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**ARE FICTIONAL EMOTIONS *SUI GENERIS*?**

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**ARE FICTIONAL EMOTIONS *SUI GENERIS*?**

A Master's Thesis

by

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Ankara

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To all individuals who like to engage with fiction...

ARE FICTIONAL EMOTIONS *SUI GENERIS*?

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by

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May 2018

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## **ABSTRACT**

ARE FICTIONAL EMOTIONS *SUI GENERIS*?

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In this master's thesis, I address the question whether fictional emotions are *sui generis* or whether they are reducible to genuine emotions. I argue that we can neither put fictional emotions in a different category nor we can reduce them to genuine emotions. The reason is that since there is a continuum between belief and imagination, there is also a continuum between fictional and genuine emotions. To defend my argument I take into account of Susanna Schellenberg's *continuum thesis* (SCT) on belief and imagination and my argument relies on a slightly reconsidered version (RCT) of SCT. I suggest that an analysis of how the mind of the Reality TV Show audience is, which might be put forth as a new miscegenated genre, supports the RCT. Furthermore, I believe that recognizing the continuity between fictional and genuine emotions should lead us to reconsider on responses to the paradox of fiction.

Keywords: Belief, Fictional Emotions, Genuine Emotions, Imagination, Reality TV Shows

## ÖZET

### KURGUSAL DUYGULAR AYRI KATEGORİDE Mİ YER ALMALIDIR?

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Bu yüksek lisans tezinde, kurgusal duyguların ayrı bir kategoride mi yoksa gerçek duygularla eş değer kategoride mi incelenmesi gerektiği sorunsalını ele alıyorum. Bu soruyu takiben, kurgusal duyguların ne ayrı kategoride incelenebileceğini ne de gerçek duygularla eş değer olduğunu iddia ediyorum. Bunun sebebi ise, inanç ve hayal gücü arasında yer alan süreklilik, kurgusal ve gerçek duygular arasında da bir sürekliliğe neden oluyor. Bu argumanı desteklemek için, Sussanna Schellenberg'in inanç ve hayal gücü üzerine olan 'The Continuum Thesis'ini belirli bir oranda tekrar değerlendirerek ele alıyorum. 'The Continuum Thesis'a destek olarak, yeni bir melez tür olarak gösterilebilecek Reality TV programlarının izleyicilerinin zihinlerini analiz ediyorum. Dahası, kurgusal ve gerçek duygular arasındaki bu süreklilikten ötürü, 'Paradox of Fiction' hakkında yapılan argumanların tekrardan ele alınması gerektiğine inanıyorum.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Gerçek Duygular, Hayal Gücü, İnanç, Kurgusal Duygular, Reality Televizyon Programları

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
ÖZET.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	v-vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii-viii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	ix
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION.....	1-5
CHAPTER 2. FICTIONAL EMOTIONS.....	6-12
2.1 Paradox of Fiction.....	7-8
2.1.1 Pretend Theory.....	8-9
2.1.2 Thought Theory.....	9-12
CHAPTER 3. GENUINE EMOTIONS.....	13-19
3.1 Cognitive Theories.....	14-17
3.1.1 Narrow and Broad Cognitivists.....	16-17
3.2 Hybrid Theory.....	17-19
CHAPTER 4. PROPERTIES OF BELIEF – IMAGINATION AND THE CONTINUUM THESIS.....	20-33
4.1 Properties of Imagination and Belief.....	20-22

4.2 Schellenberg’s Imaginative Immersion and Belief- Imagination Continuum Thesis.....	23-26
4.3 Objection to ‘The Continuum Thesis’ by Liao and Doggett.....	26-27
4.4 Supposition.....	27-29
4.5 Reconsidered Version of ‘The Continuum Thesis...’	29-30
4.6 Comparison of Narrow and Broad Cognitivism within ‘The Continuum Thesis’.....	30-33
<b>CHAPTER 5. REALITY TV SHOWS: A NEW MISCEGENATED GENRE.....</b>	<b>34-43</b>
5.1 Problem with Reality Shows.....	34-38
5.2 The Continuum between Belief and Imagination in Reality Show Case.....	38-41
5.3 Discussion of the Theories of Emotion in the case of Reality Shows.....	41-43
<b>CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>44-48</b>
6.1 Why Fictional Emotions are not <i>Sui Generis</i> .....	44-45
6.2 Reconsideration of ‘The Paradox of Fiction’ Within ‘The Continuum Thesis’.....	45-47
6.3 Concluding Remarks.....	47-48
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>48-51</b>

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

1. The interaction between imagination and belief through supposition.....	41
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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Many contemporary philosophers of art have been concerned about the paradox of fiction. The paradox in question appears when fictional and genuine situations or events make one manifest similar emotional reactions even though they both involve different mental states. When emotional reactions are considered, objects which form our beliefs are based on real events and real characters. How about emotions which come up when we engage with fictional characters? Colin Radford's initial statement of the paradox of fiction involves the idea that our response to fictional characters and events is "irrational, incoherent and inconsistent" (Radford, p.75). When fictional characters and events are in question, the paradox of fiction is articulated under these three conditions:

- 1) The agent has genuine or proper emotional response towards fictional events or characters,
- 2) In order to have proper emotional responses, the agent must believe that events and characters really exist,
- 3) The agent does not believe in the existence of characters, events and situations that are fictional.

The paradox comes out since those three premises are not compatible with each other if two of them are taken together to be true. That is to say, the paradox occurs if we give the same type of affective response to the object which we believe that it does not exist (fictional) and which we believe that it exists (real). The debate has revolved around which premise to reject to solve the paradox.<sup>1</sup>

Stacie Friend characterizes this observation following two questions. “The first is *descriptive*: Should fictional emotions be classified as the same kind of emotions we experience in other contexts? The second is *normative*: Are fictional emotions irrational or otherwise inappropriate?” (Friend, 2016: p.217) Tamar Szabo Gendler also points out the descriptive side of the problem by stating that:

What is the significance of the manifest similarities between our fictional and actual emotional reactions, and what is the significance of their manifest differences? Is this configuration of similarity and difference indicative of something problematic in our emotional responses to fiction? And does this pattern of similarity and difference suggest that fictional and actual emotions are two species of the same genus? (Gendler, 2016: p.247)

Although Friend also refers to the normativity of our emotional responses to fictional cases or characters, I am only concerned with the descriptive question of our emotional responses to both fictional and genuine events.

In this revived debate, Kendall Walton (1990) assumes that fictional and genuine emotions are two distinct types. Therefore, he names emotional reactions one

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<sup>1</sup>I will talk about the paradox in detail in the chapter on fictional emotions.

has towards to fiction as ‘quasi emotions’. Some well-known names in this debate such as Peter Lamarque (1981), Derek Matravers (2014) and Noël Carroll (1990) think emotional response one gives to a fictional character or a situation is the same when one has emotional reactions in other contexts. Despite two different contentious views, as one natural response to this problem, I argue in this master’s thesis that we can neither categorize fictional emotions as *sui generis*, nor we can categorize it under the same kind of emotions we experience in other contexts. The reason is that we may simultaneously experience both fictional and genuine emotions. In other words, there is a common cluster in which the components of what triggers fictional and genuine emotions are can be seen as a continuum case, which are belief and imagination. Since there is a continuum between belief and imagination, there is also a continuum between fictional and genuine emotions. I ground my argument on Susanna Schellenberg’s *continuum thesis* (SCT) on belief and imagination; however, my argument relies on a slightly reconsidered version of the continuum thesis (RCT). I suggest that an analysis of how the mind of the Reality TV Show audience is, which might be put forth as a new miscegenated genre, supports the RCT. Furthermore, I believe that recognizing the continuity between fictional and genuine emotions should lead us to reconsider on responses to the paradox of fiction.

First, introducing some terminology would be worth to understand how I define fictional and genuine emotions. Whereas I regard emotions which we encounter with our everyday life as genuine or proper emotions, I account for emotions which arouse as the result of engaging with fiction as fictional emotions.

Fictional emotions are emotions that are felt from reading fiction or watching a

movie; what characters in the novel or movie feel in a context make one, as someone engages with fiction, imagine going through feeling the same emotions. In other words, one might empathize with the characters in question. Fictional emotions also may arouse in the case of a direct emotional response to a character or an event. Note that I am not referring to what emotions fictional characters feel; fictional emotions occur in the non-fictional world.

