Engaging with Counter-Moral Fictions: A Contextual Approach
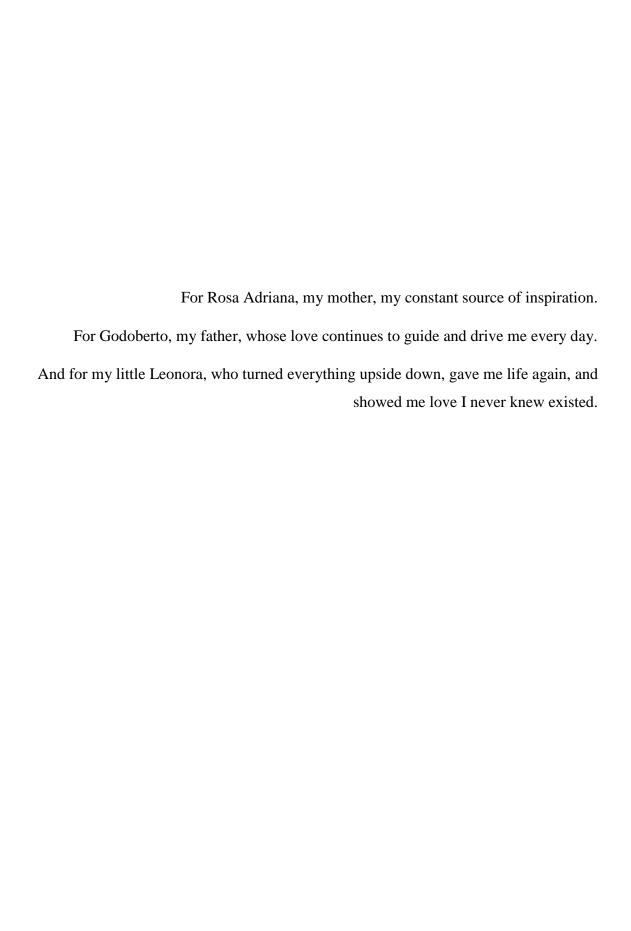
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Abstract

In order to understand our complex engagement with counter-moral fictions, and to assess it adequately, we must acknowledge that there are different types of counter-moral fictions. In particular, there is an important distinction between fictional and actual immorality in counter-moral fictions. Appreciators engage with fictional immorality because the affective responses elicited by the narrative allow for a discontinuity in their evaluative attitudes. While these affective responses constitute genuine emotions, they contrast with the emotions appreciators would normally experience in real-life scenarios that involve moral deviance. This is possible because the criteria governing emotional responses to merely fictional immorality do not include ethical appropriateness.

Further, the distinction between fictional and actual immorality not only impacts how appreciators engage with counter-moral fictions, but how we should assess both the works and our imaginative and emotional engagement with them. Only instances of actual immorality can be legitimate candidates to be ethically criticised; but this ethical assessment depends on the extra-fictional commitments of the attitude expressed by the work. For this reason, the ethical assessment of actual immorality can only be understood as an extrinsic assessment of the work in a specific context that gives the work certain extra-fictional pretensions. We should thus defend contextual autonomism in regards to the ethical criticism of fiction. Finally, appreciators' responses to fiction can only be legitimately ethically assessed when they are expressive of their actual attitudes and motivations. Nevertheless, in these cases the object of the ethical assessment are not the responses to fiction, but appreciators' actual character. Therefore responses to fiction cannot be assessed *qua* responses to fiction, and we should defend response amoralism.

For Rosa Adriana, my mother, my constant source of inspiration.

For Godoberto, my father, whose love continues to guide and drive me every day.

And for my little Leonora, who turned everything upside down, gave me life again, and showed me love I never knew existed.

Acknowledgements

Contents

Introduction

In his *Republic*, Plato argues that mimetic arts should be banned from the city because of their negative effects on moral education. On the one hand, he argues in book III that the imitation of vicious characters could have ill effects on the virtuous men performing tragedies. On the other hand, in book X he makes a more general argument against mimetic arts concerning not only performers, but spectators: while enjoying tragedy, otherwise virtuous men 'shut down' reason and let their other impulses run wild. For Plato, the problem is not only that mimetic art is inferior to truth, but that poetry appeals to the inferior part of the soul by eliciting intense emotional responses in audience members. The poet does not only nourish the irrational part of the soul, but destroys the rational part. And this is the case not only for vicious members of the audience, but for virtuous appreciators as well: the aesthetic power of poetry is such that it emotionally moves even those who are virtuous; and in moving them, the irrational part of their soul takes over. Even more so, in engaging with poetry appreciators are not only moved by the aesthetic force of the work, but they enjoy the intense emotional responses elicited by the poet. The aesthetic value of the works is directly tied to their ability to move appreciators insofar as we praise those poets who move us the most.

Plato's radical condemnation of the mimetic arts has since been abandoned. On the contrary, it is now widely believed that art, and literature in particular, plays a positive role in our moral education. In her *Love's Knowledge* (1990), Martha Nussbaum argues that literature contributes to our moral lives by extending our far too limited lived experiences. Literature preserves the complexity of real life, and it aids appreciators in attuning their moral perception. Novels, such as those by Henry James or Marcel Proust, can work as guides because they help us in focusing our attention on relevant details. Nöel Carroll also argues that art helps us in exercising our moral perception and understanding (Carroll, 2000). According to Carroll, art contributes to enlarging appreciators' moral understanding because it teaches how to apply moral norms to concrete situations by making us reflect on the vivid scenarios brought to life by works of fiction. Moreover, it is the same ability to elicit intense emotional responses previously condemned by Plato that has been the focus of reconsideration of the value of art in our moral lives. Nussbaum, for example, argues that literature contributes to our moral lives by encouraging empathy and compassion, and by familiarizing appreciators with worldviews different from their own.

However, arguing that art can play a positive role in our moral lives leaves open the possibility that art expressing immoral views might have a negative impact on appreciators' moral

education. That is, even if some artworks might be good for our moral lives, it is still possible to claim that some other artworks might have a corrupting power on appreciators. More importantly, some might argue that these moral considerations should play an important part of our engagement with works of art, and their assessment. In his paper "In praise of immoral art", Daniel Jacobson defines moralism as "the tendency to let moral considerations take over the entirety of evaluative space" (Jacobson, 1997, 156). He identifies two different versions of moralism: Platonic and Humean moralism. Platonic moralism argues that the mimetic arts are dangerous, and should be banned, because of the corrupting powers they have in their audience in virtue of the strong emotional responses they produce. A moderate version of Platonic moralism, nevertheless, would argue that while not all mimetic artworks should be condemned in virtue of their corrupting powers, those artworks that express immoral views are dangerous because they convince audiences to enter into sentiments that should be avoided. For a moderate Platonic moralist, the danger of artworks that express immoral views is that their aesthetic force is such that they manage to move appreciators, leaving them at risk of being seduced by the immoral attitudes advanced by the work. Moderate Platonic moralism argues that, precisely because immoral works can capture audiences, moral considerations should take over the evaluation of art: ethical merits and demerits count when determining the aesthetic value of works.

While the moderate Platonic moralist argues that moral considerations should take over the assessment of works, the Humean moralist argues that moral considerations take over the engagement with works as well. Humean moralism argues that appreciators take into account moral considerations not only when evaluating works, but when engaging with them. Contrary to Plato who argues that poetry moves the irrational part of the soul even in virtuous appreciators, Hume argues that literary works require a very violent effort of the imagination to get us to enter into sentiments different to our own. That is, Hume seems to think that a virtuous person would not be seduced by artworks that express immoral attitudes. Moreover, Hume argues that the fact that audiences cannot be easily convinced to adopt sentiments different to their own counts against the aesthetic force and value of a work. A Humean moralist would thus argue that artworks expressing immoral views are problematic not only because they express immoral views, but because moral audiences find it difficult to engage with them insofar as their imagination needs to make a violent effort to sympathise with the sentiments expressed by the work. According to this view, moral considerations take over the aesthetic

assessment of the work because the immoral attitudes expressed impact the ability of the work to move appreciators; ethical demerits thus count as aesthetic demerits as well.

Jacobson identifies as Humean moralists those positions that argue that an artwork's moral defects render it aesthetically defective because audiences fail to respond in the way intended by the work. For example, Noël Carroll's moderate moralism counts as Humean moralism because he claims that moral flaws "will count as an aesthetic defect when it actually deters the response to which the work aspires" (Carroll, 1996, 134). But it is also interesting to note that some accounts of what has been called 'The Puzzle of Imaginative Resistance' would fall under the scope of Humean moralism. As it was originally formulated, the puzzle of imaginative resistance noted, following Hume, that while appreciators engage with deviant factual scenarios in fiction, they encounter imaginative difficulties when trying to engage with morally deviant scenarios in fiction.

Against both Humean and Platonic moralists, who argue that moral considerations should be part of the relevant considerations when assessing works of art, autonomist positions argue that a work expressing immoral views should have no bearing over our evaluation of art *qua* art. Autonomism argues that while it is certainly possible to ethically assess works of art, such an assessment is actually irrelevant for our understanding of art. That is, autonomist positions argue that the ethical value of a work of art is irrelevant for its aesthetic and artistic value. For example, Clive Bell argues that while we certainly can assess the ethical value of a work, we do not treat it as an artwork in such an evaluation. According to Bell, "moral judgements about the value of particular works of art have nothing to do with their artistic value" (Bell, 1987, 116).

Given this picture, when examining our engagement with works of fiction that express immoral views, and their role in our moral lives, we are left with three possible approaches. We could assume the Platonic version of moralism and claim that works of fiction that express immoral views have corrupting powers because they are able to seduce appreciators and convince them to adopt attitudes they would normally condemn. We could, on the other hand, deny the seductive powers of immoral works and assume the Humean version of moralism to claim that moral defects not only affect the aesthetic value of works, but they deter our engagement with fictional narratives. Or we could assume the autonomist position and claim that, even when immoral works have the power to seduce us and convince us to adopt attitudes we would

normally condemn, moral considerations should have no bearing on our engagement and our evaluation of works of fiction.

Unfortunately, all of these options seem to paint an overly simplistic picture of our engagement with works of fiction that explore immoral perspectives. Autonomist positions fail to see that not only do audiences sometimes take into account moral considerations when engaging with works of fiction, but that they are justified in doing so given the relevance and cultural impact of fictional narratives. Humean views, on the other hand, fail to see that audiences in fact do engage with some works of fiction that invite them to enter into sentiments radically different from their own; and, even more so, Humean accounts fail to see that some artworks' aesthetic value is enhanced precisely in virtue of their moral defects, as Matthew Kieran (2006) and Anne Eaton's (2012) immoralist positions point out. Finally, a Platonic account fails to effectively explain what the corrupting powers of fiction could mean: how are appreciators' moral attitudes affected when they engage with immoral perspectives in fictional narratives? The aim of this work is to present a more nuanced account of our engagement with works of fiction that explore deviant moral perspectives.

Before going further, it is important to clarify the relation between fiction, imagination and emotion. In *Mimesis as Make-Believe* (1990), Kendall Walton argues that the notion of fiction is necessarily tied to the notions of make-believe and imagination. According to his view, a work of fiction is that which can be used as a prop in a game of make-believe. Other authors, such as Gregory Currie (1990), Peter Lamarque and Stein Olsen (1994), and David Davies (1996), agree with Walton that the notion of fiction is tied to the notion of imagination. But they disagree in thinking that a work of fiction is simply that which is *used* as a prop in a game of make-believe. They argue that a work of fiction is that which is *created* to be used in a game of make-believe. The thesis assumes this characterization of a fictional narrative as a narrative that is created to prescribe appreciators to imagine a given scenario. As we will see throughout the thesis, this original intention to prescribe appreciators to make-believe is of utmost relevance when examining immorality in fiction.

Fictional narratives prescribe appreciators to imagine a set of propositions, and in imagining the propositions prescribed by the work appreciators engage in a game of make-believe. Walton thinks that engaging with works of fiction constitutes a guided imaginative endeavour in which appreciators imagine what is prescribed by the work. And this guided imaginative endeavour does not only involve imagining a set of propositions, but imagining *from the inside* the set of

propositions prescribed by the work: appreciators imagine themselves interacting with the fictional world, they imagine the fictional events as if they were experiencing them from within the fictional world. This explains, for Walton, that the imagining that takes place during the game of make-believe does not merely involve entertaining a set of propositions, but it involves vividly imagining certain fictional events.

It is not necessary, nevertheless, to agree with Walton that imaginatively engaging with fiction involves imagining from the inside. Richard Moran (1994) criticises Walton's notion of imagining from the inside because he thinks it actually fails to account for the vivid character of imaginatively engaging with fiction. Moran thinks that imagining from the inside can also be reduced to entertaining a set of fictional propositions, only this time the propositions are about the participant, about what she is feeling and experiencing. Moran emphasizes instead the role of the work's expressive features in appreciators' imaginative engagement with artworks. When engaging with fiction, appreciators' imaginative activity consists in more than just entertaining a set of propositions because appreciators respond to how these propositions are presented by the work's aesthetic features. According to Moran, the work's expressive qualities do not "usually contribute to making something fictionally true, but they introduce elements that are often impossible to imagine as part of any fictional world. And yet their contribution to what the audience feels is direct and profound" (Moran, 1994, 84).

Moran is right in noting that to defend an imaginative engagement with fiction that involves something more than just entertaining a set of propositions it is not necessary to claim that we imagine from the inside. First, because it is not clear that when engaging with fiction appreciators imagine themselves interacting with the fictional world and characters. Second, because even imagining of themselves that they interact with the fictional world and characters does not necessarily imply that they vividly imagine the fictional events. What is important to note is that imaginatively engaging with fiction involves an imaginative activity that includes affective responses from those participating in the game of make-believe. The notion of vivid imagination that is involved in our engagement with fiction involves affectively responding to what is being narrated by the work. Engaging with fiction is not only about the imaginings that are prescribed by the work, but about the manner in which these imaginings are prescribed.

Thus, this thesis assumes that engaging with fiction means engaging in an imaginative endeavour prescribed by the works of fiction. And it further assumes that this imaginative engagement involves being emotionally engaged with the fictional narrative. I agree with

Moran that this emotional engagement with fictional narratives is possible thanks not only to the content of the fiction, to the imaginings prescribed by the narrative, but to the modes of representation, to the aesthetic features of the work. Appreciators are moved by the way in which the fictional content is presented, and so they emotionally engage with the work. If we look back to Plato's condemnation of poetry, it is precisely this sort of imaginative endeavour that is problematic.

Counter-moral fictions are not problematic simply because they prescribe appreciators to imagine content-immoral perspectives, but because they prescribe appreciators to imagine content-immoral perspectives with the corresponding affective attitudes. More importantly perhaps, the sort of imaginative endeavour counter-moral fictions engage appreciators in does not only involve content-immoral imaginings and responses, but it involves the expectation of gaining aesthetic pleasure from the imaginative engagement. It could be said, therefore, that counter-moral fictions are problematic in three aspects: (1) they prescribe content-immoral imaginings, (2) they prescribe content-immoral responses, and (3) they do so with the expectation that these prescriptions will generate aesthetic pleasure in appreciators. This thesis works under the assumption that when engaging with counter-moral fictions, appreciators knowingly and willingly engage in an imaginative project that involves imagining with feeling morally deviant perspectives; and they do so to gain aesthetic pleasure from this content-immoral imaginative project.

I want to note, before moving onto the argument of the thesis, that instead of talking about 'immoral fictions' or 'immoral art', as Jacobson does, I use the term 'counter-moral fictions' to refer to works of fiction that endorse morally deviant perspectives, and that prescribe appreciators to adopt morally deviant attitudes during their imaginative engagement. The term 'counter-moral' is meant to convey that the perspective manifested in the work is morally inaccurate or inappropriate, that is, that the content of the views explored by the work are immoral. But at the same time, I refer to 'counter-moral' rather than 'immoral fictions' because I want to remain neutral regarding the evaluative strength of the term. I refrain from talking about 'immoral fictions' precisely because part of the aim of the thesis is to determine whether we can legitimately ethically assess immorality in fiction. In addition to using the term 'counter-moral' I use the term 'content-immoral' to convey that certain imaginings and responses represent morally inappropriate or inaccurate views, but to remain neutral on whether they can be properly morally assessed. That is, I refer to content-immoral imaginings and

responses because during the imaginative engagement with counter-moral fictions appreciators experience responses whose content conflicts with the responses they would normally endorse.

As I said before, this work aims at presenting a more nuanced account of our engagement with works of fiction that explore deviant moral perspectives. The main argument of the thesis is as follows. In order to understand our complex engagement with counter-moral fictions, and to assess it adequately, we must acknowledge that there are different types of counter-moral fictions. In particular, there is an important distinction between fictional and actual immorality in counter-moral fictions. Appreciators usually engage with instances of fictional immorality, but encounter difficulties in engaging with actual immorality. Appreciators engage with fictional immorality because the affective responses elicited by the narrative allow for a discontinuity in their evaluative attitudes. While these affective responses constitute genuine emotions, they contrast with the emotions appreciators would normally experience in real-life scenarios that involve moral deviance. This is possible because the criteria governing emotional responses to merely fictional immorality do not include ethical appropriateness. Further, the distinction between fictional and actual immorality not only impacts how appreciators engage with counter-moral fictions, but how we should assess both the works and our imaginative and emotional engagement with them. Only instances of actual immorality can be legitimate candidates to be ethically criticised; but this ethical assessment depends on the extra-fictional commitments of the attitude expressed by the work. For this reason, the ethical assessment of actual immorality can only be understood as an extrinsic assessment on the work in a specific context that gives the work certain extra-fictional pretensions. We should thus defend contextual autonomism in regards to the ethical criticism of fiction. Finally, appreciators' responses to fiction can only be legitimately ethically assessed when they are expressive of their actual attitudes and motivations. Nevertheless, in these cases the object of the ethical assessment are not the responses to fiction, but appreciators' actual character. Therefore responses to fiction cannot be assessed *qua* responses to fiction, and we should defend response amoralism.

