

Empathy as Literalised Perspective-taking – HANDOUT



EXTRACT 1: ENTER

In order to occupy the greatest percentage of the gentleman's volume,
I lowered myself into his lap and sat cross-legged, just as he was sitting.

[...]

It was quite something.
Quite something in there.
Bevins, come in! I called out. This is not to be missed.

hans vollman

I went in, assuming the same cross-legged posture.

roger bevins iii

And the three of us were one.

hans vollman

So to speak.

roger bevins iii

(Saunders 2017: 146)

EXTRACT 2: EXPERIENCE

He sat, distraught and shivering, seeking about for any consolation.

He must either be in a happy place, or some null place by now.

Thought the gentleman.

In either case is no longer suffering.

Suffered so terribly at the end.

(The racking cough the trembling the vomiting the pathetic attempts to keep the mouth wiped with a shaky hand the way his panicked eyes would steal up and catch mine as if to say is there really nothing Papa you can do?)

And in his mind the gentleman stood (we stood with him) on a lonely plain, screaming at the top of our lungs.

Quiet then, and a great weariness.

[...]

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(Saunders 2017: 157, 158; italics in original)

EXTRACT 3: EMPATHISE

[W]e knew him.

hans vollman

[...]

His mind was freshly inclined toward sorrow; toward the fact that the world was full of sorrow [...].

hans vollman

All were in sorrow, or had been, or soon would be.

roger bevins iii

[...]

What a pleasure. What a pleasure it was being in there. Together. [...] In there together, yet also within one another, thereby receiving glimpses of one another's minds, and glimpses, also, of Mr. Lincoln's mind. How good it felt, doing this together! [...] One mass-mind, united in positive intention.

roger bevins iii

[...]

All selfish concerns [...] set aside.

the reverend everly thomas

(Saunders 2017: 238, 239, 253, 254; italics in original)