In this Thesis, I give a place to the discussions on fictional emotions which bring about elucidation what 'Paradox of Fiction'. The main purpose of **Chapter 2** is to give a certain background on the issue of how some philosophers categorize emotional reactions one has when she engages with fiction. In **Chapter 3**, I start this time by giving a certain background in what emotions are. I provide various theories of emotion which still have been a lively debate in both psychology and philosophy. Among those theories of emotion, (1) I presume that non-cognitivists put much emphasis on the physical process of the body when they name a phenomenon as emotion. (2) As holding an opposite view to non-cognitivists' view, narrow and broad cognitivists, on the other hand, believe that emotions cannot be fully identified as analysing the lower-order process, but cognitivists only focus on the higher-order process to call a phenomenon as emotion. Although both narrow and broad cognitivists agree on the view that cognitive process is the reason of emotional arousal, their view also branches out at some point. Whereas narrow cognitivist believe that belief is a necessary component to constitute emotions, broad cognitivists believe that belief is not a necessary component; thought might also be the reason of a genuine emotional response to a situation. (3) Although I agree with broad cognitivists on some points, I argue that hybrid theory should be ranked in a higher position since it



embraces both lower and higher order process in order to name a phenomenon as emotion. In **Chapter 4**, because I attribute different mental states (imagination and belief) as what triggers fictional and genuine emotions, I talk about the properties of belief and imagination. Later on, I focus on a specific view of belief and imagination known as the *continuum thesis* described by Susanna Schellenberg and objection directed at her thesis by Liao and Doggett. However, in the same chapter, I slightly modify the Schellenberg's continuum thesis (SCT) and I call it as *reconsidered continuum thesis* (RCT). Furthermore, as I regard belief as the triggering component for genuine emotions, I reconsider the narrow and broad cognitivists' theory so as to compare those theories within the continuum thesis framework. My main purpose in **Chapter 5** is to show a supporting illustration of the continuum thesis. In this sense, I describe a new miscegenated genre: reality TV shows and the problem about those shows. After giving a sense of what those shows are, I consider the mental state of reality show audience as having a continuum between imagination and belief through supposition. Since I argue that belief and imagination are the components of fictional and genuine emotions, I also elucidate the theories of emotions in the reality show case. In **Chapter 6**, having being taken reconsidered account of Schellenberg's thesis, as the main purpose of this master's thesis, (1) I conclude as articulating and showing why fictional emotions are neither *sui generis* nor reducible to real emotions. I believe that the assumption (1) requires and brings about the reconsideration of 'The Paradox of Fiction'. Therefore, (2) I eventually assume that the non-reducible and non-*sui generis* feature of fictional emotions paves the way to a reconsideration of the 'Paradox of Fiction'.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **FICTIONAL EMOTIONS**

When one engages with fiction, the subject can have emotional response to the fiction she engages with. For instance, one may feel pity about the death of Dumbledore while watching the movie Harry Potter. However, what makes this emotional response puzzling is the belief that one holds for the non-existence of a character in the movie. In this sense, this chapter provides how the paradox comes on the stage and how some philosophers tried to solve the first and second premises of the paradox.

I define fictional emotions as emotions that are felt from reading fiction or watching a movie; what characters in the novel or movie feel in a context makes one, as someone engages with fiction, imagine going through feeling the same emotions. In other words, one might empathize with the characters in question. Fictional emotions also might arouse in the case of one's direct emotional response to a character or an event. Note that I am not referring to what emotions fictional characters feel, so fictional emotions occur in the non-fictional world. The cognitive faculty imagination conducts our emotions when we engage with a fictional character's situation represented in the novel or in the movie.

## 2.1 Paradox of Fiction

When emotional reactions are taken into account, objects which form our beliefs are based on real events and real characters, with the nature of the world. How about emotions which come up when we engage with fictional characters? Colin Radford's initial statement of paradox of fiction comes up with the idea that our response to fictional characters and events is "irrational, incoherent and inconsistent" (Radford, p.75). When fictional characters and events are in question, the paradox of fiction is articulated under these three conditions:

- 1) The agent has genuine or proper emotional response towards fictional events or characters,
- 2) In order to have proper emotional responses, the agent must believe that events and characters really exist,
- 3) The agent does not believe in the existence of characters, events and situations that are fictional.

In order to offer a supportive argument to this paradoxical manner, Radford assumes a sort of case in which the existence belief is not held by the agent. He takes a case for granted where the existence belief is no longer available after being revealed the truth of the story. For instance, John starts telling me a story about his sister and he says that he has learnt just a while ago his sister got cancer. After seeing my sorrowful emotional response on my face, he decides to tell me the truth behind the story. He confesses that every bits of the story was a lie, and even John doesn't have a sister. Since my existence belief is no longer available after learning the fictional side of the story, I feel embarrassed for my emotional response I had a while ago rather than feeling sorry for his made-up

sister.<sup>2</sup> What Radford wants to remark in this example is that such beliefs do not exist when we engage with fictional characters or events as we know or believe from the beginning of our interaction with fiction that whatever we engage in is all fictional.

### **2.1.1 Pretend Theory**

The Pretend Theory is, for the sake of resolving the first premise of the paradox, offered by Kendall Walton (1990). According to the theory, although, Walton accepts the idea that, I might be moved in a physical and psychological way by these fictional characters or events, the belief that I have is different than existence beliefs. He calls these kinds of beliefs as “second-order” beliefs. Emotions that are aroused when I engage with fictional characters or events are also exclusively “quasi”, “imaginary” or “fictional” emotions. If one asks why they are not in the same category with proper or genuine emotions, Walton would give an answer that is grounded in his theory on two arguments. Firstly, fictional emotions<sup>3</sup> arouse in virtue of a belief I have when I engage with something fictional, meaning that I know that I am reading or watching something fictional, rather than actual or true. Secondly, our beliefs lead us to make certain behavioural movements. In fiction case, according to Walton, the belief that I have at that moment makes me avoid genuinely getting into action in order to change the stream of events. I am aware of the fact that I am not able to get interaction with the events or characters.

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<sup>2</sup> This is not the completely the same exemplified situation he is giving in the article “How Can We Be Moved by the Fate of Anna Karenina?”, but very similar.

<sup>3</sup> I prefer using fictional emotions, rather than quasi-emotions.

Walton supports his argument on 'make-believe' as pointing out to children who play 'make-believe' games and are aware of the fact that what they are doing is just a game:

The child flees, screaming, to the next room. But he unhesitatingly comes back for more. He is perfectly aware that his father is only 'playing', that the whole thing is 'just a game', and that only make-believedly is there a vicious monster after him. He is not really afraid. (Walton, 1990: p.13)

Another example he is giving here is that Walton makes us imagine Charles who is watching a horror movie and who is exposed to a terrible green slime on the screen. Feeling fearful at the moment when Charles sees the green slime on the screen is not a proper emotion, but it is a quasi-emotion because Charles, as the child who plays make-believedly games, is aware of the fact that the slime is not real; it is fictional.

### **2.1.2 Thought Theory**

As being relevant to the second premise of the paradox, Peter Lamarque approaches to the paradox of fiction with thought theory in '*How can we fear and pity fictions.*' He identifies the distinction Walton puts forward in between real world and fictional world. He says that what Walton wants to say that when one make-believedly knows that fictional characters or events she engages with exist, what she must to do is to enter a fictional world. However, instead of entering this fictional world, what Lamarque proposes differently than Walton is to make these fictional characters enter our world so that one can be really moved by them. In a literal sense, what he means as entering these fictional characters to our world is the significance of how one describes the fictional

characters and they subsequently become thought-content. “Simply put, the fear and pity we feel for fictions are in fact directed at thoughts in our minds.”

(Lamarque, 1981, p.293)

It is important to note here that Lamarque makes a crucial distinction between thoughts as states of consciousness and thoughts as states of representations. The latter one has a significant place when the proper objects of emotional responses like fear and pity come along with fiction. He claims that not everything we fear is real or exists; therefore, it is substantial to make the distinction between fear *of* something and being frightened *by* something. Having followed by the distinction, he says “What we are frightened by I will call the ‘real’ object of our fear, what we are frightened of I will call the ‘intentional’ object.” (p.294). For cases of fiction, Lamarque thinks that the real objects which come up when we engage with fiction are *thoughts*. What makes me feeling fearful or pitiful might be the reason of the intentional object of my pity or fear as much as the reason of the real object. Put in a different way, thoughts are the elements which make me fear pitiful and fulfil with that feeling as being independent from beliefs. So even though I am not in actual danger, I can be frightened *by a thought* of being kidnapped by someone.<sup>4</sup>

When we recall the Walton’s pretend theory, it seems that what is different in Lamarque’s view compared to Walton’s theory is that Lamarque does not consider the emotional response which appears as the result of thought-content, as ‘quasi-emotion’ as Walton describes when Charles is afraid of the green slime on the screen. The thought of the slime is the reason why Charles is afraid, not

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<sup>4</sup> As being one of the proponents of thought theories, Lamarque does not claim that emotions are identified with thoughts; what he assumes is that emotions might depend on thoughts.

because he is afraid of the slime itself. In other words, not the object itself makes Charles to have the emotional response being frightened. In addition, in the role of being opposed to Walton's view on behavioural reaction Lamarque states, as a behavioural evidence of that thought, that Charles tries to suppress the thought of the slime through bringing up other thoughts as closing his eyes or lighting a cigarette.