From this rough exposition of the argument it is possible to see that the thesis explores two dimensions of appreciators' engagement with counter-moral fictions: a descriptive and an evaluative dimension. On the descriptive dimension, I defend the claim that appreciators can and do have rich imaginative engagements with some works of fiction that endorse counter-moral perspectives. I side with the Platonic view and argue against Humean moralism that works of fiction that endorse counter-moral perspectives have the power to move appreciators,

and to convince them to adopt what they would normally regard as inappropriate attitudes toward fictional events. However, on the evaluative dimension, I argue that not all works of fiction that endorse counter-moral perspectives are legitimate candidates to be ethically criticised. That is, I argue that a work's moral defects do not necessarily impact its aesthetic value. Further, I argue that appreciators who adopt attitudes they would normally regard as inappropriate, cannot be ethically assessed in virtue of their imaginative engagement with merely fictional perspectives. That is, I argue that responses to merely fictional scenarios cannot be legitimately ethically assessed qua responses to fiction. In what follows I present in more detail the structure of the thesis.

Chapter One is an introductory chapter that examines counter-moral fictions. This chapter presents a taxonomy of counter-moral fictions and proposes a distinction between fictional and actual immorality. Here I also explore the notions of *perspective* and *framework*, and their role in our imaginative engagement with fiction to understand how we can identify counter-moral perspectives in fiction.

The rest of the thesis is divided into two parts that correspond to the two dimensions identified before. The first part argues for the view that the aesthetic powers of what I call counter-moral fictions convince appreciators to adopt a morally deviant perspective during their encounter with the work with the corresponding responses. This first part corresponds to chapters two to four. Chapter Two examines the accounts that claim that we have difficulties engaging with deviant moral perspectives in fiction because we import our evaluative attitudes. This chapter argues that these accounts assume what I call 'The continuity thesis', and that they cannot explain the complexity of our engagement with different types of counter-moral content. Chapter Three argues that certain elements of a fictional narrative provide a fictional context that enables a discontinuity in our cognitive-affective attitudes when engaging with counter-moral fictions. This fictional context enables emotional asymmetries that guarantee our non-moral allegiance to counter-moral perspectives in fiction. Chapter Four argues that, while emotional responses to fiction are genuine emotions, emotional asymmetries happen because the fictional context of certain narratives allows for criteria of appropriateness to differ from the criteria of appropriateness of emotional responses to actual scenarios.

The second part argues for the normative claim that counter-moral fictions cannot be legitimately ethically criticised and that appreciators' responses to counter-moral fictions cannot be legitimately ethically assessed. This second part defends a moderate version of

autonomism that I call 'contextual autonomism' in regards to ethical criticism, and argues for response amoralism in regards to the ethical assessment of appreciators' responses. Part two of the thesis corresponds to chapter five and six. Chapter Five argues that only instances of actual immorality can be legitimate candidates to be ethically criticised, but that in these cases the real target of the ethical judgement is not the fictional narrative itself. I argue that we can only aspire to an extrinsic ethical assessment of a narrative that depends entirely on contextual considerations: in certain contexts, we have reasons to regard certain works of fiction as morally defective and to reject them, but these reasons are external to the narratives. Finally, Chapter Six argues that deviant responses to fictional scenarios are so dissociated from practical and moral concerns that we should conclude that our responses during imaginative engagement with fiction cannot be ethically assessed.

The contextual account that I will defend throughout the thesis is attractive because it can explain our engagement with different types of counter-moral fictions, while accommodating the demands of moralism, immoralism and autonomism. But more importantly, this contextual account aims at showing that it is possible to advance a socially committed critical practice of fictional narratives without sacrificing the complex relation between our moral lives and our artistic practices.

1. A taxonomy of counter-moral fictions

D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* is often lauded as a seminal work in the history of cinematography. An adaptation of Thomas F. Dixon Jr.'s *The Clansman*, the film follows two families on opposite sides of the American civil war, and the impact of the Republican Reconstruction movement on the American South. The movie presents a dramatized version of the founding of the Ku Klux Klan as a movement that sought to rescue the nation from the generalised disorder brought about by the recognition of black Americans' equal rights as citizens. In particular, the movie contends that the Reconstruction movement promoted black supremacy and racial impurity through the introduction of a law that approved interracial marriage. The movie has been acclaimed as technically impeccable, and is recognised as pioneering many of the cinematic resources that makeup the cinematographic language today. Yet, for all the aesthetic merits of the work, for all it has been praised as a cornerstone of filmmaking, I find myself unable of engaging with the film, of responding with the prescribed sympathy for members of the Ku Klux Klan. The movie's aesthetic resources are aimed at portraying black American characters as corrupt and evil, and members of the Ku Klux Klan as heroes asserting justice and saving the great American Nation. The birth of the KKK is hailed in the movie for allowing the North and South to be brought together again with the goal of fighting the brutality of black Americans' resentment. One of the earlier versions of the film showed an intertitle that read "The former enemies of the North and South are united again in common defence of their Aryan birthright". The "birth of a nation" refers to the resurgence of White power as the force that guides America. The movie voices real views held by real people to this day. White supremacist groups are alive and well. Even more so, the movie has acquired a new significance in light of the re-emergence of radical groups across the world today.

The Birth of a Nation is an easy example of what is at stake when appreciators encounter immorality in fictional narratives. But works of fiction explore immorality in a variety of ways. Consider now Chan-wook Park's *Lady Vengeance.* The film follows the story of Geum-ja Lee, a woman seeking revenge after being wrongly incarcerated for the kidnap and murder of a boy. After spending years preparing her revenge, she realizes that Mr. Baek, the English school teacher who betrayed and set her up, managed to get away with the murder of four more kids. Geum-ja decides to sacrifice her own revenge and contacts the families broken by Mr. Baek to let them decide his fate. They argue against a proper trial and instead proceed to torture the man who robbed them of their children. Park makes torture appealing: not only does he manage

to make appreciators overlook Baek's suffering, but brings out in the audience a strange sense of anticipation and, quite frankly, excitement. The eagerness of the participants, both the families and the viewers, is exacerbated by the dark comedic tones of the preparation scenes. Park's is the vivid and engaging revenge of the otherwise harmless and helpless parents, siblings, grandparents. The violence of the scenes that follow may make one shriek; but, truth to be told, the feeling throughout is that justice is being served. I do not believe in violence, let alone torture. I firmly believe that everyone deserves a fair trial. But while watching *Lady Vengeance* I wanted Mr. Baek to be harmed. I nodded when the families involved agreed that they could do as they wanted with Mr. Baek as long as he was kept alive until every family had had a chance to make him hurt; and I shared the feeling of relief while they were eating cake after getting rid of the body. When watching *Lady Vengeance*, I had no trouble adopting a moral outlook that I do not actually endorse. The pleasure I experience with the torture of Mr. Baek is not something that haunts me.

The film invites appreciators to passionately endorse the torture of Mr. Baek during the duration of the film. Contrary to *The Birth of a Nation*, nevertheless, Park should not be thought of as actually advocating for torture. But while in some cases it is easy to see whether works of fiction endorse the moral flaws explored by their perspectives, we can find more complex interactions between a work's immoral perspective and actually held immoral views. For example, *The Wire,* HBO's crime drama series, has been widely praised by critics for its portrayal of urban inequality in America. The show explores the complex interaction of issues of race and poverty in Baltimore. Season four and five, for example, follow four black American boys studying the eighth grade, and the narrative aims at exposing how their lives are irreparably marked by structural injustices. But *The Wire* has one important moral failing that has been largely ignored by critics. For all the show brings forward the bleak reality of inequality in the so-called post-racial America, it also manages to ignore the issues faced by black American women of the same background. The television series completely erases black women from the narrative. It fails to acknowledge that they are victims of specific kinds of structural injustices that stem from the complex interaction of gender, race and class. This criticism could be easily dismissed by noting that this is simply not the aim of the show. But the truth is that the show contributes to the invisibility of black women and their erasure from public narratives. While I might not notice the implicit immoral attitude found in the work during my engagement with it, it certainly causes unease when I look back on it. And given the

deep issues of racial and gender inequality faced by black women in America, the show's erasure of their voices should be certainly be regarded as an important moral failing.

It is clear then that immorality in fiction comes in many forms. The many ways in which we find immorality in fiction definitely impacts how we respond to the works, how we evaluate them, and how we evaluate ourselves for engaging or failing to engage with them. As I said in the introduction, the aim of the thesis is to explore how audiences engage with radically different moral outlooks in fiction, and how deviant perspectives, and our engagement with them should be assessed. Given this picture, it is necessary to identify what should be regarded as a deviant perspective in fiction, and which moral flaws are relevant for the analysis that will follow in the rest of the thesis. This first chapter examines the different types of counter-moral content that we can find in works of fiction, and whether these moral flaws should be considered as part of the perspective advanced by fictional narratives.

In the first section of the chapter I present a categorisation of counter-moral fictions. I advance a distinction between fictional and actual immorality in counter-moral fictions that emphasizes the quarantining effect of the former. I examine the way in which fictional and actual immorality can be found in works of fiction, as immoral perspectives and immoral worlds or contexts. The second and third sections examine possible objections to my categorization of counter-moral fictions. The first objection argues that for a narrative to truly count as immoral, it needs to make deviant moral claims true in the fictional world, and endorse them. I call this the alethic objection. The alethic objection questions the distinction between immoral perspectives and immoral worlds. However, I argue that this first objection downplays the importance of the notions of framework and prescribed responses in the imaginative engagement with fictions.

The second objection to my categorisation of counter-moral fictions argues that, even if we take into consideration the notion of a framework, for a work of fiction to truly count as immoral we would need to be able to identify an immoral manifested attitude. I call this the manifested attitude objection. This objection questions the distinction between fictional and actual immorality because it argues that only instances of actual immorality could be considered truly immoral. I respond to this objection by proposing a distinction between fictional and extra-fictional perspectives in works of fiction, and I argue that the taxonomy tracks this distinction.

1.1 The diversity of counter-moral fictions

From the examples presented above it seems clear that immorality can be found in works of fiction in different ways. Sometimes, as it is the case with *Lady Vengeance*, immorality is meant to be contained in the fictional worlds inasmuch as the narrative doesn't intend to impact appreciators' actual attitudes. Other times the immorality explored by the narrative is meant to transcend the boundaries of fiction, as is the case for *The Birth of a Nation*; the narrative explicitly endorses white supremacist groups in America. And yet we find some other narratives, as in the case of *The Wire*, that might present traces of real immoral views which nonetheless are not directly addressed or endorsed by the fiction. These differences impact appreciators' imaginative activity, but they also have implications for the assessment of the works and our engagement with them.

For this reason, I believe it is important to distinguish between merely fictional and actual immorality in counter-moral fictions. In what follows, I propose a classification of counter-moral fictions based on the nature of their immoral content. This classification informs my analysis of our imaginative engagement with immorality in fiction, and its assessment in the rest of the thesis.[1]

1.1.1 Fictional immorality

Fictional immorality refers to the prescription of imaginings involving a perspective the agents (both the author and members of the audience) take to be immoral. Works of fiction that present merely fictional immorality prescribe appreciators to adopt a deviant perspective, with the corresponding deviant responses, during the imaginative engagement. Fictional immorality is quarantined to the fictional world because the immoral content includes *fictional* prescriptions only: in these cases, the narrative does not include claims about the actual state of the world. The counter-moral prescriptions, therefore, are only relevant during the imaginative engagement with the narrative. Chan-wook Park's *Sympathy for Lady Vengeance*, for instance, invites appreciators to passionately endorse the torture of Mr. Baek in the hands of the families whose children he kidnapped and murdered. The raw violence of the torture scenes contrasts

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[1] Because the thesis examines our engagement with immorality in fiction, I only consider those instances in which appreciators acknowledge the counter-moral character of the prescribed imaginings. The only exception are those cases that I will call borderline fictions in which appreciators acknowledge the counter-moral character of the prescriptions but they also note that other appreciators might not realise the attitudes are counter-moral.

with the dark comedic notes of the families' anticipation, and thus lends the narrative an almost playful tone. Nevertheless, Park is not advocating for "an eye for an eye", and the prescribed perspective[2], that is the attitude toward the narrated events, should be seen as quarantined in the fictional world.

Works of fiction that present merely fictional immorality are created *as deviant*. In these cases the author is aware of the counter-moral nature of the prescriptions. The narrative prescribes counter-moral scenarios as counter-moral; and the author intends for these scenarios to be received by the audience as counter-moral. This type of counter-moral content is thus prescribed deliberately as counter-moral. Fictional immorality fulfills the following conditions: a) it involves the prescription of a counter-moral perspective, and b) the author recognizes and the audience is put in a position where they can recognize the counter-moral character of the prescriptions, thus excluding those cases where an actual immoral attitude normalizes fictional immorality.

Works of fiction, nevertheless, not only include prescribed imaginings, but they include a set of prescribed responses to the narrated events. As said before, fictional immorality prescribes a deviant perspective with the corresponding deviant responses. These responses contrast with appreciators' actual attitudes, and would be regarded as immoral if they were directed at a similar scenario in real life. But since merely fictional immorality requires appreciators to acknowledge the deviant nature of the prescriptions, these responses are quarantined to the fictional scenario. If these responses are regarded as deviant by appreciators it is precisely because they would not approve of them in the actual world.

What is important to emphasize is that fictional immorality is detached from practical concerns, not only because we cannot act on fictional events, but because the prescribed responses concern the fictional world only. Because the author and the audiences are aware of the deviant nature of the perspective and the corresponding responses, the objects of the imaginative activity are imagined entities only. In this sense, the narrative prescribes *content-immoral* imaginings and *content-immoral* responses. What I argue throughout the thesis is that these responses are content-*immoral* in that they involve attitudes that are morally inappropriate, that are recognized as morally deviant; but they are *content*-immoral in that, although they can be evaluated as morally inappropriate, they are not properly immoral because they are not actually

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[2] In section 1.2 I explore in depth the notion of a narrative's prescribed perspective and its role in our imaginative engagement with immorality in fiction.

endorsed nor are they directed at actual events and entities. So, in addition to the two previous conditions, instances of fictional immorality are those that c) prescribe content-immoral responses.

Merely fictional immorality in counter-moral fictions can be found in different ways. First as cases of counter-moral fictional perspectives; and second as cases of counter-moral fictional worlds. By counter-moral fictional worlds I refer to those narratives that ask appreciators to imagine a world governed by deviant moral principles, while cases of counter-moral fictional perspectives refer to those narratives that simply prescribe a counter-moral point of view toward the narrated events. I will now go over these two forms of merely fictional immorality.

A) Immoral perspective

Works of fiction featuring a *counter-moral fictional perspective* are those that prescribe appreciators to adopt a deviant perspective during their imaginative engagement. But in these cases the deviant fictional perspective is presented as counter-moral *within* the fictional world as well. Appreciators are thus invited to engage with a fictional perspective that is fictionally counter-moral, a perspective that is deviant *also within* the fictional world. In these cases of fictional immorality, although the perspective is presented as counter-moral within the fictional world, the audience is asked to engage with counter-moral responses that would be considered inappropriate both in the fictional and the actual world. A counter-moral fictional perspective presents morally flawed characters in a sympathetic light. The perspective prescribes strong pro-attitudes toward characters that are presented as immoral within the world of the narrative. To do this, the fictional perspective emphasizes morally irrelevant attractive features to manipulate appreciators' responses. Appreciators overlook the moral flaws in favour of immoral features that are presented as sympathetic by the perspective. In these cases, appreciators engage with a deviant perspective qua fictionally immoral.

In this category we find narratives that feature what A. W. Eaton (2012) has identified as rough heroes, such as AMC's television series *Breaking Bad*. When appreciators are first introduced to Walter White, he is portrayed as a sympathetic character: he is a brilliant man trapped in an unfulfilling and underpaid job, a tragic hero haunted by bad fortune and death. Everything about *Breaking Bad* is designed to make appreciators feel that White is trapped in a meaningless existence: from Albuquerque's dry landscape to the students' indifference to his teachings. This is why Heisenberg's (White's criminal alter ego) genius outweighs his criminal

behavior. And once the appreciator has come to accept that White is a trapped genius, she is willing to justify any wrongdoing just to see Heisenberg succeed as he deserves. *Breaking Bad* actually tests appreciators to see how far they are willing to play along with a perspective that roots for a bad guy: one of the most interesting elements of the series is that each season presents audiences with an increasingly immoral Walter White. Although the original straightforward sympathy felt for the character vanishes, audiences still want to see him succeed, regardless of how immoral his actions might be. Appreciators are not asked to imagine a fictional world in which Heisenberg's actions are acceptable; they are, nevertheless, asked to engage with a perspective that makes Heisenberg appealing, and that will ultimately lead them to overlook immoral attitudes and actions.

Most fictional narratives include morally flawed characters. But rough heroes, such as Walter White, are not simply morally flawed characters, they are morally flawed protagonists. Even more so, they are morally flawed protagonists who demand appreciators' allegiance. But it's important to keep in mind that rough heroes are distinct from antiheroes. Antiheroes are protagonists that lack traditional heroic qualities and that are morally flawed in some respects; these flaws, however, are outweighed by their moral virtues: antiheroes might be rough around the edges, but they ultimately aim at the greater good (Carroll, 2008; Eaton, 2010, 2012). On the contrary, rough heroes' moral flaws cannot simply be written off as a kooky feature of their overall good character. During the series final episode "Felina", White finally admits to his wife that all the wrongdoing was done not for the sake of his family, but for him: "I did it for me. I liked it. I was good at it. And… I was really… I was alive". I believe the same thing can be said for appreciators: although at first it might seem that their sympathy for White is grounded on his concern for his family's wellbeing, in the end appreciators come to see that what truly makes White appealing as a rough hero are his deep moral flaws that are revealed throughout the series. Eaton thus identifies five features of the rough hero (2012, 284): (1) his flaws are grievous, (2) his flaws are an integral part of his personality, (3) he fully intends to be bad and is remorseless, (4) the audience is not prescribed to forgive him or dismiss his actions as the result of misfortune, weakness or ignorance, and (5) his vices are not outweighed by other more redeeming features.

