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Literature and Moral Feeling

An influential body of recent work on moral psychology has stressed the interconnections among ethics, narrative, and empathy. Yet as Patrick Colm Hogan argues, this work is so vague in its use of the term "narrative" as to be almost substanceless, and this vagueness is in large part due to the neglect of literary study. Extending his previous work on universal story structures, Hogan argues that we can transform ill-defined intuitions about narrative and ethics into explicit and systematic accounts of the deep connections between moral attitudes and narratives. These connections are, in turn, inseparable from empathy, a concept that Hogan proceeds to clarify and defend against a number of widely read critiques. In the course of the book, Hogan develops and illustrates his arguments through analyses of global narratives, constructing illuminating ethical interpretations of literary works ranging from Shakespeare to Chinese drama and the Bhagavad Gita.

PATRICK COLM HOGAN, Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor in the English Department and the Cognitive Science Program at the University of Connecticut, is the author of more than twenty scholarly books, including *The Mind and Its Stories: Narrative Universals and Human Emotion* (Cambridge University Press, 2003) and *What Literature Teaches Us about Emotion* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

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A Cognitive Poetics of Ethics, Narrative, and Empathy

Patrick Colm Hogan
University of Connecticut

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Frontmatter
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To the memory of my mother-in-law, Kamalavati Pandit,
a moral exemplar

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More Information

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978-1-009-16951-6 — Literature and Moral Feeling
Patrick Colm Hogan
Frontmatter
More Information

Contents

List of Figures *page* viii
Acknowledgments ix

Introduction: What (Comparative) Literature Tells Us about Ethics 1

1 Defining Ethics 9

2 The Implied Ethics of *Julius Caesar* 40

3 Narrative Universals, Emotion, and Ethics 52

4 Ethics and Narrative Genre: Some Illustrative Cases 89

5 Emotion and Empathy 150

6 The Dynamics of Empathic Response: Simulation and Inference in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 182

7 Evaluating Empathy 197

8 The Critical Empathy of *Angels in America* 242

Afterword: The Limits of Ethics: On Free Will and Blame 260

References 272
Index 290

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Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-16951-6 — Literature and Moral Feeling
Patrick Colm Hogan
Frontmatter
More Information

Figures

4.1 A possible schematization of cross-cultural story genres *page* 92
4.2 A modified and simplified connectionist model of an anti-Semitic associative network 145
4.3 A modified and simplified connectionist model of the associations fostered by *Nosferatu* 145
9.1 Transcendental freedom (for person A as observer) 268

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Patrick Colm Hogan
Frontmatter
More Information

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