Subsequent to discussion on the thought-content of fictional events and characters, Lamarque draws the attention to the idea that there is a divergence between a propositional content of a sentence and the illocutionary intentions with which it is used. The normal illocutionary intentions are suspended in sentences, which are formed for fictional uses, but the meaning of a sentence remains the same between fictional and non-fictional uses. Therefore, the writer of fiction only pretends to assert facts and he pretends to refer to real people when he talks about the characters. Lamarque makes this claim by laying his back to Frege's observation on fiction. As referring to Frege, he mentions that when we focus on fictional characters and events, sentences we use for them does not have a truth value and reference, but they have sense.

To contrast, what do we mean as referring to an object in fictional discourse? Lamarque thinks that reference should be analysed within two senses: within a story and outside the story in the real world. When a character in a story refers to another character, suppose that Harry Potter mentions Hermione Granger in a dialogue, it is a reference within a story and Lamarque calls this *internal reference*. There seems no problem of this type of reference. How about reference outside the story? When one talks about Harry Potter or other characters in the Harry Potter books, who is she referring to from an external

point of view? This is the crucial point where Lamarque tries to clear up. He appeals again to Frege to base his argument on external references. He suggests that names and descriptions of fictional characters refer to their *customary senses* rather than their *customary referents*.

His conclusion for the emotional responses to fictional characters lies on the argument that thought-content is the object of our emotions, and sentences and descriptions are the elements which adjust the intensity of our responses to those fictional characters. That is to say, the more a detailed character is described within a sentence, the more engagement with a fictional character in thought-content will be the case.



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **GENUINE EMOTIONS**

In this chapter, I provide various emotional theories which are central concern in many different fields such as philosophy and psychology for an extended period of time. Another reason why I place those debates in this current chapter is because solution for the second premise of the paradox relevant to the debates on genuine emotions. As the result of discussions on genuine emotions, I argue that among those theories, the most compatible and fruitful theory of emotion is hybrid theories.

Emotions are substantial components that have an enormous impact on one's mood, relationship with others or circumstances. We have various emotional responses by following in assessment of external input we receive from outer world. Paul Ekman (1976) categorized them under the name of six basic emotions. These are anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness and surprise. These emotional responses might be reflected outward by physiologically, phenomenologically or by our actions. I will mention the type of emotions that we encounter in our daily life, except engaging with fiction, as genuine or proper emotions. In the literature, there are several different approaches of how we can comprehend those genuine emotions.

### 3.1 Cognitive Theories

Among different approaches, ‘cognitive theory of the emotions’ is the one that has been contentiously discussed since many years both in psychology and philosophy.<sup>5</sup> Among philosophers, the main concern of cognitive theories revolved around propositional attitudes. A proposition might be composed by a declarative sentence such as ‘I am sleepy.’ Attitudes such as beliefs, desires, suppositions and etc. could be formed towards this proposition. Note that in order to talk about propositional attitudes; we need to engage with the concepts that are involved in the states of affairs. Therefore, if one assumes that emotions are formed by propositional attitudes, then the idea that emotions are formed by concepts seems inevitable, specifically if it is about appraisals of emotions. The ones that follow propositional attitude theory lay their back to the experiment done by Schachter and Singer in order to support their view. Schachter and Singer used certain amount of adrenaline on the subjects to trigger off the physiological reactions under different settings designed to arouse different emotions. They dwelled on the conclusion that in different context subjects had different emotions with the same physiological response and this is a proof that desires and beliefs are the elements deciding and labelling the emotions. By following up the approach on conceptual analyses of emotions, some philosophers like Anthony Kenny (1963) argued that psychological experiments are not able to give us a consistent data about emotions. Therefore, he thinks that what emotions are should be investigated under the conceptual analysis. Solomon shares a similar view with Kenny: “That anger also has biological backing and includes sensation is inessential to understanding the

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<sup>5</sup> There are also, on the other side, non-cognitivists who believe that cognitive evaluation is not the initiating element to have an emotional response towards a situation or an object. Immediate response without cognitively elucidating an external input is the main attitude that non-cognitivists stand in. Somatic and behavioral theories also appear in those theories of emotions; however, since the debate about fictional and genuine emotions revolves around mental states like belief and imagination, I do not mention them here.

emotion, though no doubt significant in certain measurements, which only *contingently* correlate with the intensity of the emotion or its significance.” (as cited in Griffiths, 2008, p. 23)

According to defenders of cognitive theory, there should be a cognitive evaluation for the condition in which one is situated in. What makes one being afraid of a dog is to make a cognitive evaluation that she is in danger. Without retaining any cognitive component, emotions we have are called moods by cognitive theorists. William Lyons (1980) remarked that evaluation on the state of emotions one has is the necessary condition to identity an emotion. In order to feel the emotion being disgusted, one needs to evaluate the object which makes him or her feel that emotion as something disgusting. In his account, Lyons mentions the importance of ‘seeing as’ a way of evaluating process of emotions. For instance, when I see a cat on the couch, I can evaluate the cat as a dangerous animal which may scratch my arms or I can evaluate it as a cute and friendly animal and this state of mind would shape the emotion that I go through. I might be frightened or be cheerful by the same cat.

Since the concern based emotional theories share similar views with cognitivists, I categorize those theories in the cognitivists’ lot. Robert C. Roberts (1988) holds the view on the bidirectional occurrence of ‘seeing’ the things. He goes with the belief that ‘seeing’ the things is the way how we can construct our emotions and he claims that emotions are concern-based construals, meaning that our concerns form what type of an emotional response we will give to the things around us.

One of the contemporary philosophers Bennett W. Helm (2009) frames a holistic account for the existence of emotions, which means that having only one type of emotion is not possible for someone. In a way being similar with Roberts’ concern, he

thinks that emotions are affective modes of responses for the circumstances which matter to us. Therefore, he rejects the traditional understanding of emotions because of the divergence between cognitions and conations. What makes Helm to consider emotions as holistic is the idea that emotions embrace things that are future- and past-oriented or negative and positive within a shared focusing import (what you care about).

### 3.1.1 Narrow and Broad Cognitivists

Among cognitive theorists, the ones that put much emphasis on the notion of 'belief' such as William Lyons (1980) and Justin Oakley (1992) or 'judgments' such as Robert Solomon (2003) and Martha Nussbaum (2001) as the main or necessary component which triggers emotions are branched in the side of '**narrow cognitivists**'. For this account, the belief that one carries doesn't need to be true for arousal of emotions. William Lyons puts his theory in words in this way: "In general, a cognitivist theory of emotion is one that makes some aspect of thought, usually a belief, central to the concept of emotion and, at least in some cognitive theories, essential to distinguishing different emotions from one another." (as cited in Griffiths, 2008, p. 21)

On the other hand, **broad cognitivists** do not hold the same view with narrow cognitivists as putting the component 'belief' in the centre of their theory.

Names such as Peter Lamarque (1981), Derek Matravers (1998) and Michael Stocker (1987) are some of the proponents of broad cognitivist theory.

According to broad cognitivists, belief is a sufficient but not a necessary component to constitute emotions. They argue that thought might also be the reason of a genuine emotional response to a fictional situation or a fictional

character as a means of an imagination or a supposition. Although both narrow and broad cognitivists' views branch out at some point, the common point where both narrow and broad cognitivists agree upon is that a cognitive component is sufficient to feel a genuine emotion.

### **3.2 Hybrid Theories**

What cognitivists disregard in their theory is the idea of physiological element of emotion and their ignorance makes them confront with objections. One of those objections comes from 'hybrid theorists'. What hybrid theorists argue is that in addition to the idea propositional attitude of cognitivists, physiological dimension of emotion is also a necessary component to name a phenomenon as emotion. Hybrid theorists agree with cognitive theorists on the point that constructing emotions or categorizations of emotions varies and depends on the environment and culture. i.e., depending on the situation in which an agent is. They also agree with non-cognitivists on the point that there is a universal physiologic system which is an on-going process of evolution. Which means is that hybrid theorists acknowledge the account of both cognitivists and non-cognitivists' view on how an affective experience occurs.