B) Counter-moral fictional world

Other cases of fictional narratives do not only aim at presenting an counter-moral perspective in a sympathetic light, but present a deviant perspective that is *fictionally* normalized. Works of fiction that feature counter-moral fictional worlds prescribe appreciators to adopt a deviant perspective that is not regarded as counter-moral within the fictional world. In cases of counter-moral fictional worlds, appreciators are asked to imagine a deviant world governed by deviant moral principles. Fictional narratives that present an counter-moral fictional world do not simply present a perspective that emphasizes morally irrelevant features to manipulate appreciators' responses, but rather they construct a fictional world where the morally relevant features are completely different from those in an actual scenario. In these cases, the counter-moral character is twofold: the fictional world is governed by deviant moral principles, and the fictional perspective endorses such deviant moral principles. Appreciators are thus asked to respond to a counter-moral perspective as if it was the norm in the fictional world. This category is the most radical version of fictional immorality. In these cases, appreciators are not only being asked to have counter-moral responses, but they are asked to accept as true in the fiction deviant moral claims.

This is the case of narratives like Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian*. The novel follows 'The Kid' and his experiences with a gang that massacres people in the border of US and Mexico. *Blood Meridian* does not simply prescribe appreciators to sympathize with an immoral character by prescribing strong pro-attitudes toward The Kid as part of this criminal group. The entire novel is meant to show that there's nothing but immorality: war and brutality are the norm. And in the end, Holden, the antagonist and the symbol of the brutality that governs the world (who is given, by the way, an almost divine nature), wins.

Contrast this with instances of narratives that explore immoral worlds presented through a moral perspective, as in the case of dystopian narratives. These are narratives that prescribe appreciators to imagine a fictional world governed by deviant moral principles, but in which the perspective clearly condemns the moral failings. This is the case of dystopian narratives, such as Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale.* Contrary to instances of counter-moral fictional worlds, dystopian narratives would not count as instances of counter-moral fictions because while the fictional world is governed by deviant moral principles, the perspective advanced by the narrative and prescribed to appreciators is aimed at condemning such deviant views.

1.1.2 Actual immorality

Actual immorality refers to the prescription of imaginings that involve a counter-moral perspective. However, contrary to fictional immorality, its prescriptions include claims about the actual world. That is, while the counter-moral prescriptions in instances of fictional immorality are recognized as deviant by the author and members of the audience, instances of actual immorality include immoral claims and attitudes that are *actually endorsed* in real life. In this sense, the counter-moral prescriptions in these cases are not quarantined to the fictional world: the immoral content in these narratives is not only part of a fictional perspective, but informs an *actual perspective*. The prescriptions can thus be understood not merely as fictional prescriptions, but as actual invitations to adopt an actual immoral perspective. Contrary to fictional immorality, the counter-moral prescriptions of actual immorality are meant to stand beyond the scope of the fictional world and our imaginative engagement with the narrative. Moreover, these narratives normalize counter-moral prescriptions. The counter-moral prescriptions are not to be regarded as deviant, but are prescribed in a perceived continuity with (deviant) moral claims about the actual state of the world. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation*, for instance, is problematic because it endorses a false version of American history that champions white-supremacism.

Actual immorality in counter-moral fictions can also be found in different ways. First as cases of immoral perspectives, and second as cases of immoral contexts. It is worth noting, however, that these two forms of actual immorality might overlap in certain narratives. We might find cases of immoral perspectives that can be seen as part of an immoral context, and cases of immoral contexts that are translated into immoral perspectives. I will now go into these differences and how they can be found in works of fiction.

A) Actual immoral perspective

An *actual immoral perspective* refers to those cases where the artist holds an immoral worldview that is imported to the work of fiction. In these cases, the artist's immoral views and attitudes inform the prescribed perspective of the work. In some cases, the artist's immoral perspective is intentionally imported to the fictional world. These are cases where the artist uses the fictional perspective to invite appreciators to *actually* participate in the deviant worldviews she holds. As such, in these works of fiction we can identify an invitation to export

the artist's immoral perspective as expressed in the work. This is the case of *The Clansman*, Thomas F. Dixon Jr.'s novel that was later adapted into Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation*. Dixon *actually* believed in white supremacism and promoted racial segregation. *The Clansman* and *The Birth of a Nation* portray black Americans as inherently violent, and accuse the Republican Reconstruction movement of inciting freed slaves to rise against their former masters. In light of Dixon's other writings, we can say that *The Clansman* aimed directly at convincing audiences of the superiority of white Americans and the corrupt nature of African American people. So, although he never embraced the second era Ku Klux Klan, it is not surprising that his work provided inspiration both to the revived KKK and other white supremacist groups.

Dixon and Griffith's case is a very clear example of an actual immoral perspective because their work explicitly endorses white supremacism and the KKK. But an actual immoral perspective can also be found in more subtle ways. We can find cases where the artist holds an immoral view that is imported to the work, and that informs the fictional perspective, but that cannot be taken as an overt invitation for appreciators to export the immoral outlook. Take Woody Allen as an example. In addition to the allegations of sexual abuse made by Dylan Farrow, his adoptive daughter, Allen has been widely criticized for marrying Soon-Yi Previn, the adoptive daughter of his previous partner of twelve years, Mia Farrow. While it could be said that Allen's movies do not *explicitly* endorse romantic relationships with minors, some of them advance and normalize a perspective that fails to acknowledge the problematic nature of relationships with a substantive power imbalance. And this seems expressive of Allen's immoral attitudes. In his 1979 film, *Manhattan*, Allen stars as forty two year old Isaac Davies, a fictionalized version of the filmmaker himself. The movie explores Isaac's romantic relationship with seventeen year old Tracy. Although the movie has received widespread critical acclaim, and is recognized as one of Allen's best, little has been said about its problematic premise.[3] The vast age difference becomes significant in the movie not because of how it creates a power imbalance in the relationship, but because Tracy doesn't seem to have the maturity to meet Isaac's intellectual needs. It is true that in the end Tracy moves forward and Isaac recognizes that she was too young. But again, the emphasis is not on Tracy's vulnerability, but on Isaac. The problematic nature of the relationship and the issue of consent are merely brushed off to focus on the protagonists' quirky traits: Isaac/Woody is represented

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[3] In February 2014, Greg Mitchell writing for The Nation put together the few 1979 reviews of the movie available online. None of them addresses the problematic age difference between the characters. (www.thenation.com/article/reviews-woody-allens-teen-romance-manhattan-vast-age-gap/)

as a charming neurotic, but a romantic in the end. And the movie fails to acknowledge that Isaac is in reality a predator who is not only seducing, but grooming his victim. Allen's 2015 *Irrational Man* presents the same problematic treatment of the issues of consent and power imbalance in relationships, as the film romanticizes a philosophy professor's relationship with one of his students.

Manhattan and *Irrational Man* are instances of an actual immoral perspective in fiction. The immoral views found in the works are not only part of a fictional perspective that concerns a fictional state of affairs, but they are part of an actual perspective directed at the actual state of the world. This actual perspective informs the creation of the work, and thus informs the fictional prescriptions. In this sense, the audience's participation in a fictional perspective could be seen as the participation in the actual immoral views. One could argue that because the fictional and actual perspectives are inseparable, assenting to the fictional perspective somehow implies endorsing the actual attitudes explored by the works of fiction.

In some other cases, however, the expression of the immoral views in the narrative is accidental. In these cases, while the authors profess appropriate moral views, they are unaware of the problematic nature of some of their attitudes; and these attitudes are imported to the work, so that they end up informing the fictional perspective. This usually happens when the immoral views are so deeply ingrained in the context that authors fail to see the morally problematic aspects of their attitudes. Robert Stecker uses the example of Verne's residual racism in *Mysterious Island* to note how authors sometimes accidentally express immoral views in their works (Stecker, 2005, 141). Jack Kerouac is another interesting case, as he is often accused of misogyny. Beat authors thought they were defying sexist attitudes by emphasizing women's sexual freedom. However, *On the Road* seems to express residual sexist attitudes as it fails to develop in depth its female characters: women are objectified and reduced to traditional gender roles.

B) Actual immoral context

Works of fiction are not ahistorical. Both artists and artistic practices are bound by their historical context and its social practices. Precisely because authors and their works are circumscribed by their context, some narratives count as instances of counter-moral fictions because they reflect the prevalent immoral attitudes of their historical context. That is, in some cases, the immoral attitudes are so deeply ingrained in the context of production of the work

that they are imported to the narrative. The immoral attitudes thus become part of the work of fiction. As I said before, actual immorality of perspective and context are not mutually exclusive. Although we find instances of works whose authors hold immoral views that are no longer prevalent in their context of origin, most of the cases of immoral perspectives can be identified as instances of immoral contexts as well. Nevertheless, not all works of fiction created within an immoral context reflect immorality in the same way. In some works of fiction the immoral views inform the fictional perspective, and are thus endorsed by the narrative. In some others cases, on the other hand, the immoral practices seem to be implicitly assumed by the fictional world, but are not directly acknowledged nor endorsed by the fictional perspective, they are merely taken for granted.

When the immoral attitudes found in the context are imported to the narrative and inform the fictional perspective, the immoral views become an *essential* part of the fictional world. Because the immoral views inform the perspective, we can say that the perspective endorses them. In these cases, the immoral attitudes are not only reflected in the construction of the story, but they are essential to understand how the fictional world functions and to grasp the perspective prescribed by the narration. That is, the immoral views are essential in these cases because the narrative cannot be understood without them. This is the case of *Gone with the Wind.* The narrative expresses an immoral attitude toward Black American history that reveals the prevalent attitude toward issues of race during the early 20th century. *Gone with the Wind* depicts slavery and the American South in a nostalgic light, and presents stereotypical black characters that reinforce the condescending treatment of black American people that often masks racism. What is important to note is that the racism found in *Gone with the Wind* is not simply an element that reflects a racist context, and that could be ignored for the sake of the narrative. The narrative's perspective endorses this nostalgic view of the South and the treatment of Black American characters. The whole story is built around its nostalgic representation of slavery, and the characters' development depends on their stereotypical traits.

In this sense, the counter-moral content in *Gone with the Wind* is very different to that found in *The Wire.* As I said at the beginning of the chapter, *The Wire* explicitly aims at exploring inequality in America through the interaction of issues of race and class. And yet, it fails to acknowledge that black American women are victims of specific kinds of structural injustices, and thus contributes to their erasure from public narratives. The counter-moral content found in *The Wire* is a product of the dominant immoral views in the context of production of the series, but it cannot be said to be endorsed by the fictional perspective. The deviant elements

are not treated as true in the fictional world, nor are they endorsed by the perspective. In this sense, the immoral elements do not contribute to the construction of the narrative and the telling of the story. The counter-moral content in these cases is *incidental* to the fictional narrative. Although it could be said that the immoral elements are part of the implicit context inherited by the work from its historical circumstances, it does not seem as though they are part of the fictional world as such because they are not necessary to understand the fictional narrative.

HBO's *True Detective* provides another example of incidental actual immorality in works of fiction brought about by an immoral context of production. The first season of the series follows detectives Rust Cohle and Martin Hart in the investigation of the murder of a prostitute and their hunt for a serial killer. Although the show has received widespread critical acclaim, it has been highly criticized for its portrayal of women. In particular, criticism has focused on the lack of complexity of its female characters and on the numerous scenes involving female nudity. The only main female character is Maggie, Hart's wife. And her role in the development of the story is not explored beyond the men that surround her; Maggie is only a prop used to examine the complexity of the relationship between Cohle and Hart. Other female characters include Lisa, Hart's mistress, a receptionist at the police department, and various prostitutes that are contacted during the investigation. Even more so, actresses have had to put up, not only with the lack of development of their characters, but with the objectification of women on the show. It is not simply that the series fictionally objectifies women; this would be expected from a show that explores sexual violence against women and children. The problem is that the television show objectifies its actresses: women are offered poor roles and are expected to participate in numerous scenes that involve nudity. Thus, the immoral character of the show is not related to content-immoral imaginings, but to actual immoral attitudes expressed in the writing, production and filming of the series. The show reflects real attitudes towards women and reveals worrying aspects of the social context of the work. It is not clear, however, that the real immoral attitudes are endorsed by the fictional perspective.

1.1.3 Borderline cases
Finally, it is important to note that the distinction between fictional and actual immorality is not straightforward. We can find what may be considered borderline cases of fictional immorality: narratives that were created by the artist as instances of fictional immorality, that are regarded by the reader/viewer as instances of fictional immorality, but whose context of

reception is susceptible to take the fictional prescriptions as an invitation to believe. This happens when the deviant scenario is still part of what William James calls a 'live option', that is, when a significant number of people in the context of reception still believe the immoral claim to actually hold. In these cases, regardless of authorial intentions, we have reasons to treat instances of fictional immorality as actual immorality because the perspective explored is still considered a live option in the context we inhabit. So, although we recognize that the fictional nature of the prescriptions is meant to neutralise the export of the perspective to the actual world, we might also realize that other appreciators would take the immoral perspective to stand in the actual world. The fact that these narratives could be regarded by certain members of the audience as advancing deviant claims they believe to be morally appropriate would give us legitimate reasons to treat them as instances of actual immorality.

As I said before, for a narrative to count as an instance of fictional immorality it must fulfil three conditions: a) it prescribes a counter-moral *fictional* perspective, b) the author recognizes and the audience is put in a position where they can recognize the counter-moral character of the prescriptions, and c) because the prescriptions are quarantined in the fictional world and the objects of the prescribed responses are the *fictional* events, the narrative prescribes *content-immoral* responses. In the cases described as borderline cases of fictional immorality, however, these three conditions are not fulfilled. Although the author creates the narrative as an instance of fictional immorality, and is thus aware of the counter-moral nature of the prescriptions, when the deviant claims are still part of a live option, the context of reception is such that audience members are not in a position to recognize the counter-moral nature of the prescriptions. That is, the context of reception is such that a significant number of audience members could fail to recognise that the narrative was created *as deviant*, and would thus take the narrative to advance a counter-moral *actual* perspective. As a result, although the responses are prescribed as content-immoral, when the deviant views are still part of a live option the objects of the prescribed responses would be taken to be not only the fictional events, but real entities and events.

Gone Girl provides a complex example of a borderline instance of the fictional/actual immorality distinction. The narrative follows the Dunne marriage, Nick and Amy. Formerly a journalist, Nick loses his job and uses Amy's trust fund money to move back to his hometown and open a bar. But while her husband is living his dream, Amy soon starts feeling trapped in the suburban life. After realising Nick has not only spent her money and moved her to his

hometown, but cheated on her, Amy decides she is tired of giving up her life for the sake of her ungrateful husband. She decides to enact her revenge by framing him for her own murder.

Gillian Flynn's novel prescribes sympathy toward Amy. The narrative prescribes appreciators to endorse Amy's false abuse accusations in order to see her plan of ruining her husband's life succeed. The novel emphasises Amy's wit, intelligence and charm in order to secure appreciators' sympathy. But David Fincher's 2014 film adaptation turns Amy into the villain, and instead prescribes sympathy for Nick. There is nothing in *Gone Girl* that would indicate that Flynn is inviting appreciators to believe that false abuse allegations are right, or that they should endorse them in real life. And yet Fincher failed to adopt the prescribed perspective and changed the object of appreciators' sympathies in his own reading of the work. So what caused the shift? I believe this happened because Fincher realised that Amy's actions are still regarded as a live option in the context of production and reception of the work. What Flynn creates as a fictional perspective can easily be misinterpreted as an endorsement of actual immorality.

In David Fincher's context, our context, the myth of the false sexual abuse allegations is a widespread narrative. Although data have proven it wrong again and again, most people remain convinced that false accusations regarding sexual violence are common. According to this narrative, women often lie about being victims of sexual abuse to get away with their intentions. From scorned lovers and resentful employees, to random strangers, in the public narrative women often fabricate stories of sexual violence to destroy men's lives. Given this context, appreciators, including Fincher, falsely believe that fabricating abuse allegations is still regarded as a live option by many. Adopting a fictional perspective that endorses a woman who fabricates such allegations to get away with what she wants would be tantamount to endorsing women who do the same in real life. *Gone Girl* the novel would thus be seen as endorsing these women at the expense of those men whose lives have been ruined. David Fincher solves this problem in the movie by no longer prescribing a perspective that sympathises with the lying woman, but with her victim, poor Nick Dunne. But those appreciators who believe that the myth of false abuse accusations is just that, a myth, might in turn see the engagement with Fincher's iteration of *Gone Girl* as endorsing the view that victims of sexual violence often fabricate these stories to benefit from them.

1.2 Prescribed responses and immorality in fiction

As we have seen, immorality in fiction comes in many forms. I have tried to argue that there is an important distinction between merely fictional and actual immorality. And I have tried to show that even within instances of fictional and actual immorality there are differences in the scope of the prescribed counter-moral claims. But someone could still argue that not all the cases I have explored should count as instances of counter-moral fictions in the relevant sense. If this was the case, it could be argued that not all of the instances presented before are relevant when examining how audiences engage with immorality in fiction, and how narratives and appreciators should be assessed. A first objection could argue that my categorization of counter-moral fictions fails because some of the narratives do not prescribe deviant moral claims *as true in the fictional world*. Let us call this the "alethic objection". This objection would claim that for a work of fiction to count as immoral in the relevant sense, the narrative would need to make deviant moral claims true in the fictional world. Contrary to this, in most of the cases examined above appreciators are not being asked to imagine a deviant world in which deviant moral claims are presented as true. According to this first objection, without the prescription of deviant moral claims as true in the fictional worlds, narratives cannot be said to endorse immorality.

The alethic objection claims that instances of counter-moral fictional perspectives, such as *Breaking Bad,* should not count as immoral in the relevant sense because they prescribe appreciators to adopt a counter-moral perspective that is counter-moral within the fictional world as well. That is, according to the alethic objection, instances of counter-moral fictional perspectives are not counter-moral fictions because they do not prescribe a counter-moral fictional perspective that is presented as morally accurate within the fictional world. Some instances of actual immoral contexts, such as *The Wire* or *True Detective,* should not count as counter-moral fictions either because they do not endorse the deviant perspectives as true in the fictional world. That is, according to the alethic objection, instances of incidental immorality that was imported from an actual context should not count as instances of counter-moral fictions because the narratives do not endorse the deviant moral claims. As a result, according to the alethic objection only instances of counter-moral fictional worlds, actual immoral perspectives, and endorsed real immoral contexts would count as counter-moral fictions in the relevant sense.

Indeed, this is how Noël Carroll objects to Eaton's rough heroes. In a response to her "Robust Immoralism", he argues that narratives that feature rough heroes, that I have identified here as

merely fictionally immoral, cannot really be regarded as immoral precisely because the rough heroes are represented as immoral *within* the fictional world. According to Carroll, appreciators are invited to admire certain traits, while still condemning the immoral character of the hero. In this sense, the perspective does not endorse immoral attitudes (Carroll, 2013), and thus the narratives should not be considered as counter-moral in the relevant sense. Counter-moral fictional immoral worlds, and instances of actual immorality, on the other hand, present a fictionally normalized immoral perspective. In these cases, the narratives display a perspective that is not regarded as counter-moral within the fictional world. And in these cases it could be said that the narrative endorses the deviant moral claims precisely inasmuch as it does not acknowledge the deviant nature of the moral claims.

According to the alethic objection, instances of counter-moral fictional perspectives, such as *Breaking Bad,* are not immoral in the relevant sense because they are not really trying to make an immoral claim. It could even be argued that these narratives actually condemn immorality, not only by acknowledging the counter-moral character of the perspective, but by presenting the characters' fate. Many of the narratives that involve counter-moral fictional perspectives culminate with the destruction of the protagonist after all. The sympathy appreciators would feel for the counter-moral perspective is, therefore, only temporary. The prescribed sympathy is only a provisional prescription, while the ultimate prescriptions should be identified with a sense of moral reaffirmation. So, what would be ultimately true in the fictional world is that immorality does not pay, and, therefore, the narrative does not really prescribe a counter-moral fictional perspective.

However, I think the alethic objection fails. It is not necessary for narratives to present deviant moral claims as true in the fictional world for them to be counter-moral. A work of fiction should be regarded as a counter-moral fiction in the relevant sense if it invites appreciators to adopt a perspective that includes responses that would be considered morally inappropriate if directed at the actual world. In instances of counter-moral fictional perspectives, for example, even when the perspective is framed as counter-moral within the fictional world, the narratives convince audiences to adopt a perspective that contrasts with their everyday moral attitudes and to overlook the moral flaws of the rough heroes. And this oversight is certainly endorsed (and driven) by the fictional perspective. Instances of counter-moral fictional perspectives endorse the oversight inasmuch as they prescribe what would normally be regarded as

unmerited sympathy and, as we will see in the third chapter, nonmoral affect-based allegiance to immoral characters. In addition to this, these narratives prescribe responses that are certainly counter-moral: to allow one's moral perspective to be contaminated by nonmoral approval should not be regarded as a moral virtue.

The problem with the objection that claims that counter-moral fictions are only those that prescribe deviant claims as true in the fictional world is that it overlooks that fact that the imaginative engagement with fiction requires more than merely entertaining a set of propositions as true in a fictional world. The engagement with fictions is not merely a matter of what is represented but how it is represented. Responses to the fictional scenarios and characters depend on a prescribed point of view upon the narrated events that focuses appreciators' attention on certain features over others, namely, the "authorial attitude to story content" (Currie, 2012, 51). The fictional perspective refers to the point of view that guides the narration of the events presented in the fictional world, and that prompts appreciators to react in specific ways. Establishing a perspective is, therefore, not only a matter of prescribing propositions, but a matter of framing the prescriptions so that they emphasize certain aspects of the narrated events. The perspective guides the thread of the story, the explicit and implicit evaluations of the events, and the tone of the narration. The perspective sets the tone of the narration by a set of what Currie calls 'expressive features', which "function to indicate the ways in which authorial interest is directed towards unity, time, specificity, and causation" (Currie, 2012, 52).

The relevance of the perspective in our engagement with fictional narratives means that even when these narratives do not prescribe the deviant moral claims as true in the fictional world, they do prescribe a perspective that asks appreciators to ignore important moral flaws. Appreciators' focus is shifted away from the characters' immoral features, to emphasise other characteristics that present them as attractive instead. Even more so, counter-moral fictional perspectives focus on immoral characters' attractive features and ignore those who have been wronged by the immoral acts. To classify a narrative as a counter-moral fiction, therefore, one needs to identify the prescribed perspective.

1.2.1 Prescribed perspective

Whose perspective corresponds to the prescribed perspective? Appreciators might be able to identify different points of view within a narrative. Each character will have her own point of

view, even if it is not fully explored in the narrative. Many narratives include immoral characters that are an active part of the fictional scenario. But this doesn't mean that such narratives can be identified as counter-moral fictions in the relevant sense. In many of these cases appreciators may not be invited to adopt a perspective that sympathizes with the deviant character.

The relevant perspective in terms of what is being prescribed *by the narrative* is that of the narrator. However, identifying the narrator's point of view as the prescribed perspective brings a new set of problems. We might find cases of stories with multiple narrators. And we might find stories with unreliable narrators. More importantly, we might find cases where the narrator's point of view and the prescribed perspective split up. It is therefore important to note that the narrator whose point of view determines the fictional perspective is the external narrator or author narrator.[4] I will not argue in favour of the notion of an implied author and its consequences for interpretation and the experience of fiction.[5] But it is important for the discussion that follows to identify what this author-narrator amounts to. As we have seen, the perspective should be understood as the implied attitude towards the *fictional events* narrated, and, in turn, the implied attitude towards the narrated events depends on the external or author-narrator. The author-narrator is, therefore, necessary to determine what the narrative prescribes and endorses.

To illustrate the importance of the prescribed perspective and the interaction between the content of a narrative and the mode of its presentation, think of Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita.* The novel presents an interesting difference between the perspective of the internal narrator and the prescribed perspective, that is, the perspective endorsed by the author-narrator. Within the novel, the narrative is presented through the eyes of Humbert Humbert. Humbert's telling of the story seems remorseful, but at the same time, he constantly implies that he was simply a victim of Lolita's advances. Humbert is also eager to defend himself by explaining his actions in light of the loss of his mother and his childhood love, Annabel. However, the tone of the novel is far from endorsing a sympathetic treatment of Humbert: the expressive features of the novel portray Humbert in an ironic tone that presents him as a deeply pathetic figure, or as

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[4] For the rest of the discussion I will assume Currie's identification of the author and narrator of the fictional world as it's found in "Authors and Narrators", in *Narratives and Narrators.* I will not, however, go into the difficulties found in cases where we can identify fictions within fictions and second narrators (Currie, 2012).

[5] In particular, I will not focus on the possible differences that can be found between the actual author of a narrative and the hypothetical author that can be reconstructed by attending to the narrative. In the discussion that follows I will favour Jerrold Levinson's hypothetical intentionalism. I will thus argue that the relevant perspective should be identified with utterance meaning.

Nabokov himself puts it, "a vain and cruel wretch who manages to appear 'touching.'"[6] The author-narrator thus seeks to distance himself from the internal narrator's apologetic nature; and thus the prescribed perspective guides the thread of the novel to achieve this.

It is important to note at this point that, by alluding to the author-narrator, I am not referring to the actual author. The prescribed perspective refers to a *fictional perspective*, and in this sense, it is important to separate it from what the author would *actually* endorse. The author-narrator refers to the external narrator that an appreciator would be able to reconstruct from the expressive features that guide the tone of the narration of the fictional events, and the set of responses prescribed to the audience. In the above example, what is important to note is that, although we have a direct quote from Nabokov explaining how he saw Humbert, the same could be inferred from elements present in the fictional context. That is to say that, in strict sense, Nabokov's actual testimony is unnecessary to grasp the fictional perspective prescribed by the fictional world.

Again, the reconstruction of the relevant author-narrator is necessary to determine the prescribed perspective of a work of fiction. And in this sense Jerrold Levinson's hypothetical intentionalism is of great help. As said before, identifying the prescribed perspective does not mean reconstructing the actual artist's intentions, but rather it seems that the perspective of the author-narrator can be understood in terms of utterance meaning:

> we arrive at utterance meaning in the most comprehensive and informed manner we can muster as the utterance's intended recipients. Actual utterer's intention, then, is not what is determinative of the meaning of a literary offering (or the linguistic discourse) but such intention as optimally *hypothesized,* given all the resources available to us in the work's internal structure and the relevant surrounding context of creation, in all its legitimately invoked specificity. (Levinson, 1992, 224)

The prescribed perspective corresponds to that of the author-narrator, that is, the author-narrator that audiences can reconstruct from all the elements available in the narrative. As such, the prescribed perspective is something internal to the narrative, in the sense that it cannot be found in actual artists' intentions. But it is important to note, nevertheless, the relevance of the surrounding context. Since appreciators cannot access the external narrator's actual mental states, they depend both on the work's internal elements and on contextual considerations to

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[6] Nabokov quoted by Levine in (Levine, 1995).

reconstruct the narrative's fictional perspective. The author-narrator's perspective is thus reconstructed by attending to all the available elements in the narrative interpreted within a contextual matrix. This is what explains cases like *The Wire*, in which we cannot identify an explicit authorial intention to prescribe a counter-moral perspective, that is, narratives that inadvertently incorporate actual immoral views into the fictional perspective. In these cases, an appreciator can reasonably identify counter-moral aspects of a fictional perspective in the light of actual immoral views found in a narrative's context, regardless of the actual author's explicit intentions.

The perspective is also essential for the imaginative engagement. Just in as much as fictions are not just explicit prescriptions to entertain isolated propositions, the engagement with fictions must not be reduced to the understanding of the set of fictional propositions prescribed. Along with the prescription to imagine a set of propositions, narratives prescribe appreciators to respond in certain ways to the narrated events: "Rhetorical devices manipulate or direct responses under the fictive stance so that a reader is guided not only in *what* to imagine but also in *how* to imagine it" (Lamarque & Olsen, 1994, 139). Appreciators are meant to respond to the point of view presented by the narrative. These relevant responses are not merely triggered by what is being represented but by how it is represented.

The prescribed perspective includes a specific framework to guide appreciators' responses. The notion of framework, as defined by Greg Currie, refers to the prescribed set of cognitive, evaluative and emotional responses prescribed by the narrative. Since the framework refers to a set of cognitive, evaluative and emotional responses to the *fictional events*, it is important to take into consideration the distinction proposed by Shen-yi Liao between make-believe and real-world moral outlooks (Liao, 2013). The make-believe moral outlook refers to the outlook a fictional narrative asks us to imagine; the real-world moral outlook refers to the outlook appreciators in fact have. These outlooks include not just imaginings and beliefs, but other non-cognitive morally relevant attitudes (Liao, 2013, 271). A narrative's framework thus prescribes a make-believe moral outlook that involves both propositional imaginings and non-cognitive morally relevant attitudes. The framework refers to how we are being asked to respond by what is being narrated in virtue of how it is narrated (Currie, 2012, 86), and so the framework is in charge of shaping appreciators' make-believe outlook during their engagement with the narrative. In the case of immoral fictions, it can be said that it is the framework that is responsible for the distortion of appreciators' moral outlook in favour of an immoral make-believe outlook during their imaginative engagement. This is important because, as Cain Todd

notes, the explicit prescription and compliance to adopt a corrupt attitude is not necessary: the prescribed perspective and the acceptance of the perspective is all it takes (Todd, 2009).

The role of the prescribed perspective, therefore, is twofold. On the one hand, the perspective guides the narration. On the other hand, it guides appreciators responses. The prescribed perspective aims at shaping the audience's own perspective by eliciting specific responses to the narrated events. This reveals what Lamarque and Olsen recognize as the Gricean turn of the perspective: "Competent readers not only respond in this way, they also recognize (at least as literary critics they recognize) that this response is required of them. That is, they notice that it is being controlled and directed by the narrative content". (Lamarque & Olsen, 1994, 142)

The alethic objection, which claims that counter-moral fictions are only those that prescribe deviant claims as true in the fictional world, misses two important points: 1) that the framework, the preferred set of responses to the narrative, follows the fictional perspective and not what is fictionally true; 2) that even when we refer to the prescribed perspective as that of the author-narrator, the narrative's perspective is a *fictional* perspective. Regarding the first point, it is important to emphasize that appreciators often respond with counter-moral responses, even if these responses are not fictionally normalized (that is, even if the responses are counter-mora *within* the fictional world). Contrary to what the alethic objection suggests, a narrative should be regarded as counter-moral when it manipulates and misguides appreciators' make-believe moral outlook so that their responses focus on the wrong salient features, regardless of what is fictionally true. This seems to be what Jacobson is suggesting by noting "(…) how much of aesthetic experience is *not* a matter of what a work makes fictional, or what is true of some "fictional world"; for these concepts cannot capture the kinetic nature of our emotional and evaluative responses to narrative and dramatic art" (Jacobson, 1997, 166).

Instances of counter-moral fictional perspectives count as counter-moral in the relevant sense precisely because, even when deviant moral claims are not fictionally true, appreciators are asked to engage with a counter-moral perspective: the narrative prescribes a counter-moral framework, a set of cognitive affective responses that contrasts with appreciators' real-world moral outlook and that would be regarded as morally inappropriate in an actual scenario. In this sense it is important to distinguish narratives like *Lolita* from narratives like *Breaking Bad*. *Lolita* cannot be regarded as a counter-moral fiction in the sense that I have defined. Although the narrative follows an immoral character, the prescribed perspective towards the immoral

character clearly condemns the immoral actions, and the corresponding framework demands from the audience a fitting response: readers are meant to feel repulsed by Humbert Humbert. *Breaking Bad,* on the other hand, constitutes a counter-moral fiction because it presents a fictional world in which Walter's actions are immoral, but in which the perspective invites appreciators to sympathize with an immoral character *qua* immoral.

As said before, the alethic objection also misses the fact that a narrative's prescribed perspective constitutes a *fictional* perspective. I believe it is important to emphasize that the narrative's framework involves the prescription of a *make-believe moral outlook* only, and not a real-world moral outlook. A narrative should be regarded as a counter-moral fiction insofar as it prescribes a counter-moral framework, that is, content-immoral imaginings and the corresponding content-immoral responses. This means that for a fiction to count as a counter-moral fiction it needs only to prescribe a counter-moral *make-believe* outlook. Instances of counter-moral fictional perspectives are counter-moral because they prescribe content-immoral imaginings and content-immoral responses. Narratives do not need to include actual invitations to adopt an immoral real-world outlook. Ignoring the notion of framework also misses this. The framework refers to an *imagined* moral outlook. Narratives prescribe appreciators a perspective that guides their engagement with the narrated events. But this says nothing about how the narrative might invite appreciators to believe certain things as opposed to merely imagine. As we will see in the following section, the difference between make-believe and real-world moral outlooks implies a difference between fictional and extra-fictional perspectives. And this difference will in turn determine how the prescriptions to imagine relate to invitations to believe in certain cases.

1.3 Manifested attitudes and immorality in fiction

So far I have argued against the alethic objection that some works of fiction should be regarded as counter-moral even when they do not prescribe deviant moral claims as true in the fictional world because they prescribe a counter-moral fictional perspective. But someone could still argue that my categorisation of counter-moral fictions that emphasises a distinction between fictional and actual immorality is mistaken insofar as instances of merely fictional immorality are not counter-moral in the relevant sense because they do not manifest an immoral attitude. A second objection to my categorisation of counter-moral fictions would claim that works of fiction should be considered as counter-moral in the relevant sense only when they include an

immoral manifested attitude. Let us call this the "Manifested attitude objection". According to this second objection, because instances of counter-moral fictional perspectives acknowledge the deviant character of the prescribed perspective they do not manifest an immoral attitude, and they should not be considered as counter-moral fictions in the relevant sense.

However, the main problem with the manifested attitude objection is that it is not clear how we should understand the notion of an immoral manifested attitude. According to Berys Gaut, the manifested attitude refers to the work displaying pro or con attitudes toward some represented state of affairs via the prescribed responses (Gaut, 2007, 230). A narrative manifests an immoral attitude by prescribing ethically unmerited responses: "The notion of manifesting an attitude should be construed in terms of a work's displaying pro or con attitudes toward some state of affairs or things, which the work may do in many ways besides explicitly stating an opinion about them" (Gaut, 1998, 183). For a narrative to be counter-moral in the relevant sense, therefore, it would have to manifest an immoral attitude; and this in turn would mean that the narrative prescribes ethically unmerited responses, that is, pro or con attitudes.

If we were to understand the manifested attitude merely as the prescription of ethically unmerited responses, it would seem that the manifested attitude objection would be wrong in dismissing instances of counter-moral fictional perspectives as counter-moral in the relevant sense; after all, we have seen that these narratives prescribe a counter-moral framework. However, the manifested attitude objection argues that we cannot simply look at prescribed responses to identify the narrative's manifested attitude. According to Gaut, the manifested attitude cannot be identified by simply alluding to individual responses. The manifested attitude can only be identified by attending to "the complete set of relevant prescriptions that a work makes toward fictional events"(Gaut, 1998, 193). This is important because, according to Gaut, sometimes the individual responses prescribed are contrary to the manifested attitude of the work. For instance, Gaut asks us to consider "a novel that apparently prescribes its readers to be amused at a character's underserved suffering but that does so in order to show up the ease with which the reader can be seduced into callous responses. Then one response (amusement) is prescribed, but a very different attitude is manifested by the work (disapproval of the ease with which we can be morally seduced). Hence it may seem that the manifestation of attitudes is wholly distinct from and independent of the prescription of responses" (Gaut, 2007, 230). According to Gaut, this reveals not that the manifested attitude is distinct from the prescribed responses, but that we can identify in the narrative lower and higher-order prescribed responses. In some narratives, we might find individual prescribed responses that are only prescribed

provisionally, to advance a higher order prescription that should be identified as the manifested attitude of the work. This means that it is not a case of the prescribed responses differing from the manifested attitude, but rather of individual responses that correspond to lower order prescriptions, and that contrast with higher order responses. The manifested attitude should then be understood as the higher order prescriptions. According to the manifested attitude objection to my categorisation of counter-moral fictions, for a narrative to count as counter-moral in the relevant sense it must include deviant higher order prescriptions.