Peter Griffiths (1997) starts his idea by articulating that emotions are not natural kinds. He accepts Paul Ekman's Six Basic Emotions and their universality, but he also accepts when these basic six emotions are not considerable in somatic way, they are regarded as higher cognitive emotions such as envy, guilt, shame, pride. Moreover, the theory of social constructionism appears in emotional theory that Griffiths classify. He thinks that enculturation has the qualification to decide the way how emotions are constructed.

As Griffiths does, other defenders of hybrid theories are Keith Oatley and P.N. Johnson-Laird (1987) also acknowledge the presence of the six basic emotions, except the emotion surprise. They assume that basic and higher cognitive emotions have a different structure, but compromising basic emotions' processing modes is the feature of higher cognitive emotions. Therefore, those six basic emotions might potentially be under the cultural impact.

I initially would like to state that even though I ground my argument within the broad cognitivists' framework as claiming that imagination also induces emotional response, I do not reject the arguments put forth by non-cognitivists. Therefore, I assume that hybrid theories could be ranked in a higher position in terms of plausibility for the question what constitutes our emotions in general. The reason comes from my assumption that when someone engages with fiction, it is possible for her to experience emotions which may arouse without instantiation of a cognitive deliberation, namely immediate gut reactions, as it might also happen in the genuine emotions. This also means that there might be some cases in which imagination is not involved in fictional engagement. However, I also assume that emotions which require cognitive evaluation such as jealousy, embarrassment, envy etc. can also be experienced and categorized in both genuine and fictional emotions. Note that since I accept the idea that both genuine and fictional emotions can also occur without any cognitive deliberation or as immediate gut reactions, what I am concerned here is not relevant to non-cognitivists' stand in the debate. Instead, because I dwell on the functional role of imagination and belief in order to have emotional arousals, I take into account of broad and narrow cognitivists' view under the continuum thesis. Therefore, I discuss how the debate among those theories on emotions could be compared

within the framework of the continuum thesis, which I make mention of in the continued chapter in detail.

## CHAPTER 4

### PROPERTIES OF BELIEF – IMAGINATION AND THE CONTINUUM THESIS

The first aim in this chapter is to introduce the properties of belief and imagination since I argue that the component of genuine emotions is belief and the component of fictional emotions is imagination. Note that attribution of imagination as a component for fictional engagement had already been discussed in this field by well-known names such as Gregory Currie (1990) and David Davies (2007) before.<sup>6</sup> Having been had a sense of about the properties of fictional and genuine emotions, as the second aim, I present ‘The Continuum Thesis’ put forth by Susanna Schellenberg. What Schellenberg states is that there is continuity between imagination and belief when one is immersed in imagination. I also mention the objections directed at her thesis by Liao and Doggett. At the end of this chapter, I argue for a slightly modified version of the continuum thesis.

#### 4.1 Properties of Belief and Imagination

Theories of belief and imagination are divided into two opposing groups. Some philosophers think that belief and imagination are different mental states whereas some philosophers think that belief and imagination are unified by the intermediate

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<sup>6</sup> See Currie (1990), *The Nature of Fiction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; See Davies (2007), *Aesthetics and Literature*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.



states or they are similar. The view which put those states in different categories assumes that functional properties of belief do not belong to the functional properties of imagination or vice versa. Since I agree with the argument that they are conceptually different mental states, I only take into consideration the arguments which analyse how and why those mental states are different.

Philosophers who distinguish those mental states believe that there are some properties of beliefs that imagination does not share them. Standard functionalist view articulated by Eric Schwitzgebel (2000) firstly claims that beliefs have a logical relation to one another in the way that appearance of a new belief makes the other belief dispel as depending on their contents. In other words, we have a disposition to not forming contradictory beliefs as simultaneously believing  $q$  and *not* believing  $q$ . However, imagining  $p$  and *not* believing  $p$  can simultaneously be hold regardless of their contents. For instance, one can imagine that she is in 'Alice's Wonderland' without genuinely believing that she is in 'Alice's Wonderland'. Logical reasoning also individually derives premises and conclusions of imagination and beliefs. If she imagines that she is in the Wonderland and she also believes that the Wonderland does not exist, she does not conclude that she also does not exist. Secondly, one of the functional roles of perceptual state is to be source of beliefs. Features of perceptual states make us believe that things how we perceive them. Whereas this is the case for beliefs, imagination does not have to depend on the immediate sensory experiences one has. One can easily imagine a past or future event without having any sensory data from external input. Thirdly, functionalists also think that beliefs interact with desires and actions. If one desires that to have a cold beverage and believing that the action opening the fridge to have a cold drink, this would give more motivation for giving rise to that having a cold beverage from the fridge. However, imagined things do not

usually have to directly bring about the motivation for action. Imagination being in the Wonderland does not necessarily result in the adventurism for that imagined place. Even if an imagined thing brings about an action upon itself, that action might be constrained by external stimuli.

People who put the nature of imagination and the nature of belief in different categories also think that there are some properties of imagination that beliefs do not share them. They show the lack of those properties as the reason why they should be differentiated from one another. The first lack of property is the intentional action that while to intend imagining an action is not a difficult endeavour, to intend believing an action might occasionally require the sensory experience. If one intends to imagine the presence of a flying unicorn, she can imagine it without any difficulty; however, if one intends to believe the presence of a flying unicorn, then other beliefs or the sensory experience she has would not induce her to believe in the existence of that flying unicorn. The second property which beliefs do not share with imagination is the higher quality of phenomenology that imagination involves in. According to Amy Kind (2001), qualitative feeling as an experiential aspect is an essential element in imagination. She furthermore claims that imagining and perceiving an object are similar to a certain extent. As evidence her claim, recent neuroscientific research by O'Craven and Kanwisher (2000) shows that imagining and perceiving the same object activate the similar regions of the brain. Nonetheless, beliefs are not tied to phenomenology as much as imagination does because sensory experiences can easily change forms of our beliefs. As a matter of this fact, while imagination can affect how we experience things, experiences can affect how we believe in things we experience.

## 4.2 Schellenberg's Imaginative Immersion and Belief-Imagination Continuum

### Thesis

After analysing the properties of imagination and beliefs in terms of their differences, I intend to answer the question whether fictional emotions are *sui generis* or whether they are reducible to real emotions by accounting of Susanna Schellenberg's *continuum thesis* on belief and imagination. However, consideration about what Schellenberg argues for those mental states would be fruitful before discussing about my arguments for the question in manner.

In '*Belief and Desire in Imagination and Immersion*', Susanna Schellenberg (2013) indicates that there is a continuum between imagination and beliefs by virtue of intermediate states in which involve some properties of imagination and some properties of belief. She also claims that one can lose her control over imagination such that she can immerse in imagination or fiction. She states for the imaginative immersion that "the phenomenon of imaginative immersion can be fully accounted for only if the functional roles of imaginings and beliefs are understood as being on a continuum." (Schellenberg, p.508) This imaginative immersion may have the effect on actions and the way how beliefs are formed in a spontaneous mode. What she describes on this point corresponds to the Walton's description on the game of make-believe. (Walton, ch. 7) For instance, two children engrossed in making mud pies may spontaneously imagine new rules and may desire to cook them in an imagined oven so that this can motivate action in their make-believe games. Their desire which motivates action is the representation of belief-like and their imagination in mud pies without genuinely believing in them is the representation of imagination-like.

In the case of imaginative immersion, one can start to simultaneously have belief-like mental state and imagination-like mental state. Immersing in imagining would lead her to take whatever she imagines as something true. Therefore, she believes that there is a continuum between imagination and belief. The possibility of moving seamlessly among those mental states may start from pure imagining or pure belief. She states that:

We can call a mental state of imagining *p* a *pure imagining* if and only if it is not to any degree larger than 0 a matter of believing *p* or desiring *p*; we can call a mental state of believing *p* a *pure belief* if and only if it is not to any degree larger than 0 a matter of imagining *p* or desiring *p*. (Schellenberg, p.509)

She also states that the continuum thesis can be analysed by two different approaches. The first approach is considering mental states as placing them in three different boxes: a pure-imagination box, a pure-belief box and a mixed box. The immersed pretender has the mixed box mental state when she is immersed in imagination. The second approach is considering them as a multitude of cognition boxes: a pure-imagination box, a pure-belief box and several boxes in between. In this approach, immersed pretender has the several boxes in between when she is immersed in imagination.