But what are these higher order prescriptions? Let's go back to Gaut's example of a narrative that prescribes amusement at undeserved suffering to evidence the fragility of our moral outlook. On the one hand, we have amusement as the prescribed response toward the narrated events. This prescribed response is directed toward the imaginings prescribed by the narrative. As such, the prescription is aimed at shaping what Shen-yi Liao calls a *make-believe moral outlook*, that is, an imagined moral outlook that concerns the imagined events. But, at the same time, appreciators are prescribed to regard their amusement as callous and unmerited. This means that the higher order response does not have the represented events as its object, but rather the make-believe moral outlook. And, more importantly, the fact that the higher order prescription is aimed at evidencing the fragility of our moral outlook shows that the higher order prescription is aimed at shaping what Liao calls a *real world moral outlook*. Higher order prescriptions, therefore, seem to be prescriptions that are directed at real world moral outlooks, and that concern an actual state of affairs. And if the higher order prescriptions concern not just the imagined state of affairs presented by the narrative, but the actual state of the world, the attitude of the work manifested in these higher order prescriptions can be identified with an actual, as opposed to a fictional, perspective.

According to Gaut, the manifested attitude of the work can thus be identified with the manifested artist's character (Gaut, 2007, 115). As we have seen in the previous section, the engagement with works of fiction is not merely a matter of what is represented, but about how it is represented. Works of fiction possess expressive features that reveal an attitude toward the narrated events. And, according to Gaut, the expressive features of the work are derived from the expressive acts of the artist (Gaut, 2007, 71). Gaut follows Guy Sircello in claiming that artistic acts ground the expressive properties of the works. Artistic acts refer to what artists do in the artworks: "An artistic act is simply one performed by the artist in and by means of the work. As Sircello stresses, it is internally related to the properties of the work. (…) So the artistic act is not to be thought of as something that exists prior to and as the cause of features

of the work; rather, the description of an artistic act is a redescription of features of the work in order to bring out how they are internally related to acts of the artist." (Gaut, 2007, 71) Taking into consideration the notion of artistic acts, Gaut claims that the work's manifested attitude is equivalent to the artist's attitude, precisely inasmuch as the work's expressive features are derived from expressive acts of the artist.

The manifested attitude objection to my categorisation of counter-moral fictions, therefore, claims that for a fiction to count as counter-moral in the relevant sense it must include an artist's immoral attitude. This means that according to the manifested attitude objection works of fiction should be regarded as counter-moral in the relevant sense only when they include a deviant actual perspective, rather than simply a deviant fictional perspective. If this is the case, then only instances of what I have identified as actual immorality can truly count as counter-moral fictions. This second objection claims that narratives that I have identified as fictionally immoral would not really count as counter-moral because, although they prescribe pro attitudes toward immoral characters, the narratives are clearly created as counter-moral by the artist. The counter-moral responses prescribed would only count as lower order prescriptions that should not be identified with the manifested attitude, which involves higher order prescriptions. According to the manifested attitude objection, a truly counter-moral fiction would be one whose ultimate goal is to persuade appreciators to actually endorse immoral beliefs, and to prescribe ethically unmerited responses toward actual events.

1.3.1 Fictional and extra-fictional perspectives in fiction

However, I believe that the manifested attitude objection is wrong in claiming that for a work of fiction to count as counter-moral in the relevant sense it must include an actual immoral perspective. The main problem with the objection is that it is wrong in identifying the manifested attitude of the work with that of the artist. And in doing so, it obscures an important distinction between fictional and extra-fictional perspectives that, as we will see, is relevant for the analysis of our engagement with immorality in fiction and our assessment of both counter-moral narratives and our responses to them.

As we saw in the beginning of this section, the manifested attitude should be understood as the work displaying pro or con attitudes toward the *narrated events*. It is in this sense that the manifested attitude could be identified with the complete set of prescribed responses toward the narrative. The prescribed perspective guides the focus of the narration and, by prescribing

responses, it advances an attitude toward the *fictional events*. According to Gaut, prescribed responses are meant to cover "a wide range of states directed at represented events and characters, including being pleased at something, feeling an emotion toward it, being amused about it, and desiring something with respect to it – wanting it to continue or stop, wanting to know what happens next" (Gaut, 1998, 193). However, in Gaut's analysis the artist's attitudes, understood as the higher order prescriptions that guide lower order prescribed responses, seem to have as their object not the narrated events but the prescribed responses and a real world moral outlook. Thus it is not clear whether the work's manifested attitude is to be understood as a make-believe outlook that is directed only at the narrated events, or if it refers to a real-world outlook expressed in the work that is directed at an actual state of affairs.

To solve this difficulty, it is necessary to distinguish between fictional and extra-fictional perspectives in works of fiction. I believe that the work's manifested attitude should be identified with the fictional perspective that concerns merely a make-believe moral outlook, while the extra-fictional perspective constitutes a meta-perspective that concerns not just the actual state of affairs but the relation between make-believe and real world moral outlooks. To distinguish between fictional and extra-fictional perspectives, I think it is important to consider the difference between internal and external points of view of the readers discussed by Lamarque and Olsen: "A reader can have both an ('internal') imaginative involvement with fictive content and an ('external') awareness that the content is under the control of a writer". (Lamarque & Olsen, 1994, 144) Under this distinction, the imaginative involvement is circumscribed to what is fictional, while elements such as authorial actual purposes are reflected upon from an external perspective (Lamarque & Olsen, 1994).

The fictional perspective refers to the complete set of responses toward the narrated events. That is, the fictional perspective refers to the prescribed pro or con attitudes toward the represented events and characters *as represented by the work.* According to what was said in the previous section, the fictional perspective corresponds to the author-narrator's attitude toward the narrated events as represented in the work. Thus, the fictional perspective concerns a make-believe moral outlook exclusively.

The extra-fictional perspective, on the other hand, refers to a perspective that concerns a real world moral outlook. This perspective is directed toward an actual state of affairs. The extra-fictional perspective thus corresponds to the attitude the author-narrator *would* hold when faced with real events and real people. As such, the extra-fictional perspective sometimes includes

invitations not only to imagine, but invitations to believe: via an extra-fictional perspective, the narrative invites us to reflect upon the actual state of the world and our own moral outlook. The extra-fictional perspectives can invite appreciators to adopt a real world moral outlook as a result of the imaginative engagement with fiction. Even more so, the extra-fictional perspective can also be regarded as a meta-perspective since it is often directed at our responses prescribed by the fictional perspective. The extra-fictional perspective can invite appreciators to reflect on the prescribed make-believe moral outlook in light of a real world moral outlook.

I believe it is important to recognize these two perspectives in order to be able to account for the complexity of fictional narratives. My categorisation of counter-moral fictions alludes to the distinction between fictional and extra-fictional perspectives by introducing a distinction between merely fictional and actual immorality in counter-moral fictions. And the manifested attitude objection to my categorisation obscures the distinction by claiming that counter-moral fictions are only those that include an artist's actual immoral perspective.

It might be difficult to distinguish between fictional and extra-fictional perspectives since in many cases the two perspectives coincide. This is the case for narratives that present a moral fictional perspective and a moral extra-fictional perspective. And it is also the case for narratives that present an immoral fictional perspective and an immoral extra fictional perspective, as it is the case for instances of actual immorality that I have outlined above. But the more interesting cases are those where the two perspectives differ. As evidenced in the example examined by Gaut, some works prescribe either a neutral or an immoral fictional perspective that contrasts with the extra-fictional perspective. In these cases, by prescribing the contrasting fictional perspective, the author-narrator wants to shed light on relevant aspects of a real world moral outlook. However, I believe it is misleading to claim that in these cases what I have identified as the fictional perspective refers to provisional prescriptions only. Gaut fails to note that for the extra-fictional perspective to be successful, the audience needs to *really* adopt the contrasting make-believe moral outlook during their imaginative engagement with the narrative. That is, the expected change in the real world moral outlook can only be brought about by the adoption of a counter-moral perspective during the imaginative engagement. Moreover, the counter-moral fictional perspective should not be understood as something provisional: the counter-moral make-believe outlook is not eventually replaced by a moral make-believe outlook. That is, while the extra-fictional perspective aims at causing an impact on the audience's real world moral outlook, the make-believe moral outlook stays the same. The fictional perspective is not replaced by the extra-fictional perspective during the

imaginative engagement. Rather, these two perspectives correspond to two different levels found in the narrative and in appreciators' engagement.

In this sense we can accept that instances of fictional immorality count as counter-moral without requiring that the external perspective finds them actually immoral. That is, instances of fictional immorality are counter-moral in the relevant sense because they prescribe a counter-moral make-believe moral outlook that is not only provisional: audiences are really meant to adopt a deviant make-believe moral outlook during their imaginative engagement. But this does not mean that instances of fictional immorality need to prescribe a deviant real world moral outlook to count as immoral. Counter-moral fictions can elicit content-immoral responses because the responses are circumscribed to the internal perspective; and the counter-moral prescriptions to imagine, along with the corresponding content-immoral responses, could have a moralizing intention when regarded from an external perspective, but without affecting the content-immoral imaginative engagement with the fictional world.

So what does the difference between fictional and extra-fictional perspectives mean for the work's manifested attitude? I believe the manifested attitude of the *work* should be Identified with the fictional perspective, not with the extra-fictional perspective. That is, the manifested attitude should be identified with the perspective the author-narrator holds toward the *narrated events* and that can be identified by attending to the prescribed responses to the *fictional events*. Contrary to that the manifested attitude objection claims, instances of what I have identified as merely fictional immorality are counter-moral in the relevant sense because they involve a deviant fictional perspective that prescribes a deviant make-believe moral outlook. Gaut might be right in saying that the artist's attitude is manifested in the work via certain expressive properties brought about by artistic acts. But I believe this is irrelevant for the distinction between fictional and extra-fictional perspectives. What I want to note is that even if we could say something about the artist's attitude by attending to the work's expressive features, this would only amount to an extra-fictional perspective that has an actual state of affairs as its object. The work's manifested attitude, as opposed to the artist's manifested attitude, can be found in the fictional perspective, that is, the perspective that has as its object the fictional events and characters.

Finally, I want to note that the distinction between fictional and extra-fictional perspectives should not be cashed out in terms of a distinction between actual and implied authors. I believe both of these perspectives can only be identified by referring to the author-narrator that the

audiences can reconstruct from the available elements in the narrative. What I have tried to claim is that even taking into consideration the fact that we can only access the author-narrator in the work, it is important to separate between the author-narrator's make-believe and real world moral outlooks. The fictional perspective refers to the perspective the author narrator prescribes toward the narrated events, that is, to a make-believe moral outlook. The extra-fictional perspective refers to the perspective the author-narrator would hold toward actual events, that is, a real world moral outlook.

In this chapter I have argued that there are different types of counter-moral fictions that should nonetheless be regarded as counter-moral in the relevant sense. I have argued against the alethic objection that counter-moral fictions do not need to present deviant moral claims as true in the fictional world. Counter-moral fictions are those that prescribe a counter-moral perspective with a corresponding counter-moral framework. And I have argued against the manifested attitude objection that counter-moral fictions do not need to include a deviant extra-fictional perspective to be regarded as counter-moral in the relevant sense. For a narrative to count as a counter-moral fiction it needs only to prescribe a deviant make-believe moral outlook. In the following chapter I will explore how the diversity of counter-moral fictions has an impact on how audiences engage with different types of counter-moral content.

2. The Continuity Thesis

The classification of counter-moral fictions I advanced in the previous chapter shows that appreciators relate to a fiction's counter-moral content in a variety of ways. In some cases, as it is with instances of fictional immorality, appreciators are willing to engage with works of fiction that present morally problematic scenarios that directly contrast with their moral outlook, and to adopt what they regard as a counter-moral make-believe outlook. The difference between a counter-moral fictional perspective and a counter-moral fictional world makes it clear that appreciators do not need to imagine a fictional world governed by deviant moral principles to adopt a deviant perspective during their imaginative engagement. As I argued before, in instances of counter-moral fictional perspectives, appreciators adopt a deviant make-believe moral outlook when they adopt a deviant perspective in fiction, that is, when they adopt a perspective that leads them to ignore in the narrative what they would normally consider morally salient features or when they allow their moral outlook to be contaminated by non-moral considerations. In these cases, although they do not come to imagine that the deviant moral claims are true in the fictional world, we can say that they adopt a counter-moral outlook by responding in ways that contrast with their actual attitudes. In recent years, the proliferation of narratives featuring what A. W. Eaton has called Rough Heroes, such as *Breaking Bad*, emphasises how the prescription of a deviant perspective in fiction is a recurrent narrative resource. Appreciators are thus capable of engaging in rich imaginative endeavours that involve adopting deviant perspectives inasmuch as they have affective responses they would normally consider inappropriate.

In recent years, philosophers have written extensively on what was originally called "The Puzzle of Imaginative Resistance".[7] The puzzle refers to the problems imagination seems to encounter when dealing with deviant scenarios in fiction, that is, with fictional scenarios that contrast with appreciators' actual attitudes. According to the puzzle, appreciators do not imaginatively engage with some fictional scenarios that involve deviance. Walton's famous Giselda example, "In killing her baby, Giselda did the right thing; after all, it was a girl" (Walton, 1994), has been used by some authors to show that there is a curious asymmetry between our reception of deviant factual scenarios and deviant evaluations in fiction. In his "Of

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[7] For a detailed overview of the literature on imaginative resistance and the solutions offered, see (Liao & Gendler, 2016; Miyazono & Liao, 2016).

the Standard of Taste" (1757), David Hume first noted the asymmetry found between our reception of deviance in speculative and moral matters in literary works:

> Speculative errors that are found in the literary works of any age or country don't detract much from the value of those works. To get us to enter into all the opinions that prevailed at that time, and to enjoy the sentiments or conclusions derived from them, all that is needed is a certain turn of thought or imagination (…). But to change our judgments on conduct, and arouse in us sentiments of approval or blame, love or hatred, different from the ones that long custom has made familiar to us—that requires a very violent effort.

Following Hume, the literature on imaginative resistance has noted that there is an asymmetry between our engagement with evaluative and non-evaluative scenarios in fiction. Imaginative resistance arises because, while appreciators do not have problems engaging with fictional scenarios that ask them to imagine deviant factual matters, they do encounter difficulty when trying to engage with fictions that ask them to imagine deviant evaluations. And so, while appreciators do not normally find it difficult to engage with a work of fantasy or science fiction, they do find it difficult to imaginatively engage with a narrative that asks them to agree that Giselda did the right thing in killing her daughter. For this reason, Tamar Gendler first formulated the puzzle of imaginative resistance as "the puzzle of explaining our comparative difficulty in imagining fictional worlds that we take to be morally deviant" (Gendler, 2000, 56).[8] Although both Gendler and Hume focus on moral deviance, authors like Walton (2006) and Brian Weatherson (2004) have noted that imaginative resistance arises when appreciators are faced with deviant evaluative scenarios in general.[9]

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[8] Although Gendler originally identified a single puzzle, Walton and Weatherson have since noted that what was originally named "The Puzzle of Imaginative Resistance" actually comprises four different, if related, problems. The alethic puzzle refers to why authorial authority is not enough to make certain claims true in the fiction. The imaginative puzzle refers to the lack of psychological participation certain fictional scenarios provoke. The phenomenological puzzle refers to why certain propositions in fiction are striking. And the aesthetic puzzle refers to how evaluative deviance impacts the aesthetic value of certain fictional scenarios. In what follows I refer in general to the problems of imaginative difficulties or to resistance phenomena.

[9] There is a widespread disagreement regarding the nature of the deviant scenarios that prompt problems in imaginative engagement. Some authors, like Yablo (2002) and Todd (2009), claim it has something to do with the application of certain concepts. Others, like Weatherson (2004) and Stock (2005), claim it has something to do with inconsistencies found in the stories. Most authors, nevertheless, accept that other non-evaluative fictional scenarios can also cause problems of imaginative barriers, as it is the case for scenarios that conflict with simple necessary truths. Due to the aims of the thesis, this chapter only focuses on cases of deviant evaluative scenarios that cause problems of imaginative resistance, and on those accounts that claim that these problems are caused by the evaluative nature of the propositions.

The literature on imaginative resistance has focused on examining the causes of the asymmetry between evaluative and non-evaluative scenarios in our engagement with fiction to explain why sometimes appreciators experience imaginative difficulties. This chapter examines those accounts of imaginative resistance that identify the evaluative nature of the problematic scenarios as the underlying cause of resistance phenomena. [10] I argue that these solutions fail to account for the complexity of our imaginative engagement with different types of counter-moral content in narratives, and that the supposed asymmetry between evaluative and non-evaluative deviant scenarios is in fact unsupported by the diversity of counter-moral fictions. The examples examined in the previous chapter indicate that audiences are able and willing to engage with morally deviant perspectives in certain instances of fictional narratives. During their imaginative engagement, appreciators commonly adopt attitudes they would otherwise consider unacceptable. They feel a strong sympathy for immoral characters, they applaud immoral decisions, they overlook immoral actions, and they root for the bad guys. In light of these examples, it would seem that cases where appreciators agree to ignore their everyday evaluative framework in favour of a deviant perspective prescribed by the narrative are as puzzling as cases where they experience imaginative difficulties. A satisfactory account of our imaginative engagement with immorality fiction, therefore, needs to explain both the cases that cause imaginative difficulties and the cases that do not.