Schellenberg interprets the imaginative immersion in the state of being intermediate states, meaning that both imagination and belief are in play and in the case of non-immersive imagination only pure imagination is in play. For instance, when two children engrossed in making mud pies, they are captured by their imagination-like

state whereupon they do not have any conscious thought about the make-believe part of mud pies and they start taking to be true the pies that are made of mud.

To make more comprehensible the continuum thesis, she uses the analogy on colours. The case of continuum could be recognized in a colour scale for yellow and red. Although yellow and red are two distinctive colours in a colour range, shades between them are not easily categorized as yellow or red insofar as those two colours are combined with each other. As in the analogy of colours, combination of belief and imagination occurs as lowering the functional role of imagination and increasing the functional role of belief. This combination results in the appearance of intermediate states among them.

For the interaction between imagination, belief and desire, she believes that considering desire as *i*-desire is not necessary when one is immersed in imagination.<sup>7</sup> She makes this claim on the ground that the one who is immersed in imagination is motivated by desires which make the content fictional. In other words, the content of desire is different than normal desires in the way that the desire Schellenberg defines functions to make the content fictional. Schellenberg writes:

But do we need to introduce *i*-desires to explain these cases? An alternative to introducing *i*-desires is to introduce more complicated desires, namely desires to make fictional. What are desires to make fictional? One way of analysing such desires is to say that they are desires to make true in fiction. The idea is that when a child pretends to be a cat, she acts in the way that the conventions of the game of pretending to be a cat govern her to act. She may lick her

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<sup>7</sup> For the debate between cognitive lumpers and cognitive splitters on desires, See Tyler Doggett and Andy Egan, "Wanting Things You Don't Want: The Case for an Imaginative Analogue of Desire," *Philosophers' Imprint*, vii, 9 (December 2007): 1–17.

hands, purr, walk around daintily, and, if she is an English-speaking child, she may say “meow.” (Schellenberg, 2013, p. 515)

#### **4.3 Objection to ‘The Continuum Thesis’ by Liao and Doggett**

The picture she draws for the continuum thesis takes some critical objections by Shenyi Liao and Tyler Doggett. In their article ‘*The Imagination Box*’ (2014), although they state that they find the thesis plausible in terms of the change between imagination and belief, they point out unnecessary of arguing the continuum between those attitudes. They also think that not only attitudes but also content of the attitudes change when the immersion occurs, but it does not mean that there is a continuum between belief and imagination. “At best, the continuum thesis can explain why one fails to notice a transition from belief that p to imagining that p. However, immersion involves not just a change in attitude, but also a change in content.” (Liao & Doggett, 2014: p. 7) What they criticize on her thesis is not only about the rejection of the continuum between belief and imagination. They also underline the difficulty of what state one is when she is immersed in imagination. That is to say, the immersed is not consciously aware that she is imagining. As a counterargument to her statement, they provide some psychological experiments to support their claim as showing that children were shocked when the adult who was pretending as if having a picnic bits into a Playdough cookie. Liao & Doggett believe that behaviour of those kids shows that even though immersed pretenders are immersed in imagination, they are conscious about what they are doing, where they are or who they are. Moreover, they are able to posit that they were in the state of imagining. They explain that:

If the continuum thesis were true and these kids were in an intermediate state, why would they be surprised by the water-pouring or the Playdough-eating?

So far as one believes the Playdough is a cookie and that one wants to eat that cookie, eating it makes sense. (Liao & Doggett, 2014: p.9)

Another criticism by Liao and Doggett addresses to how Schellenberg categorizes the desire in imaginative immersion case. They describe the problem with her statement about unnecessary categorization of desire as *i*-desire in an account of imagination. They believe that her statement is at odds with the continuum thesis. If there are some in-between states that have some functional roles of belief and some functional roles of imagination, then there should be also a continuum between desire and *i*-desire, rather than categorizing what induces motivation in immersed case as desires.

I believe that the criticisms Liao & Doggett direct at Schellenberg's thesis are not considerable as a disproof. What she argues in the continuum thesis basically is to give an account of how belief, imagination and desire induce actions and affective responses. However, Liao & Doggett only focus on the mental states of the immersed pretender, rather than considering the action inducing and affective response feature of the continuum thesis she calls attention to. Nevertheless, even if we accept their objections as a disproof for the continuum thesis, they do not jeopardize the new frame that I draw for the continuum thesis.

#### **4.4 Supposition**

I now wish to introduce here a kind of mental state which is distinct from both belief and imagination, namely supposition.<sup>8</sup> I assume that supposition I introduce here appears in cases where the mental states belief and imagination function in a continuous way. I believe that the useful terms to define this intermediate mental state

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<sup>8</sup> Some philosophers such as Amy Kind (2013) and Christopher Peacocke (1985) consider supposition and imagination as distinct mental states whereas some philosophers such as Alvin Goldman (2006) and Margherita Arcangeli (2014) take supposition as a type of imagination.

would be supposition. The functional role of supposition occurs when the truth value of an input (propositional attitude) is ambiguous. In other words, the agent is not able to check whether or not the propositional attitude in question is real. Aforementioned properties of imagination and belief in section 4.1 do not individually function in cases where supposition appears. That is to say, there is not only functional role of imagination mental state or not only functional role of belief mental state; there are various inputs and outputs through imagination and belief in the examples I will present in the continued paragraphs.

Suppose that my flatmate and I had an argument. I was really angry with her because I am not sure that she is telling me the truth about taking my money on the dinner table. I decide to punch the sandbag to pour out my feelings. When I punch the sandbag, there comes moments I take the propositional attitude “She is not telling me the truth” as true and I imagine her face on the sandbag, which makes me angrier with her and punch harder. On the other hand, there comes moments I take the propositional attitude “She is telling me the truth” as true and my belief on this attitude makes my frustration lessen and punch weaker to the sandbag. The level of my emotional response changes depending on the level of functional roles of my mental states (imagination and belief).

Suppose another case that I am walking on the dark and lonely streets alone in the midnight. I feel like there is someone or something behind following me. Even though I check and confirm there is no one behind me, I am still not sure about if it is true or not. I start to imagine and take the propositional attitude “There is someone behind me” as true before turning my back to check if there is really someone behind me. That levels up my emotional response being frightened by something, which might be the outcome of my imagination. While keeping on walking on the street, I start to



believe and take the propositional attitude “There is no one behind me” as true and this attitude lessens my panic and concern. This shows that my emotional response again changes depending on the functional roles of mental states.

As in the both examples, agents encounter with a condition in which there is more than one input and supposition shows a functional role here since agents are not sure about which propositional attitude to take as true. Furthermore, as was already mentioned in section 4.1, imagination is a voluntary action but belief is not. By the time when the agent uses her supposition, since there is a continuum between mental states belief and imagination, there occurs continuity between voluntary and involuntary actions as it is the case in the examples. As in continuity between voluntary and involuntary action, the continuity also seamlessly happens between imagination and belief. This means that when imagination-like mental state gains much role, belief-like mental state does not cease functioning; when belief-like mental state gains much role, imagination-like mental state does not cease functioning.

#### **4.5 Reconsidered Version of ‘The Continuum Thesis’**

As being different than Schellenberg’s continuum thesis (SCT), the reconsidered continuum thesis (RCT) I provide does not occur when one is immersed in imagination. Instead, this case happens when one is not sure about which propositional attitude to take as true and by taking the content through supposition, the continuum appears between imagination and belief. One is also aware of the continuum between mental states imagination and belief while engaging with fiction. This also does not bring about the case in which the difficulty of describing what state one is.

Supposition is also a new mental state I introduced in section 4.3. The functional role for supposition I presume here does not involve in SCT. I believe that supposition can

initiate to function only if the agent is aware the continuity between belief and imagination and it gains a role as being in an intermediate state between them. One can easily state when she imagines or when she believes in the content in RCT. Furthermore, not only mental attitudes but also contents of those attitudes are in a continuum. The agent believes that “there is no one behind” and the agent imagines “there is someone behind”. That is why I believe that Liao and Doggett’s objection does not endanger the RCT I assume here.

For debates on desires, I believe that the concept of desire Schellenberg talks about by any means appears in *i*-desire box, although desires in imaginative immersion case that Schellenberg define are plausible in the RCT I argue here. That is to say, the one who engages with fiction in the RCT case desires to make the content fictional; however, affective responses and actions result differently when they are compared with affective responses and actions which occur when one’s belief-like mental states gain more functional role. Therefore, I agree with Liao & Doggett that in an account of imagination, what occurs is *i*-desire, rather than considering them in a desire box. This shows that there is also a continuum between desire and *i*-desire when one is immersed in imagination.

#### **4.6 Comparison of Narrow and Broad Cognitivism within ‘The Continuum Thesis’ Framework**

Firstly I need to clarify that even though I defined in the introduction that what triggers fictional emotions is imagination and what triggers genuine emotions is belief, I do not hold narrow cognitivists’ view here. When I ground my argument on the idea that fictional emotions occur in the case of imagination, I reject their view that only beliefs are the reason of emotional responses. By this reason, I support broad cognitivists’ view that beliefs are components of emotions and it is sufficient but not

necessary for emotional arousals. However, what I argue as being different from broad cognitivists' view by considering the continuum thesis is that when one has emotional response through imagination, she experiences both genuine and fictional emotions, not only genuine emotion.<sup>9</sup> The reason of the occurrence of both emotions results from the continuum among beliefs and imagination. By following the Schellenberg's idea, I assume that the more one is immersed in fiction through imagination-like states, the more one starts taking to be true what she imagines. In this sense, imagination shares a similarity with belief so that this triggers simultaneously both genuine and fictional emotions.

One might reasonably object to my assumption by asking the question that what could be the case instead of beliefs when thoughts are the components of genuine emotions. This objection would bring about the broad cognitivists' opposition to narrow cognitivists' view on placing the belief as the necessary component to induce emotions. I believe that the continuum thesis is in accordance with even broad cognitivists' thought theory if we replace the continuity between belief and imagination with the continuity between thought and imagination. In this case, there occur two possible answers if the continuum thesis would be replaced with the continuity between thought and imagination. (1) Thought could be taken as a *sui generis* propositional attitude or (2) thought could be taken as a sub-member propositional attitude of belief. I presume that those two possible answers appear due to how broad cognitivists unclearly oppose to narrow cognitivists' view when they discuss about thought theory.

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<sup>9</sup> In the debate on paradox of fiction, broad cognitivists reject the second premise that when one does not believe in the existence of objects of emotions, she does not experience genuine emotions. They claim that imagination is sufficient to have genuine emotions to fiction.

First, I will consider the second possible answer since it does not jeopardize Schellenberg's original continuum thesis. That is to say, I can still assume that there is a continuum between belief and imagination although this time thought is the active component to induce genuine emotions. The discussion between narrow and broad cognitivists on phobias could be taken into account by considering the second possible answer. Assuming holding a thought as a triggering element for emotional arousal in the case of phobias comes along with the imagination-like states. I interpret the cases of phobias such that even though one holds the thought that he is not in danger, he concurrently imagines the situation as though he is in danger. This situation gives a chance to gain the role of imagination-like states and lessens the role of thoughts, but his thoughts do not cease their existence because of the gained role of imagination as taking imagined things to be true. In other words, instead of function the role of belief in the continuum thesis, thoughts this time function in the case of phobia as a continuum between imagination and thoughts. Therefore, this role sharing paves the way for the existence to some extent the function of thoughts and to some extent imagination-like state so that one experiences both genuine and fictional emotions in the case of phobias.<sup>10</sup>

For the first possible answer, I think that first there has to be a discussion on what makes properties of thoughts different and distinguishable than imagination and belief. I believe that mapping thought as a *sui generis* propositional attitude on the continuum thesis could afterwards prepare a better ground for the discussion. However, I prefer to consider the second possible answer in a separate and detail article for further discussions.

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<sup>10</sup> The continuum thesis can also be considered in the case of aliefs and beliefs, but I do not give place to that debate in my thesis. See Gendler, T. S. (2008). Alief and Belief. *Journal of Philosophy* 105 (10):634-663.

As a summary of this chapter, I conclude that despite of the objections directed at Schellenberg's continuum thesis, the RCT I presumed here does not oppose to any objection directed by Liao and Doggett, but when the continuum thesis is compared with broad and narrow cognitivists' view, I argued that there occurs two possible answers and I only consider the second possible answer here for the sake of my argument to the question whether or not fictional emotions are *sui generis*.

## CHAPTER 5

### REALITY TV SHOWS: A NEW MISCEGENATED GENRE

I introduced the RCT in the previous chapter. The main approach of this current chapter is to show a supporting illustration for the RCT. I assume that reality TV show audience experiences the continuum between belief and imagination due to not being certain about the actuality of the show. Therefore, the continuity between those mental states makes them simultaneously feel both genuine and fictional emotions.

#### 5.1 Problem with Reality Shows

Many of us at least once might run across them while zapping the TV channels since they have recently become very popular or mainstream in the TV industry. Most of them involve cast of individuals who are not professional actors or some of them prefer having couple of celebrities to attract more audience to the show. I assume that some of you are familiar with them: Reality TV shows. To briefly mention what these TV shows are is that they are generally known as television programs which are based on real-life stories as involving the life stories of characters. Even these reality TV shows are standardly categorized in subgenres such as documentary-style or competition-based<sup>11</sup> such as *Survivor* or *Master Chef*, where one participant has to be eliminated in accordance with her performance in the show. This is a type of broadcast

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<sup>11</sup> There is recently a number of reality shows and sub-genres of them, but I just arbitrarily referred to two genres.

wildly believed and known if you ask to audience what these programs are about.

Although the popularity rate of reality television is recently uprising, the word ‘reality’ has faced many criticisms since it has generally been thought of as shows reflecting the events assuming they have *really* occurred. Most criticism towards them is because they have been regarded in some ways as deceptive and involve cases of editing or directing by producers of the show. There is a general belief about them that, for some scenes, directors have the right to say how the participants in the show should behave or how they should have a talk with other participants. Even worse, some participants are humiliated and are made feeling degraded in front of cameras. The common answer why this is so apparent: This is all staged in order to raise the audience ratings who like engaging with reality shows. However, you can come across scenes that are obviously fictional or staged making it hard to believe that events in the show are *really* happening.

It seems like there occurs a dilemma when the audience engages with reality shows. On one side of the coin, the audience believes that participants really compete with one another or against the time, or the winner of the show is not assigned beforehand behind the scene. What is happening in the show is all natural streams of events without deliberately being interrupted by anyone or anything. Participants in the show, in a natural way, characterize their personal life and personality when they are on the stage. The more absorbing and closer one of the participants’ life-story or character to herself or himself, the more the audience want to make the participant they support win the competition. To put it another way, they empathize with the participant they don’t know her in real life. Emotions which ensue following that belief -such as

excitement, sadness, anticipation, pity, annoyance<sup>12</sup>, surprise etc. - make them be moved by a participant they have never met in real life.

When we look at the other side of the coin, as a remarkable manner, they also believe when they are exposed to some scenes of the show that are too smooth or awkward for a *reality* TV show, the show itself is from different ways too absurd or bizarre to be real. Therefore, they are, at that moment, captured by the imagination that most of the scenes must be edited, scripted or remade multiple times to find the correct angle and light.<sup>13</sup> For example, in most of the shows on cooking competitions, participants finish in the time they are expected to complete the task. As an another evidence, in some cases, one of the participants face with a dangerous case in which a physical or mental condition of her might affect her performance, but rather than showing the scene in a serious fragment, it is shown in such a dramatized or sorrow way that it weakens the audience's belief about the actuality of the show. Having been transited to weakened belief mental state to imagination, the level of their emotional reactions relatively changes towards the participants in the show. Note that they enjoy each of those emotions individually. Experiencing and feeling all of them in different contexts by putting oneself in the other's shoes gives that person a certain pleasure even though some of them might be regarded as negative emotions.<sup>14</sup> Though this is the case when the audience watch the reality show, they leave aside the imagination towards the show and regain the belief over again that this is a reality show so that it must involve some truth *per se*. This bizarre condition leads one to have a circular belief way and a

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<sup>12</sup> To other participants who cannot get along with the participant she is supporting.

<sup>13</sup> This case also might be an instance of imaginative resistance. Since imaginative resistance has mostly been discussed in the context of morality, this is not my concern here. (see, Moron, 1994, *The Expression of Feeling in Imagination*)

<sup>14</sup> In this sense, those TV shows also involve the 'Paradox of Tragedy'. If any of those experienced situations by participants or people in real life would happen, I believe that the audience would have had different emotional reactions to those people. For instance, the audience would try to help them in real life because they could feel sorrow or pity what they experience.



constant emotional shifting. They do not hold a permanent belief about the show; they think of by watching the show that it is both real and fictional. Therefore, the continuum between imagination and belief occurs in the mind of reality TV show audience. Popularity and ratings of reality shows have recently been growing, albeit the transitional thought succession -real vs. fictional-.