This chapter examines some of the solutions to the problems of imaginative resistance with the objective of determining how appreciators imaginatively engage with immorality in fiction, and why they willingly adopt a counter-moral make-believe outlook in some cases, but not in others. I examine the solutions in light of two so-called problems derived from our engagement with morally deviant scenarios in fiction: the problem of immorality and truth in fiction, and the problem of immorality and perspective. The problem of immorality and truth in fiction focuses on the construction of fictional worlds, and refers to the possibility of making a deviant evaluation true in the world of the story. The problem of immorality and perspective refers to the possibility of imagining and adopting a counter-moral perspective in fiction. This division is meant to track the distinction between counter-moral fictional worlds and counter-moral

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[10] The second wave of literature on imaginative resistance, as Gendler has called it, has emphasised the role of context in explaining resistance phenomena. For example, authors like Stuart Brock (2012) and Cain Todd (2009) claim that the so-called puzzle of imaginative resistance arises only when propositions are provided with no surrounding context. Authors like Shen-yi Liao (2013, 2016), Bence Nanay (2010), and Jonathan Weinberg (2008) have argued that genre plays an essential role in appreciators' engagement with deviant evaluative scenarios in fiction. Chapter three examines these arguments to show that the fictional context provides grounds for defending what I will call 'The discontinuity thesis'.

fictional perspectives examined in the previous chapter. The solutions to the two problems examined in this second chapter reveal there is an explanatory gap in the accounts of imaginative resistance that explain resistance phenomena by alluding to an asymmetry between evaluative and non-evaluative scenarios.

I argue that these accounts invoke the continuity of our evaluative attitudes and their criteria of appropriateness between fictional and actual scenarios to explain the asymmetry. I call this 'The continuity thesis'. The chapter addresses the two problems outlined above to examine how the continuity thesis is assumed in each case, and to show that it yields a defective explanation of appreciators' engagement with counter-moral fictions because the continuity assumption is left unexplained. This chapter shows that the examined solutions to the problems of imaginative barriers are flawed on two counts. First, the continuity assumption remains unexplained, and therefore there is no reason to defend an asymmetry in our engagement with deviant evaluative and non-evaluative scenarios in fiction. Second, the diagnoses that assume the continuity thesis are proven wrong by the diversity of counter-moral fictions because the features they identify as the causes of imaginative problems are present in narratives that don't cause imaginative resistance.

To do this, the first section of the chapter outlines the continuity thesis, and shows how it is presented as the explanation for the supposed asymmetry. In section two I examine how the continuity thesis is present in the accounts advanced for each of the problems mentioned above. Section three analyses two arguments in favour of the continuity thesis: the argument from response moralism and the argument from value-like imaginings. In section four I claim that the arguments examined before are not enough to defend the continuity thesis, and that, ultimately, they all fail to answer the question at the core of the problems defined from the beginning: why is our engagement with deviant evaluations in fiction different from our engagement with merely descriptive scenarios in some cases but not others. In the final section I reprise the distinction between fictional and actual immorality in fiction to advance an explanation for the cases of counter-moral narratives that cause imaginative resistance, and for those that do not.

2.1 What is the continuity thesis?

As said at the beginning, although the problems of counter-moral scenarios in fiction have been approached from different perspectives, and authors have provided different solutions, the

accounts that claim that problems of imaginative difficulties have something to do with the evaluative nature of the propositions argue that there is an asymmetry in our engagement with deviant evaluative and non-evaluative scenarios in fiction. While appreciators do not typically have problems engaging with fictional narratives that ask them to imagine deviant factual matters, they seem to encounter difficulties when trying to engage with fictions that ask them to imagine deviant evaluations. But why is it that we find such an asymmetry? These accounts invoke the continuity of the evaluative attitudes and their criteria of appropriateness between fictional and actual scenarios to explain the asymmetry. I call this the Continuity thesis. In what follows I argue that the continuity thesis is present as the background assumption in the solutions to the problems of imaginative difficulties that focus on the evaluative nature of the resisted scenarios.

According to these accounts, deviant evaluations in fiction cause imaginative problems because appreciators' evaluative attitudes in fiction follow the evaluative attitudes they would have in an actual scenario, while their non-evaluative attitudes adjust to what is prescribed by fictional narratives. The continuity thesis is thus an explanation for the supposed asymmetry found in our engagement with deviant factual and deviant evaluative scenarios in fiction. The continuity thesis claims that *there is such an asymmetry because of the underlying continuity of appreciators' evaluative attitudes during their engagement with fiction*. Because of this continuity, appreciators do not[11] adopt the prescribed evaluative perspective with its corresponding attitudes.

The accounts that explain the asymmetry in virtue of the evaluative nature of the scenarios that cause imaginative difficulties, assume the continuity thesis inasmuch as they argue that the asymmetry is caused by the persistence of appreciators' evaluative attitudes in spite of what is prescribed by the fictional scenario, contrary to what happens in cases of factual deviance. These accounts assume the continuity thesis by claiming that the asymmetry is caused by the continuity of our evaluations in fictional and actual scenarios. And this in turn is explained by the continuity of our evaluative framework: we *import* our evaluative framework as part of the background information that helps us in making sense of the fictional narrative.

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[11] In her first formulation of the puzzle of imaginative resistance, Gendler identifies two different categories of solutions. Either imaginative resistance is caused by our inability to imagine certain fictional propositions (*can't* solutions), or imaginative barriers emerge because we are unwilling to imagine certain fictional propositions (*won't* solutions) (Gendler, 2000). For the purposes of this discussion, I ignore the differences between *cantian* and *wontian* solutions to the puzzle of resistance phenomena.

We can thus formulate the continuity thesis as follows:

> The *continuity thesis*: the thesis that appreciators import their evaluative framework during their imaginative engagement with fiction.

The continuity thesis can therefore be formulated in terms of the *import principle*[12]. The import principle refers to how much of their cognitive stock appreciators need to take into account for the imaginative engagement with fiction to work. The continuity thesis claims that there is continuity in appreciators' evaluative attitudes because they are imported to the fictional world. *The asymmetry is explained because appreciators import their evaluative attitudes, but not (necessarily) their factual beliefs.* As such, the continuity thesis argues that there is an asymmetry in the workings of the import principle that governs evaluative and non-evaluative background information. While appreciators don't necessarily import the background information regarding non-evaluative matters, they do import their evaluative framework. The asymmetry supposedly found in the import principle explains the asymmetry found in the engagement with deviant scenarios in fiction.

In general, fictional factual beliefs allow discontinuity because they are specified by the fictional context. The import principle governing non-evaluative fictional truths dictates that the background information we are allowed to import to the fictional narrative is limited by the fictional prescriptions: appreciators should import to the fictional scenario what they know about the world *unless* it directly contrasts with the implicit and explicit prescriptions found in the fictional narrative. The import principle can be thus defined as:

> *Import principle*: Where p is a non-evaluative proposition relevant in the context of the narrative, assume p is true in F *unless* F prescribes that $-p$.

However, as said before, the continuity thesis explains the assumed asymmetry in terms of an asymmetry in the workings of the import principle for evaluative and non-evaluative fictional scenarios. When it comes to evaluative propositions, the import principle dictates that appreciators should not simply import background assumptions *unless* otherwise specified by the fictional world, but that they should import background assumptions, and the resulting

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attitudes, *regardless* of what is prescribed. So, for evaluative propositions in fictions, the import principle would be defined as:

> *Import principle[1]*: Where *p* is an evaluative proposition that actually holds, assume *p* is true in F *regardless* of what F prescribes.

The accounts that assume the continuity thesis as an explanation for the supposed asymmetry between deviant evaluative and non-evaluative scenarios in fiction argue that imaginative resistance arises because what is prescribed by the author directly contrasts with how appreciators would evaluate the scenario in real circumstances. Contrary to what happens with deviant factual scenarios, the prescription of a deviant evaluation is not enough to cancel the import mechanism, and the appreciators' actual attitudes are given priority. As a result, appreciators have difficulties or do not fully participate in the fictional world because they reject the prescribed perspective.

2.2 The continuity thesis and the problems of counter-moral fictions

As I said in the introduction to this chapter, I think it is possible to speak of two different types of imaginative problems that might arise during our engagement with the diversity of counter-moral fictions: the problem of immorality and fictional truth, and the problem of immorality and perspective. The problem of immorality and fictional truth refers to the problems that arise when fictional narratives prescribe deviant evaluations as true in the fiction; the problem of immorality and perspective, on the other hand, refers to the problems that arise when fictional narratives prescribe a perspective that endorses deviant evaluative attitudes. This distinction tracks the difference between counter-moral perspectives and counter-moral worlds examined in the first chapter. This section examines some of the proposed solutions to the puzzle of imaginative resistance in virtue of the problem they address, and it shows how the continuity thesis is found as an underlying assumption.

2.2.1 The continuity thesis and the problem of immorality and fictional truth

The problem of immorality and fictional truth refers to the possibility of making true a deviant evaluation in the world of a fictional narrative. That is, it refers to the problems that arise when appreciators engage with narratives that prescribe them to imagine a fictional world in which deviant evaluations are true. This would be the case for instances of counter-moral fictional

worlds, that is, narratives that ask appreciators to imagine a fictional world governed by deviant principles, such as McCarthy's *Blood Meridian*.

In the literature on imaginative resistance, the problem of immorality and fictional truth is addressed by those accounts that explain resistance phenomena by claiming that appreciators encounter imaginative difficulties *because the prescribed deviant evaluations cannot be true in the world of the fiction*. That is, according to these accounts, appreciators experience imaginative difficulties when imagining the world of *Blood Meridian* because the deviant evaluations prescribed by the narrative cannot be true in the fictional world. So, while narratives can make certain deviant factual propositions true in their fictional worlds, such as "The rabbit took a watch out of his waistcoat pocket", narratives cannot arbitrarily make deviant evaluations true in their stories. That is, there is an asymmetry in the prescription of fictional truths for deviant evaluative and non-evaluative scenarios. A fictional narrative can make true in the world of the story a set of deviant non-evaluative propositions by stipulating the right fictional context (as in the case of fantasy or science fiction). But the continuity assumption dictates that for evaluative propositions to be true in the fictional world, they must follow the evaluations that would hold in an actual scenario. The accounts that argue that imaginative problems arise because deviant evaluations cannot be true in the fiction assume the continuity thesis inasmuch as appreciators are meant to *import* their evaluative framework to determine what is and is not true in the fictional world. In Walton's Giselda example, this means that appreciators encounter imaginative difficulties because they do not accept that killing one's own daughter is the right thing to do in the fictional world; instead, the criteria of what is right and wrong in the fictional world follow the criteria of what is right and wrong in the actual world, and appreciators import their evaluative attitudes during their engagement with the world of the fictional narrative.

Kendall Walton claims that appreciators encounter difficulties in imagining deviant evaluations in fiction because appraisals supervene on certain 'natural' characteristics. These relations of dependence do not allow for fictional worlds to differ in evaluative aspects from the real one (Walton, 1994). Walton acknowledges that authors are not constrained by what is the case in the actual world when stipulating fictional truths on factual matters; in factual fictional truths what he calls 'The Reality principle' is not decisive, otherwise audiences would be unable to engage with non-realistic fictions. But, he claims that when it comes to engaging with evaluations, appreciators bring along their evaluative framework because their understanding of the dependence relations remains the same (Walton, 2006; 1994). It is interesting to note

that Walton does not deny that the relations of dependence for evaluations could be different in fiction. He explicitly denies endorsement of the impossibility hypothesis. But rather he argues that appreciators do not accept the relations to be different, thus *importing* their evaluative attitudes (Walton, 2006).

Tamar Gendler identifies what she calls a 'doubling of the narrator'. Gendler suggests that imaginative resistance can be regarded as a 'That's what you think' move: whenever appreciators encounter the prescription of a deviant evaluation, instead of regarding it as true in the story, they regard it as what the narrator *thinks* is true (Gendler, 2000, 63-64). In this sense, we can say that when engaging with fictional worlds, appreciators prioritise and *import* their actual evaluative attitudes over the fictional prescriptions. For Gendler, moral evaluations are categorical, in the sense that if they are true in this world, they are true in any possible world; and this includes fictional worlds, regardless of what is prescribed (Gendler, 2000. 78). So, while the violation of factual truths in fiction doesn't cause imaginative resistance, deviant moral evaluations are resisted by appreciators because of their categorical nature. Readers of fiction do not imagine deviant evaluations being true in the story because moral evaluations are true in all possible worlds, including fictional worlds. And, if this is so, appreciators' evaluative framework is meant to stand even during their engagement with a fictional world. This explains Gendler's emphasis on the democratic nature of appraisals. According to her, appraisals are democratic because appreciators have a bearing on the application of evaluations, so that it is not enough for the narrative to prescribe a deviant evaluation for appreciators to accept it. The fact that appreciators import their evaluative framework due to its categorical nature explains why, according to Gendler, appreciators are both unwilling and incapable of vividly imagining deviant moral propositions during their imaginative engagement (Gendler, 2006, 157).

2.2.2 The continuity thesis and the problem of immorality and perspective

As we just saw, the problem of immorality and fictional truth refers to whether a narrative can stipulate deviant evaluations as true in the fictional world. However, even if we allowed for deviant evaluations to be true in the fiction, we would still have to examine whether it is possible for appreciators to have a rich imaginative engagement with such deviant worlds, to respond according to what a deviant perspective prescribes. The problem of immorality and perspective refers to the difficulties that arise when a fictional narrative prescribes appreciators

to adopt a perspective that endorses deviant evaluations. This problem would arise when appreciators engage with instances of counter-moral perspectives, such as *Breaking Bad*. As I said in the previous chapter, instances of counter-moral perspectives do not prescribe deviant evaluations as true in the story, but they prescribe appreciators to adopt a perspective that involves deviant evaluative attitudes, with the corresponding deviant responses. In the case of *Breaking Bad*, appreciators are meant to regard Walter White as an immoral character even within the world of the fiction. But they are also prescribed to adopt a perspective that regards his success as a drug kingpin as more important than the wellbeing of his family, a perspective that dismisses his wife's moral concerns as exaggerated and unreasonable.

Accounts of imaginative resistance address the problem of immorality and perspective when they claim that, even when the deviant evaluations are not prescribed as true, imaginative difficulties arise because appreciators do not adopt the prescribed deviant perspective because it contrasts with their actual attitudes. That is, the solutions to the problems of imaginative difficulties that assume an asymmetry between deviant evaluative and non-evaluative prescriptions in fiction argue that resistance arises when appreciators do not inhabit a deviant perspective because it violently contrasts with their own evaluative attitudes. The continuity thesis is assumed by these accounts because they claim that appreciators do not engage with deviant evaluative perspectives because they *import* their evaluative framework during their imaginative engagement with fiction. Imaginative difficulties arise because, instead of holding the deviant attitudes prescribed by the narrative, appreciators hold the attitudes they would normally hold toward a deviant character in a real scenario. Going back to Walton's Giselda example, these accounts of imaginative resistance argue that imaginative difficulties arise because appreciators do not adopt a perspective under which they sympathise with Giselda killing her daughter, regardless of whether it is fictionally true or not that she did the right thing. The reason why appreciators do not adopt a perspective that sympathises with Giselda is because they import their everyday perspective that condemns murdering one's own daughter.

Richard Moran, for example, claims that emotional responses toward imagined scenarios follow the emotional responses appreciators would experience when facing an actual scenario. In his "The expression of feeling in imagination", he notes that there is an inherent tension in engaging with contrasting perspectives in fiction. While he acknowledges that the fact that a scenario is actual or imagined makes a difference for the appropriateness of emotions, he also claims that appreciators do not abstract from their actual attitudes when responding to a deviant

scenario in fiction. According to him, this is due to the fact that the emotional responses prescribed by the narrative are not part of the content of what is imagined, but part of the manner in which it is imagined: "The *way* in which [the content] is imagined, on the other hand, is an aspect of the activity of imagining that one is really engaged in, a fact about one's real psychological life and attitudes" (Moran, 1994, 93). In this sense, appreciators *import* their attitudes during their imaginative engagement with fiction. According to his view, fictions can stipulate the content of what is imagined, but they cannot stipulate how one responds to what is imagined; appreciators import their evaluative framework because it is *them* responding to what is prescribed. Moran claims that resistance arises precisely because of the differences between the emotional responses that are prescribed as part of the perspective and appreciators' actual commitments, and the friction this causes (Moran, 1994, 95).

Tamar Gendler's continuity assumption regarding what can and cannot be true in the fictional world has consequences for the problem of immorality and perspective as well. While the prescription of deviant non-evaluative attitudes does not cause imaginative resistance, a perspective that involves deviant moral attitudes is resisted because of the categorical nature of moral claims. As I said in the previous section, Gendler argues that the categorical nature of moral claims means that they are democratic: because they are categorical, appreciators have a bearing on the application of moral concepts. The categorical nature of appreciators' moral beliefs means that a narrative cannot simply prescribe appreciators to hold deviant moral attitudes. Rather, appreciators *import* their actual moral attitudes during their engagement with fiction because they legitimately stand in the fictional world, regardless of the prescribed perspective. Thus, the categorical and the democratic nature of moral evaluations explain why, according to Gendler, appreciators are both unwilling and incapable of vividly imagining deviant moral propositions, that is, of adopting a perspective that endorses deviant moral claims (Gendler, 2006, 157).

Gregory Currie tackles the issue of imaginative difficulties by alluding to a distinction between two types of imaginings: belief-like and desire-like imaginings. The adoption of a perspective during the imaginative engagement with fiction involves not only belief-like imaginings, but a desire-like component (Currie, 2002). Currie's solution to the puzzle of imaginative resistance is thus twofold: appreciators resist adopting deviant perspectives in fiction because they resist summoning both the necessary desire-like and belief-like imaginings. Currie begins by arguing that appreciators do not engage with the relevant deviant desire-like imaginings because, like desires, they are internally constrained due to their world-to-mind direction of fit. Desires and

desire-like imaginings are constrained by "a complex set of dispositions that may, perhaps, be thought of as higher-order desires, but that, since they constitute her basic moral character, are not easily changed" (Currie, 2002, 214). Appreciators thus *import* to the fictional world their evaluative framework inasmuch as "desire-like imagining remains responsive to the dictates of moral character" (Currie, 2002, 214). The lack of the relevant deviant desire-like imaginings has consequences for evaluative belief-like imaginings. While factual belief-like imaginings allow discontinuity with the agent's actual beliefs, evaluative belief-like imaginings are internally connected to desire-like imaginings, and thus also remain responsive to the agent's evaluative framework. The continuity that explains the asymmetry is, therefore, manifested not only in the evaluative framework that regulates desire-like imaginings, but also in that appreciators *import* evaluative belief-like imaginings via desire-like imaginings.

Dustin Stokes (2006) rightly notes that Currie fails to explain the conceptual connection between morality and desire-like imaginings, as there seem to be many cases (as both Stock and Stokes note) where we desire what we don't value. Instead, Stokes claims that to solve the puzzle of imaginative difficulties we need to focus on values expressed in second-order desires. Imaginative resistance is explained by appreciators' inability to form the relevant value-like imaginings. Stokes argues that the reason why appreciators fail to form the relevant second-order desire-like imaginings, or value-like imaginings, necessary for the adoption of a deviant perspective during our imaginative engagement with fiction is that value-like imaginings have a conceptual connection to actual evaluations. In Stokes view, the inability to form the value-like imaginings thus rests on the assumption of the continuity thesis: appreciators import value-like imaginings because they are connected to appreciator's actual evaluative attitudes. Stokes argues that, contrary to belief-like imaginings, value-like imaginings have a world-to-mind direction of fit; this means that, contrary to belief-like imaginings, value-like imaginings are agent-dependent (Stokes, 2006, 397-399). This 'egocentric motivational role' of value-like imaginings causes value-like imaginings to be guided by the agent's actual evaluative framework. Imaginative difficulties arise when engaging with deviant perspectives in fiction because appreciators *import* their actual evaluative framework. Now, as Stokes rightly notes, if this was the whole story, appreciators would be incapable of adopting different perspectives in fiction, as their make-believe perspective would always follow their actual perspective. So, it is important to note that appreciators are capable of forming value-like imaginings that differ from their own, which is why they are capable of perspective-taking in their encounter with

fiction. But, when it comes to *radically deviant* value-like imaginings, the agent's actual evaluative framework is given precedence over the prescribed evaluations (Stokes, 2006, 400).

2.3 Continuity explained

So far I have tried to show that the accounts that assume an asymmetry between our engagement with evaluative and non-evaluative deviance in fiction assume what I have called 'The continuity thesis'. As I said, the continuity thesis can be formulated in terms of the import principle: there is continuity in appreciators' evaluative attitudes because they are imported to the fictional world. The continuity thesis explains the asymmetry in the engagement with deviant evaluative and non-evaluative scenarios in fiction in terms of the asymmetry in the workings of the import principle. While appreciators do not necessarily import the background information regarding non-evaluative matters, they do import their evaluative framework.

However, those accounts that assume the continuity thesis to explain imaginative difficulties in our engagement with counter-moral fictions still need to explain why the rules of import are different for evaluative and non-evaluative cases. This section examines two different arguments that can be adduced to support the supposed asymmetry in the workings of the import principle that lies at the core of the continuity thesis assumed by the solutions to resistance phenomena examined so far. The first argues that the asymmetry in the import principle is caused by the implications of assenting to deviant evaluations in fiction. This first attempt to justify the continuity assumption depends on the assumption of a further asymmetry in the export mechanism. I will show that this argument depends on *response moralism* to justify the continuity thesis. The second argues that evaluations are agent-dependent. This argument claims that appreciators import their evaluative attitudes because evaluations are egocentric.

2.3.1 *Continuity and response moralism[13]*

The continuity thesis explains the asymmetry in the engagement with deviant evaluative and non-evaluative scenarios in fiction in terms of the asymmetry in the workings of the import principle: appreciators import their evaluative attitudes but not (necessarily) their non-

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[13] Chapter 6 argues against response moralism in detail. In this section I only aim to show why response moralism does not provide the necessary grounds to defend the continuity thesis.

evaluative attitudes. However, the accounts examined in this chapter still need to explain why the rules of import are different for evaluative and non-evaluative cases. Some of the authors discussed above explain the asymmetry in the import principle in terms of the implications of assenting to deviant moral evaluations in fiction.

Walton argues for the continuity of appreciators' evaluative attitudes by claiming that imagining can sometimes cause appreciators to succumb to what they regard as pernicious because imagining can lead to believing. But in addition to the risk of confusion, Walton claims that imagining a reprehensible view is dangerous because it would imply giving it more credence than it deserves (Walton, 2006; 1994). This why appreciators do not accept fictional worlds differing from the actual world in evaluative matters.

For Gendler, on the other hand, the asymmetry in the import principle is explained by a 'pop out' effect found in evaluative scenarios. The categorical nature of moral claims is manifested in a 'pop out' effect in which "(…) the reader takes the author to be asking her to believe a corresponding proposition p that concerns the actual world" (Gendler, 2006, 159). In Gendler's view, the fact that evaluations are categorical means that assenting to an invitation to adopt a deviant make-believe moral outlook implies assenting to an invitation to adopt a deviant real-world moral outlook.

Finally, Currie seems to argue that the agent-dependent nature of desire-like imaginings, and their link to the moral character, means that allowing a deviant desire-like imagining would have consequences for the agent's actual moral character. Deviant non-evaluative belief-like imaginings are *quarantined* in the fictional world because they are externally determined; the mind-to-world direction of fit would not allow appreciators to *export* them to the actual world. The agent-dependency of desire-like imaginings, on the other hand, means that a deviant desire-like imagining would somehow track an actual deviant desire that conflicts with the agent's moral character: if appreciators experience deviant desire-like imaginings is because they somehow hold deviant desires.

What is interesting to note, then, is that these attempts to justify the continuity thesis have in common the assumption of a further asymmetry of a closely related sort. In the accounts discussed above, the asymmetry found in the import principle is meant to be explained by a more fundamental asymmetry in the *export mechanism*.

The export mechanism refers to the processes that allow appreciators to learn information about the actual world from their engagement with fiction. Gendler explains that this export

mechanism can work in two different ways: appreciators can export things that the storyteller intentionally and consciously imported, thus gaining knowledge by testimony; or appreciators can export things "whose truth becomes apparent as a result of thinking about the story itself" (Gendler, 2000, 76). It is relevant to note, however, that just as the import principle in non-evaluative scenarios is constrained by what is prescribed by the narrative, the export mechanism for non-evaluative claims is modulated by appreciators' actual beliefs. This means that the export mechanism is neutralized if and when appreciators believe something to be false.

If, however, the export principle is meant to explain the asymmetry between evaluative and non-evaluative scenarios found in the import principle, this cannot be the whole story. The workings of the export mechanism also present an asymmetry for evaluative and non-evaluative cases; the asymmetry in the import principle corresponds to this asymmetry in the export mechanism. Evaluative scenarios are different in terms of the export mechanism because they seem to lack what Gendler calls a quarantining feature: appraisals in fiction are not neutralised by appreciators' contrasting evaluative attitudes. As such, evaluations found in fictional narratives are not limited to the fictional context, but behave like actual appraisals. While deviant non-evaluative propositions are taken to be a prescription to make-believe, deviant evaluative scenarios present a 'clamour for exportation' and are taken to be an invitation to believe. That is to say that deviant evaluations in fiction are taken as a mandate for exportation, even when they contrast with appreciators' actual beliefs.

The rules governing the export mechanism are different for evaluative and non-evaluative cases because in the former, knowledge of the deviant nature of the perspective is not enough to neutralize the presumed invitations to believe rather than make-believe. Imaginative resistance supposedly occurs because appreciators treat the deviant fictional evaluative prescriptions as actual invitations to hold an attitude that demands to be exported. For this reason appreciators import their evaluative framework, and their attitudes follow the attitudes they would hold in an actual scenario.

However, even if it is true that when a narrative prescribes a deviant evaluation it should be taken as a prescription to believe, rather than make-believe, the standard export mechanism could still save appreciators from responding to the call: appreciators could neutralise an invitation to export a fictional prescription when they believe it to be false or inappropriate. Even if understood as an invitation to believe, rather than make-believe, it is not clear why the

invitation cannot be quarantined by the export mechanism, as it is the case for non-evaluative cases. If the possibility to export information from the fictional world in factual matters is neutralized by the belief in the falsity of the claim, it is not clear why appreciators would not be able to engage with what they regard as deviant evaluations in fiction if they take them to be quarantined in the fictional world. So, in principle, the invitation to hold a deviant moral belief could be ignored precisely because appreciators are aware of its deviant character, and it could simply be regarded as an invitation to make-believe.[14]

It seems that to explain the asymmetry in the export mechanism for evaluative and non-evaluative cases, continuity theorists need to defend the claim that deviant evaluative imaginings cannot be quarantined as simply make-believe. To do this, they would need to argue that the make-believe itself breaks the quarantining effect and implies exportation. This means that continuity theorists would have to show that the fundamental asymmetry in the export mechanism, that justifies the asymmetry found in the import principle, stands *because merely make-believing a deviant evaluation already implies the participation in an actual deviant evaluation*.

Thus, one way to defend the continuity thesis is to allude to response moralism. Response moralism argues that our responses to fictional scenarios can be evaluated as bad to feel or wrong; that is, response moralism argues that some instances of make-believe *themselves* are bad or wrong. The continuity thesis would need to argue with response moralism that fictional deviant evaluations are special because assenting to them during an imaginative engagement is wrong in itself. Response moralism argues that deviant imaginings are bad or wrong in themselves because assenting to the deviant evaluations in fiction implies assenting to actual deviant evaluations. In this sense continuity theorists could claim that deviant evaluations in fiction are exported because they imply deviant evaluations in actual scenarios. Continuity theorists would then be able to argue that appreciators prioritise their evaluative framework because they resist actually embracing what they regard as reprehensible views. Imaginative resistance would be explained because adopting a perspective that involves deviant attitudes would imply holding deviant attitudes toward actual scenarios.

To explain why deviant evaluations in fiction imply actual deviant evaluations, Allan Hazlett turns to what he calls the similarity assumption. Hazlett claims that the engagement with fiction

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[14] It is important to note that imaginative resistance would only arise for those appreciators who held moral beliefs contradicted by the fictional world, and who are aware that the perspective prescribed by the fictional world is deviant.

can only function under the assumption that the fictional world is similar to the actual world. The similarity assumption specifies that fictional worlds are similar to the actual world in certain aspects. These aspects form a similarity class which "(…) defines the domain for which the aforementioned assumption of similarity is warranted, for a fiction *f*" (Hazlett, 2009, 251).

When appraisals are part of the similarity class, reacting to a deviant perspective in fiction is tantamount to reacting to its actual counterpart. Response moralism claims that the restrictions to the export mechanism fail (thus eliminating the quarantining effect) not because the *make-believe* response is wrong, but because make-believe responses "(…) are also responses to real events and people. In as much as our emotional responses to fictions are directed at reality, they may be morally assessed. An emotional reaction is never wrong, however, merely in virtue of how it is directed at merely fictional events and characters" (Hazlett, 2009, 253).

2.3.2 Continuity and value-like imaginings

As we saw before, Dustin Stokes claims that we encounter problems when engaging with counter-moral scenarios in fiction because we fail to form the relevant value-like imaginings. As such there is an asymmetry between belief-like imaginings and value-like imaginings (Stokes, 2006, 394). Value-like imaginings have the relevant conceptual link to moral character to guarantee that when appreciators find deviant evaluations in fiction they are unable to form the relevant value-like imaginings, and thus import their actual evaluative attitudes. Stokes claims that the reason why we cannot form radically deviant value-like imaginings is because of their egocentric nature. Contrary to belief-like imaginings, which are determined by fictional prescriptions, value-like imaginings follow the agent's actual value system. The argument that needs to be advanced to back the continuity thesis, therefore, has to do with the nature of the value system and second-order desires.

Following David Lewis, Stokes argues that desires can be both *de dicto,* directed at the world, or *de se,* or directed at oneself, in terms of their intentionality. Values, or second-order desires, on the other hand, are always *de se*: "They are egocentric desires that one have a certain (first-order) desire. (And they are egocentric irrespective of whether the embedded desire is *de dicto* or *de se*.)" (Stokes, 2006, 396) And, if this is the case for values, this will also be the case for value-like imaginings. As such, "all value-like imagining is self-directed"(Stokes, 2006, 396).

In addition to the egocentric nature of value-like imaginings, Stokes accentuates the difference in the direction of fit between belief and desire to show that values, or second-order desires,

are not constrained by the fictional world, but by appreciators' actual value systems. It is the direction of fit that determines the normative constraints of belief-like and value-like imaginings. Since beliefs have a representative function, they have a mind-to-world direction of fit. Therefore they are normatively constrained by the world. So, in the case of make-believe, belief-like imaginings are normatively constrained by the fictional world and by what the narrative prescribes. In contrast, values, like desires, have a world-to-mind direction of fit. As such, they are constrained by the agent's value-system. This value system refers to "an agent's evaluative profile or value set, constituted by all of the evaluative attitudes and dispositions of the agent: her moral character, aesthetic tastes, sensitivities and dispositions, desires, likes, dislikes, and so on" (Stokes, 2006, 398). The agent-dependent nature of values is present in their make-believe counterparts. Value-like imaginings are constrained by the agent's actual value system. It can still be argued, as Stokes notes, that first-order desires don't always follow our value-system. The egocentric nature of values, however, causes them to be more strongly constrained by the value system (Stokes, 2006, 399).

Stokes also notes that, just as beliefs are subjectively constrained in some ways, desires are objectively constrained in some ways (Stokes, 2006, 398 (footnote)). This is what allows for value-like imaginings to be "constrained by value-systems *and* by the evaluative facts of the story" (Stokes, 2006, 399). As said before, he argues that if value-like imaginings *always* followed appreciators' actual values, engaging with different perspectives in fiction would be impossible, since they would always import their own perspective to engage with what is being narrated. Since appreciators are capable of perspective taking during their engagement with fiction, it is possible to *background* the value system to "imaginatively 'try on' different perspectives" (Stokes, 2006, 400). If, however, the different perspective radically contrasts with the agent's evaluative framework, the latter is prioritised. According to Stokes, nevertheless, what is considered as radically contrasting is something that remains subject to 'reader relativity'; it depends on the strength and salience of the agent's values, on different conceptual associations, or even on different imaginative ability (Stokes, 2006, 403-403).

2.4 Against the continuity thesis

So far I have showed that those accounts that claim that imaginative resistance arises due to the evaluative nature of the scenarios depend on the continuity thesis insofar as they try to explain the asymmetry between our engagement with evaluative and non-evaluative deviance

by claiming that appreciators import their evaluative framework. However, in what follows I argue that the continuity thesis, and therefore the solutions to the puzzle of imaginative resistance that rely on it, is flawed on two counts. First, the continuity assumption that depends on the import of appreciators' evaluative attitudes is unexplained; therefore, there is no reason to defend an asymmetry in our engagement with deviant evaluative and non-evaluative scenarios in fiction. Second, the continuity thesis fails to account for the diversity of counter-moral fictions; in fact, the diagnoses that assume the continuity thesis are proven wrong by the different types of counter-moral fictions because the features they identify as the causes of imaginative problems are present in narratives that don't cause imaginative resistance. These failings of the accounts that assume the continuity thesis are relevant because if we want to examine how appreciators engage with counter-moral fictions, as is the aim of this work, we have to be able to explain what happens both in those cases where imaginative difficulties arise and in those cases where they do not.

2.4.1 Assuming the continuity thesis is unjustified

I have argued that the accounts that claim that imaginative resistance is caused by the *evaluative* nature of the scenarios assume the continuity thesis. According to these views, imaginative difficulties arise because appreciators import their evaluative attitudes in their engagement with fiction. But in the arguments advanced by the accounts discussed above, it is never clear why it is assumed that appreciators import their evaluative framework, thus provoking difficulties in the imaginative engagement with deviant evaluations in fiction. To argue that evaluations in fiction follow the audience's actual evaluative attitudes one needs to show that there is something special about evaluative attitudes, something that differentiates them from non-evaluative attitudes. However, what I argue in what follows is that neither response moralism nor value-like imaginings can explain why the evaluative framework is meant to be exported, and therefore they cannot explain the asymmetry in our engagement with evaluative and non-evaluative deviance in fiction.

Against response moralism[15]

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[15] In what follows I present a very brief criticism on Hazlett's version on response moralism. Chapter six explores other arguments in favour of response moralism, and shows why they are flawed.

As we saw above, one way to defend the asymmetry in the workings of the import principle is to allude to a further asymmetry found in the export mechanism. Deviant evaluations in fiction are such that they are exported just by participating in the make-believe. Appreciators thus import their evaluative attitudes because of the implications of assenting to deviant evaluations in fiction: by adopting a deviant perspective in fiction, appreciators assent to an invitation to hold an actual deviant perspective, thus exporting a make-believe moral outlook to a real-world moral outlook. Make-believe responses violate the quarantining mechanisms because make-believe responses are already bad to feel or wrong. Appreciators import their evaluative attitudes to avoid holding deviant attitudes that make them morally accountable. In this sense, a version of the continuity thesis depends on response moralism.

Response moralism, however, depends on the equivalence of actual responses and make-believe responses to argue that the make-believe responses themselves violate the quarantining effect of fiction. And, as we saw, in Hazlett's account this equivalence depends on evaluations being part of the similarity class, that is, the aspects in which the fictional world is similar to the actual world. The equivalence of actual and make-believe responses is only guaranteed in cases where the objects of the appraisals are part of the similarity class. However, the extension of the similarity class is arbitrarily determined in Hazlett's account. He does not present an argument for when deviant moral scenarios should be taken to be part of the similarity class. And thus, there is no reason to think that appreciators' responses violate the quarantine.