I categorize the propositional attitude that makes one think in the way that this show is staged or fictional as imagination whereas I categorize the propositional attitude which makes one think that this is a *reality* show; therefore, it should involve some truth either in terms of characters or events happening in the show, as belief. I assume that the cognitive operator which activates this constant belief succession is *supposition*. As referring to the article I argue that supposition is the main cognitive element which conducts the transition between imagination (make-belief) and belief.

What makes the reality show case intriguing could be analysed within both descriptive and normative side of emotional reactions.<sup>15</sup> Following the case on mental state I described, one can, without a doubt, ask the question that even though the audience realizes after a while that the show doesn't involve a pure reality *per se*, why they still prefer engaging with the show. One of the possible answers to that question could be given by referring to the idea of Lazarus. He believes by following the empirical psychology evidences that relinquishing beliefs is not an easy process for people (as cited in Prinz, p.37).

I briefly talked about what reality shows are, but I haven't mentioned what makes this genre different than other fictional concerns. I assume that another interesting point about those shows is that the audience has a different mental state compared to the

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<sup>15</sup> For the normative side of the manner, types of emotional reactions the audience gives for the people in the show without knowing them in real life (for competitive shows) is the question could be raised up here; however, the aim in this master's thesis is to focus on only descriptive side of the issue.

audience who engages with things that are composed of mere fiction. For the latter form of audience's mental state, it is the case that the audience or readers hold the belief from the very beginning of whatever they engage with that the characters or story itself is based on fiction or imagined by someone else before. Stacie Friend states the limited effects and implications of imagination under quarantined emotions. When one engages with fiction, the beliefs that the person holds about the fictional character or event is compartmentalized from beliefs about the world. That brings about no transmission between imagination and belief. However, for reality shows, I presume that uncertainty nature of the show leads the audience to not being able to completely quarantine their beliefs. Therefore, the audience both use their imagination when they are exposed to some scenes and believe the actuality of events in the meantime.

## **5.2 The Continuum between Belief and Imagination in Reality Show Case**

What about the belief when one engages with reality shows? Is the person constantly captured by the belief that the show is precisely fictional or involves sort of reality in itself? I assume that the *dynamic cognitive succession* among components belief and imagination through supposition makes peculiar the case of engaging with reality shows. Instead of having a certain belief or imagination about the show as it happens in fictional or genuine emotions, I take for granted that those three elements provoke our both genuine and fictional emotional responses when we engage with reality shows. The reason of this active transition among beliefs and imagination by supposition appears as the result of instability among actual world truths and fictional world truths about the props of the reality shows. That is to say, the audience takes themselves to the structure of make-believe game as leaving the real world truths for the fictional world truths. Derek Matravers states this as saying that "A stipulation has to be made (or understood) that will serve as a function that takes us from truths about

the actual world (some proposition p) to truths within a game world (G(q)).”

(Matravers, 2017, p.9)

In order to carve those three components at their joints, consideration of what the audience thinks when they interact with those reality shows would draw a better picture for understanding the case.

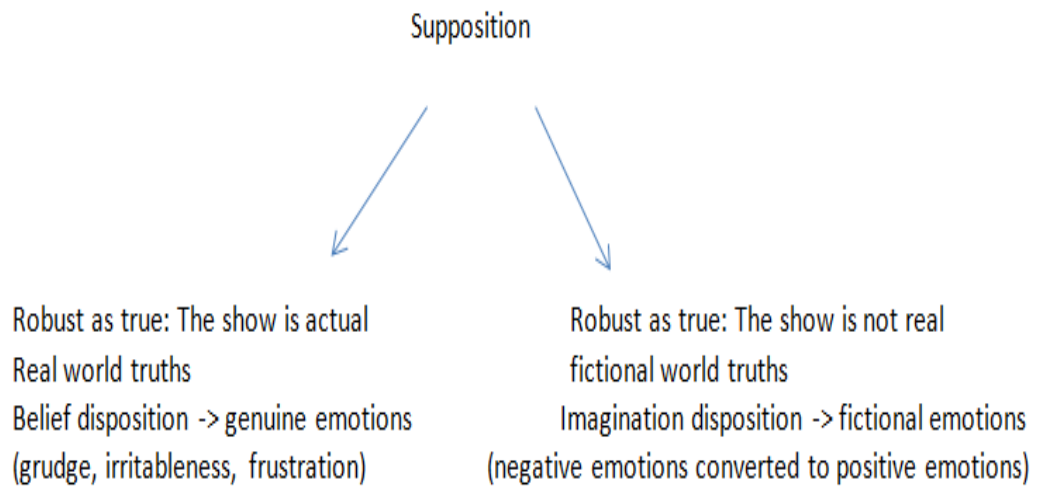
Suppose that Sally really likes engaging with those reality shows. Having started to watch the show, she *supposes* that what happens in the show is all natural streams of events without deliberately being interrupted by anyone or anything. Moreover, all participants in the show are real and they characterize their personal life and personality when they are on the stage. In a way, she *believes* that participants reflect their own individuality; therefore, she also *believes* that everything in the show is based on real streams of events as being contingent on the reason that it is a *reality* TV show. Under the effect of this type of belief which is evoked by supposition, emotional responses she has for the show can be characterized as genuine emotions. For instance, if the participant she is supporting and having sympathy is overwhelmed by other participants, she simultaneously experiences various forms of negative emotions such as grudge, irritableness, frustration etc. Note that since she is still under the effect of the belief that the show embraces and reflects the actuality, actual world truths serve as a function to her belief system. Therefore, those negative emotional responses make her cease to engage with the show by following an internal assessment of her emotions.

However, there are also some scenes she exposes to make her believe that the show is too smooth or awkward for a *reality* TV show. The show itself is from different ways too absurd or bizarre to be real. Therefore, she is, at that moment, captured by the

belief that most of the scenes must be edited or scripted. The cognitive element supposition again intervenes in her belief about the show and supposition deliberately alters her belief about the show in the way that she begins to *imagine* that participants in the show do not reflect characteristic features of their personality; therefore, she uses her cognitive imagination<sup>16</sup> that the show is not real. This C-imagination paves the way for her to have the belief, as in Charles' condition, that she is participating in a game of make-believe so that Sally also becomes a participant or prop in this game of make-believe as being an audience. As opposed to taking actual world truths as the reference point for her belief system, this time, she takes the fictional world truths as a reference point for imagination, but I assume that, under the effect of this type of belief which is also evoked by supposition and followed by imagination, emotional responses Sally has for the show can this time be characterized as fictional emotions. Her enjoyment seeing the participant she is supporting overwhelmed by others is induced by this reference point. Experiencing and feeling all emotions in different contexts through putting herself in their shoes produces certain pleasure in her mental activity even though some of them again can be regarded as negative emotions.

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<sup>16</sup> Cognitive imagination has been considered as a type of imagination by many philosophers in the literature. I'm here using the same way how Arcangeli uses the term C-imagination. She defines C-imagination as 'propositional representation without commitment to their truth.' (See Arcangeli, 2017)



*Figure 1. The interaction between imagination and belief through supposition.*

Belief, imagination and supposition are three core elements which become the reason for the emotional rollercoaster that occurs when Sally engages with reality shows. This is the reference point she takes for granted for the truth about the show and also makes a constant alteration while watching it. In a nutshell, it can be said about the problem that there is an epistemological and cognitive manner in the case of those shows from the perspective of the audience.

### **5.3 Discussion of the Theories of Emotion in the case of Reality Shows**

As was already mentioned above, what emotions are or what constitutes emotions are still a highly debated issue in both psychology and philosophy. The question I asked about fictional and genuine emotions in the introduction part brings about the requirement of the consideration about which theory of emotion I mention here.

Therefore, I state here that I completely take aside by holding the arguments put forth neither by cognitivists nor non-cognitivists among aforementioned theories. Moreover,

I assume that hybrid theories could be ranked in a higher position in terms of plausibility for the question what constitutes our emotions in the context of reality shows.

The reason why the case in the reality shows couldn't be involved in the theory of non-cognitivists is that it does not merely accentuate the lower-order processed emotions, namely basic emotions which could be involved under the name of evolutionary psychologists. According to non-cognitivists, instinctive physiological bodily response to environmental stimuli is emphasized and primary reason of emotional arousal. Even though non-cognitivists do not necessarily neglect cognitive assessment of the external stimuli, i.e. valence theory, they do not hold the belief on cognitive mediation of affective response as cognitivists do and cognitive mediation is one of the responsible triggering factors for the arousal of fictional emotions.

I take the cognitivists' argument on propositional attitudes for granted that the audience start to feel negative emotions as positive emotions when they use their imagination (make-believe). I assume that the cognitive imagination makes the audience 'see' the show by virtue of being in a different mental state and makes them arouse altered and valued emotions. On this point, it could be claimed that cognitivists' argument on propositional attitudes, thoughts, beliefs or judgmental approaches seems as a required component to value on emotions one holds. That is to say, cognitive mediation is the processor as to value negative emotions as positive emotions in the case of engaging with fiction, namely for those reality shows.

To put the manner in terms of the present account, when the audience engage with TV shows in question, evaluation on the actuality of them is the necessary cognitive process to develop certain beliefs and emotions here at and they need to be deliberate

or voluntary in some cases. That is to say, emotional response to those shows requires a cognitive mediation, rather than assessing the occurred emotions as the result of bodily reactions. For instance, excitement may be one of the emotional responses that the audience may realize on themselves; however, they would evaluate this excitement not because of their heart pumping faster or not because of increased awareness to the show; they would instead evaluate this emotional response by cause of cognitive assessment and construed response towards the show. Nevertheless, I also don't reject non-cognitivists' assumption on reflexive emotions which are the by-products of evolutionary genetic codes. That is to say, in order to arouse emotional response or to experience an affective response, I do not essentially hold the belief that there has to be a cognitive process; emotions which come along with reflexive actions are also emotional arousals and they can also be observed on the audience's behaviour as immediate gut reactions. Therefore, the emotional state in which the audience has couldn't be placed among both cognitivists and non-cognitivists.

In continuation of the arguments I claimed in the former paragraphs, different points given by cognitivists and non-cognitivists on what constitutes emotions can be unified in the same cluster of fictional and genuine emotions. I assume that when the audience engages with fiction, it is possible for them to experience emotions which arouse without a cognitive deliberation, namely immediate gut reactions, as it might happen in the genuine emotions. However, I also assume that emotions which require cognitive evaluation such as jealousy, embarrassment, envy etc. can also be experienced and categorized in both genuine and fictional emotions. Therefore, I believe that hybrid theories should be ranked in a higher position even in the case of reality shows.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

#### 6.1. Why Fictional Emotions are not *Sui Generis*

When Schellenberg describes the continuum thesis, one's mental state shows similarities to belief and she starts to take the imagined proposition to be true.

According to my interpretation of her idea, she states that the more one is immersed in imagination, the more there is a chance to occur belief-like mental state to some extent. For that reason, this relevant representation involves some extent belief-like and imagination-like state and it paves the way for the continuum among belief and imagination. In this regard, I accept the continuum thesis and I include one more cognitive faculty. I believe that the continuum takes place as the reason that one starts to take the imagined proposition to be true by way of *supposition*. That is to say, the mental state supposition makes one take the imagined proposition as something to be true and supposition makes one to have both belief-like and imagination-like state.

The continuum thesis put forth by Schellenberg makes a considerable justification why neither fictional emotions are *sui generis* nor they are reducible to real emotions. I initiated my argument by grounding on the idea that fictional emotions appears when there is the functional role of imagination and genuine emotions appears when there is the functional role of beliefs. Since I assume under the continuum thesis that one may



concurrently have belief-like and imagination-like mental states, subsequently there appears the case where she concurrently experiences both fictional and genuine emotions. In other words, since there is a continuum between imagination and belief, there is also continuum between fictional and genuine emotions. As a result of this phenomenon, as in the analogy on colour shades, one cannot distinguish what sort of emotion she experiences while engaging with fiction.

The nature of continuity between imagination and belief when one engages with fiction also comes from the reason of not being able to quarantine beliefs that one holds. In the continuum thesis Schellenberg argues, non-quarantined belief takes place when one is immersed in imagination. This also means that one is not aware of non-quarantined beliefs. The RCT I discussed in Chapter 5 also occurs as the result of not being able to quarantine one's belief from the real world truths. However, slightly different than Schellenberg's argument, I presume that one is aware of non-quarantined beliefs in the RCT. In short, the disposition of non-quarantined belief sets the stage for the continuum between imagination and belief.

## **6.2 Reconsideration of 'The Paradox of Fiction' Within 'The Continuum Thesis'**

My main concern in this master's thesis is not to resolve or reconsider the 'paradox of fiction' because as claiming that fictional emotion appears when one has the mental state imagination, I had regarded the way how broad cognitivists solve the paradox.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, I believe that the continuum thesis takes the debate on the paradox to another dimension. Therefore, in this chapter, I elucidate the paradox within the frame of the continuum thesis.

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<sup>17</sup> Not only belief, but also supposition or imagination can also induce emotional responses.

I proposed as considering the continuum thesis that one can concurrently experience both genuine and fictional emotions due to having different mental states. That is to say, the functional role of both belief-like and imagination-like may occur to some extent in one's mental state. When this thesis is mapped and reconsidered for the 'paradox of fiction', I assume that it requires reconsideration the three premises of the paradox. The debate on paradox arises from the inconsistency among aforementioned premises in the introduction part.

For the first premise, it can be stated that although one uses imagination when she engages in fiction through events, situations or characters, what triggers genuine emotions is the lessened role of belief-like mental state. Therefore, the remark I propose neither neglects Walton's rejection of imagined beliefs nor accepts his denial of being genuinely moved by fiction. (Walton, 1990) The rejection of the first premise also comes from the relation between motivational force and emotions. It has been argued that fictional emotions do not motivate one to get into action as genuine emotions do in most of the cases. I believe that having no motivation for taking into action results from a gain of roles characteristic of imagination, but this does not show complete absence of belief-like mental state. As was already mentioned in Chapter 4, the nature of imagination does not necessarily bring about the motivation for action.

The debate on the second premise revolves around the narrow cognitivists' argument on propositional attitudes. As I already discussed in Chapter 4, although one does not believe in the existence of the objects of emotion, whatever is imagined involves belief-like state to some extent due to imagined objects which come about from real world concepts. For instance, when one imagines about the existence of a unicorn, she thinks that imagined unicorn out of a form of a horse or horn she has already known before. Those already substantial concepts appear with a gain of roles characteristic of

imagination and a loss of roles characteristic of belief so that one can experience both genuine and fictional emotions. Schellenberg also shares the same view here. She states that:

Consider a subject who is imagining that she is a crocodile. She needs something to be a surrogate for the crocodile's jaws. Now assume that she believes that her arms stretched out in front of her, one hand on top of the other, would serve this purpose well. In order to act out her imaginings, she needs beliefs about her arms and she needs to assign to her arms the function of being crocodile jaws. Without doing this, she will not be able to act out her imaginings. (Schellenberg, 2013, p.503)

I assume that the argument depended on the continuum thesis is the most successful solution for the third premise in the paradox of fiction. As the thesis considers having imagining  $p$  and believing  $p$  concurrently, rather than believing  $p$  and not believing  $p$ , both mental states can function without causing any logical contradiction. Similar to the solution for the second premise, although one does not believe in the existence of fictional characters or events, one can imagine the existence of them, but at the same time believe in the non-existence of the fictional characters. That is to say, the gained role of imagination-like mental state may bring about the experience of both emotions.

### **6.3 Concluding Remarks**

Debate on what emotions are is still an unsettled issue in both psychology and philosophy. I believe that this ongoing debate even makes the question how we response to fictional characters and events more puzzling. Nonetheless, in this master's thesis, I contended to make a remark on the question whether fictional emotions are *sui generis* or they are reducible to real emotions. Although this actual

question relevant to both descriptive and normative side of the manner, I only discussed the problems related to descriptive part in this master's thesis. I believe that another particular article or thesis would be more fruitful and worth to consider for further discussions on the normative side of the manner. Moreover, normativity of emotional reactions that the reality show audience gives when they engage with those shows could be a chapter in that.

To summarize the thesis, having being discussed on which theory of emotion I take into account here, I initiated my argument by grounding on the idea that fictional emotions appears when there is the functional role of imagination and genuine emotions appears when there is the functional role of beliefs. I assumed by reconsidering the continuum thesis put forth by Susanna Schellenberg here that since there is a continuum between belief-like and imagination-like mental states; subsequently there is also a continuum between fictional and genuine emotions. As a supportive case to the continuum thesis, I articulated the continuity among belief-like and imagination-like mental states through supposition when one engages with reality TV shows. As being relevant to this hypothetical phenomenon, my main aim in the thesis is not to reconsider the paradox of fiction, but I eventually disputed that the continuum thesis takes the unsolved paradox of fiction to another extent and offers a different way of consideration to each premise in the paradox.

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