It is not clear if the similarity class is determined by the author or by the readers. If the similarity class is determined by the author, it is still not clear why appreciators would not be able to regard the inclusion of the object of a deviant evaluation in the similarity class as a mistake. It seems that in cases of factual deviance, appreciators are capable of ignoring imprecise claims that were intended to be part of the similarity class; in cases where authors make factual mistakes, knowledgeable readers can simply eliminate the fictional propositions from the similarity class, without getting confused. So it is not clear why this would not be the case for evaluative deviance. If appreciators regard a fictional evaluation as deviant, it is precisely because they do not think the evaluation actually stands; deviant evaluations stand out because they contrast with appreciators' understanding of the world. Therefore, it is not clear why, when encountering a deviant evaluation in fiction directed at an object that was included as part of the similarity class by the author, readers would not simply eliminate it from the similarity class.

The same can be said if the similarity class is specified by the audience. If it is the audience who determines which objects are part of the similarity class during their engagement with fiction, and audience members recognise deviant evaluations as deviant, it seems clear that they would not include the object of the evaluation in the similarity class. Again, if appreciators regard a fictional evaluation as deviant, it is precisely because they do not think the evaluation actually stands. And so appreciators would not regard the object of the deviant evaluation as belonging to the similarity class precisely because they realise the response is inappropriate.

Without the inclusion of the objects of deviant evaluations in the similarity class, response moralism cannot claim that the responses to fictional events are actually responses to real events; and, in turn, it cannot claim that make-believe responses to deviant evaluations in fiction violate the quarantine because they are bad or wrong themselves. And this is the same problem found in the accounts discussed above: it is not clear why evaluations in fiction constitute a special type of fictional prescription, why evaluations are part of the information that is imported to the fictional world, or why they are exported.

In the arguments advanced by the accounts discussed above, it is never clear why the evaluative framework is imported, thus provoking difficulties in the imaginative engagement with deviant evaluations in fiction. To argue that evaluations in fiction follow the audience's actual evaluative attitudes one needs to show that there is something special about evaluative attitudes. As argued in the second section of the chapter, these accounts of imaginative resistance seem to point to the export mechanism as the reason why evaluations require a special consideration in imaginative engagement. But, once again, it is not clear why evaluations would imply a special kind of export mechanism that is unable to quarantine what is recognised as deviant, as is the case with other instances of non-realistic fiction.

I have tried to show that the 'clamour for exportation', and therefore the continuity thesis, could work under the assumption made by Hazlett's response moralism: that the assent to a fictional deviant evaluation entails the implicit assent to a claim regarding the actual world. But the problem is that Hazlett offers no argument for why the objects of deviant evaluations are part of the similarity class. And this problem is mirrored in the export mechanism. The export mechanism dictated that appreciators can export something from the fictional world unless they believe it to be false (that is, unless they know the scenario is not part of the similarity class). Precisely because of this, the export mechanism can only apply for the similarity class. And, as shown before, response moralism offers no argument to claim that deviant moral evaluations

are always part of it, and, therefore, to claim that deviant moral scenarios present a 'clamour for exportation'. Hazlett is right in claiming that the fact that fictions sometimes say something about the world should not be controversial, but what I do believe to be controversial is to claim that, when it comes to deviant moral claims, fictional narratives *always* aim at saying something about the world, and that therefore our reactions to deviant moral claims in fiction are always reactions to actual deviant moral claims. To provide no argument as to why evaluations have special implications for the similarity class, the export mechanism, and the import principle is to beg the question.

Against value-like imaginings

As we saw before, Stokes argues that to explain imaginative difficulties we need to examine value-like imaginings that are inherently linked to moral evaluations. According to Stokes' account, imaginative resistance arises because appreciators cannot form the relevant value-like imaginings. Contra Currie, Stokes argues that appreciators *can* form desire-like imaginings during their engagement with deviant perspectives in fiction. In fact, engaging with a deviant perspective in fiction would be like actually desiring something we don't value. And this is because, although desires and desire-like imaginings, are agent-dependent due to their world-to-mind direction of fit, they are not necessarily constrained by an agent's value system. So, while they are normatively evaluable in terms of their consistency, Stokes claims that "We are not very good at managing our desires. (…) We notoriously have desires that are inconsistent with the rest of our goals, projects, and other desires" (Stokes, 2006, 398).

Values, on the other hand, are not only normatively evaluable, like first order desires, but are in fact constrained by the agent's value system. These constraints cannot simply be caused by the agent-dependent nature of second order-desires, as this characteristic is shared by first-order desires. Values are constrained by the agent's value system because they are always egocentric. Even when the embedded desires can be *de dicto* or *de se*, values, or second-order desires are always *de se* (Stokes, 2006, 399). Because they are egocentric, values connect directly to the agent's value system. The continuity in appreciators' evaluative framework during their engagement with fiction is explained, in Stockes' account, by the egocentric nature of values. While desire-like imaginings are not constrained by the agent's actual value system, value-like imaginings refer directly to the agent's value system for normative constraints. Appreciators fail to assent to the prescription of deviant evaluations as true in the fictional

world because they cannot form value-like imaginings that radically differ from their value system.

Stokes seems to argue that values and value systems are different: the latter normatively constrain the former. Value systems must, therefore, be constituted by something other than just values (although it might include them). Stokes includes as part of the value system "all of the evaluative attitudes and dispositions of the agent: her moral character, aesthetic tastes, sensitivities and dispositions, desires, likes, dislikes, and so on" (Stokes, 2006, 398). But he fails to mention that value systems must also include a reference to relevant beliefs. Moral beliefs, for instance, seem to be an essential part of an agent's moral character. So, while it might be true that values are agent-dependent and egocentric, it could be argued that at least part of the value system has a mind-to-world direction of fit.

Stokes recognises that, like beliefs, belief-like imaginings have a mind-to-world direction of fit. If at least part of the value system is constituted by beliefs, it doesn't seem clear why in their engagement with fiction appreciators do not form the relevant moral belief-like imaginings to modify the constraints so that the agent can form the relevant deviant value-like imaginings. Stokes does recognise, as we saw before, that appreciators can background their value system to allow for moderate deviant value-like imaginings; but radically deviant prescriptions are always resisted to prioritise the agent's actual value system.

It is not clear, however, what constitutes a radical value-like imagining. But even more so, it is not clear why (certain) beliefs within the value system do not allow fictional distortion, while factual beliefs do. Stokes would have to argue why there can't be something like a fictional value system that is constituted by value-like and belief-like imaginings; or he would have to argue why value systems are off limits during the imaginative engagement. So, in the end, Stokes' account assumes the continuity thesis inasmuch as he assumes the continuity of the value system, but he fails to argue for it.

2.4.2 The continuity thesis and the complexity of counter-moral fictions

In addition to the problems examined above, the solutions that assume the continuity thesis are unable to account for the complexity of our imaginative engagement with different types of counter-moral fictions. The examples advanced in the previous chapter show that audiences are able and willing to engage with morally deviant perspectives in certain types of fictional narratives but not others. Appreciators often feel a strong sympathy for immoral characters,

they applaud immoral decisions, they overlook immoral actions. If the accounts of imaginative resistance that focus on the evaluative nature of the resisted scenarios were right, and imaginative difficulties were caused by the nature of evaluations, appreciators would resist participation in all instances of counter-moral fictions. And this is not the case. A satisfactory account of our imaginative engagement with fiction needs to explain both the cases that cause imaginative difficulties and those that do not. And the fact is that the continuity thesis cannot account for the variability of resistance phenomena. In this sense, I believe it is possible to say that the diagnoses of the causes of imaginative resistance are wrong: the features they present as the causes of imaginative resistance are found in narratives that do not cause imaginative problems.

One of the problems is that a big part of the discussion has been framed in terms of clear and explicit propositions in the narrative that are resisted. But this approach fails to acknowledge that fictional narratives prescribe perspectives and not simply propositions. Continuity theorists ignore the fictional context in which the deviant evaluations and deviant perspectives are prescribed. Kathleen Stock (2005) and Cain Todd (2009) both emphasise the importance of context in imaginative engagement. They are right in noting that the original formulation of the puzzle was highly misleading in presenting only isolated propositions. The problem with these examples is that they are not really representative of what we would expect from a fictional scenario. Fictions are rarely made of just one sentence. Fictional propositions are always presented within a fictional context. It is within this context that appreciators accept, or reject them. It could be true that if an appreciator encountered the isolated proposition "Justice is served when a criminal is tortured", she would be likely to reject it. However, when she encounters the same implicit attitude in the fictional context of *Lady Vengeance,* it would seem that the implicit proposition is accepted as fitting; even more so, she is likely to respond accordingly by sympathizing with the perpetrators.

Nevertheless, the importance of context for the imaginative engagement with deviance in fiction is not exclusive to evaluative propositions, and thus it does not support the supposed asymmetry between evaluative and non-evaluative cases. Appreciators need the relevant context to imagine deviant factual propositions, such as "The rabbit took a watch out of his waistcoat pocket". Stock notes that this is reason enough to think that the difference between factual and evaluative propositions, established from the first writings on imaginative resistance, is not as straightforward as authors made it seem. Thus imaginative failure does not occur *whenever* we encounter a deviant evaluation in a fictional context, but rather when we

cannot identify the fictional context that justifies such an evaluation. Even in those cases where fictions are made of just one sentence, like Moterroso's "Upon awakening, the dinosaur was still there.", appreciators are still required to come up with the relevant context that could justify an otherwise nonsensical proposition. And even without an *explicit* narrative context, appreciators would most likely find the proposition in an actual context (for instance, finding the proposition in a book of fiction, the author's belonging to a certain literary movement, etc.) that would encourage appreciators to come up with a fictional context to make sense of the proposition. In the same light, if appreciators were presented with a fiction made up of only "In killing her baby, Giselda did the right thing. After all, it was a girl" in the relevant context (for instance, finding the proposition in a short story compilation), they would be required to come up with the necessary context before resisting the proposition altogether. Stock notes that even Gendler accepts that the relevant context (if the baby was a changeling, for instance) would make Giselda's decision a sensible thing (Stock, 2005) (Gendler, 2000).

The use of such short examples in the original literature on imaginative resistance not only leaves aside the context, but also the aesthetic properties of the fictional scenario that help in establishing the prescribed perspective. As said in the first chapter, appreciators do not merely respond to what is represented, but to how it is represented. The modes of representation and the way in which they manipulate appreciators' responses are particularly important for narratives that present deviance. But, again, I do not think this is something exclusive to evaluative propositions. Appreciators often engage with radically deviant factual propositions in fiction because of how propositions are presented. For example, Julio Cortázar is famous for introducing radically deviant fictional worlds (like a man throwing up bunnies in his short story "Letter to a young lady in Paris") as if they were mundane: the utterly detailed narration of the otherwise realistic world is not disrupted by the revelation of the fantastic element, and the narrator shares the details without any signs of bewilderment. This is far from the only resource available for artists, and I believe we have reasons to think that appreciators are capable of engaging with deviant evaluative worlds for the same reasons they accept such deviant worlds as those created by Cortázar. When the relevant context has been provided and the right aesthetic properties are put into place, the assent to the deviant proposition might come naturally[16].

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[16] Shen-yi Liao examines the phenomenon of 'hermeneutic recalibration'. This refers to "a common and non-puzzling literary technique to jar the reader *temporarily* and force her to reconsider the work in response" (Liao, 2013). He notes that many cases that were originally thought to cause imaginative resistance, are actually cases

2.5 An eliminativist account?

As I have tried to show, the problem with the continuity thesis is that it fails to explain why we should assume that evaluations in fiction are special, and, therefore, that our imaginative engagement with them is different. On the contrary, it seems that an account that claims that the import principle does not behave differently in evaluative and non-evaluative cases is more attractive. A *discontinuity* thesis would claim that both in evaluative and non-evaluative cases appreciators import their attitudes to the fictional narrative *unless* it directly contrasts with what is prescribed by the fictional perspective. That is, appreciators prioritise the fictional prescriptions during their imaginative engagement. Most importantly, a *discontinuity* thesis would claim that appreciators' evaluative framework is guided by the prescribed perspective.

In the following chapter I defend a discontinuity thesis that can explain our engagement with different types of counter-moral fictions. However, I do not believe that a discontinuity thesis should support an eliminativist account that denies resistance phenomena altogether. Like I said before, a successful account of our engagement with counter-moral fictions needs to be able to explain cases that do not cause imaginative difficulties and cases that do. In the previous chapter I noted that I find difficulties in engaging with narratives like *The Wire*, and that I absolutely refuse to engage with fictions like *The Birth of a Nation* or *The Clansman*. In this sense, an eliminativist account of imaginative resistance that denies an asymmetry between evaluative and non-evaluative cases also fails to account for the complexity of our engagement with counter-moral fictions. Under an eliminativist assumption, appreciators should assent to deviant prescriptions once the right context and the right aesthetic properties are put in place. Nevertheless there are cases in which appreciators overlook fictional prescriptions in favour of their actual evaluative framework, where imaginative resistance actually takes place; and this phenomena definitely undermine an eliminativist account.

To explain resistance phenomena it is important to note that the fictional context is not just constituted by fictional prescriptions and aesthetic properties. As I argued in the first chapter, authorial intentions and the actual context in which fictions are produced have a bearing on the classification and the reception of fictional narratives. The distinction between fictional and

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where the audience is capable of making sense of an originally shocking proposition by identifying the relevant fictional context.

actual immorality is of utmost relevance to determine why certain morally deviant scenarios cause imaginative difficulties, while others do not.

Cases of actual immorality present what Gendler calls a 'clamour for exportation', insofar as we can identify an underlying authorial intention to make a claim about the actual world. These are cases where imaginative difficulties take place. Contrary to what Gendler argues, this 'clamour for exportation' has nothing to do with evaluative nature of the scenarios. Instead, the invitation to *believe*, rather than make-believe, that appreciators refuse is found in the narrative's extra-fictional perspective. Instances of actual immorality, such as *Manhattan* or *Gone with the Wind*, lack the necessary elements to quarantine the prescriptions to the fictional world. But what is important to note is that this is caused by the *actual* attitudes found in the works, and not by the special nature of evaluative propositions. As I said in the previous chapter, instances of actual immorality prescribe a real-world moral outlook in that they include an immoral extra-fictional perspective. And works of fiction that are instances of actual immorality present a 'clamour for exportation' not in virtue of the evaluative nature of the deviant perspective, but in virtue of the fact they include an extra-fictional perspective that prescribes an immoral real-world outlook.

Instances of fictional immorality, on the other hand, do not present a 'clamour for exportation' insofar as they only include a counter-moral fictional perspective that prescribes only a make-believe moral outlook. Because appreciators realize that merely fictional immorality does not violate the quarantining effect of fiction, they do not import their evaluative framework. In turn, they do not experience imaginative difficulties, and they can adopt a deviant fictional perspective with the corresponding deviant responses.

I believe that imaginative resistance to evaluative scenarios in fiction can therefore be explained by alluding to the distinction between fictional and actual immorality, and fictional and extra-fictional perspectives. Appreciators encounter imaginative difficulties because they can identify a deviant extra-fictional perspective in instances of actual immorality. Precisely because these narratives include immoral real-world outlooks, appreciators cannot ignore moral considerations as they do in instances of fictional immorality. The distinction between fictional and actual immorality has thus implications for both the import principle and the export mechanism. Appreciators realize the quarantining effect of fiction is violated due to the 'clamour of exportation' of actual immorality; they import their evaluative framework in those narratives where they can identify an extra-fictional perspective that prescribes a deviant real-

world moral outlook; and thus they experience imaginative difficulties when trying to engage with these morally deviant scenarios.

In this chapter I have showed that the continuity thesis found in much of the literature on the problems of imaginative resistance cannot account for our engagement with different types of counter-moral fictions. The diversity of counter-moral fictions shows that in some cases appreciators favour their actual evaluative attitudes, which stand in the way of participation with counter-moral perspectives in fiction. But it also shows that in some other cases appreciators' make-believe moral outlook follows what is prescribed by the narrative. Because part of the aim of this thesis is to examine how appreciators engage with immorality in fiction it is important to explain what happens in both cases. I have offered an explanation of the causes of resistance phenomena by alluding to the distinction between fictional and actual immorality, and between fictional and extra-fictional perspectives. In the next chapter I explore a discontinuity thesis that can explain what happens in those cases where appreciators engage with immorality in fiction by adopting counter-moral perspectives.

3. The Discontinuity Thesis

The examples examined in chapter one showed that appreciators engage in different ways with different types of counter-moral fictions. A satisfactory account of our engagement with immorality in fiction, therefore, needs to be able to explain why different types of counter-moral content elicit different types of responses from appreciators. In the previous chapter I argued that the continuity thesis cannot account for these differences. I claimed that the continuity thesis is present in those solutions to the puzzle of imaginative resistance that assume there is an asymmetry between our engagement with evaluative and non-evaluative deviance in fiction. The continuity thesis attempts to explain this assumed asymmetry by claiming that appreciators import their evaluative framework during their imaginative engagement.

However, I have showed that the continuity thesis and the accounts that rely on this continuity assumption are flawed on two counts. First, these accounts give no arguments for why we should think that appreciators import their evaluative attitudes *whenever* they encounter evaluative deviance in fiction; and, therefore, there is no reason to think there is an asymmetry between deviant evaluative and non-evaluative scenarios in fiction. I argued that the accounts that claim that imaginative resistance is caused by the evaluative nature of the scenarios assume the continuity thesis: appreciators import their evaluative attitudes in their engagement with fiction. But in the arguments advanced by the accounts discussed in chapter two, it is never clear why the evaluative framework is imported, thus causing imaginative resistance. To argue that evaluations in fiction follow the audience's actual evaluative attitudes one needs to show that there is something special about evaluative attitudes. I concluded that neither response moralism nor value-like imaginings can explain the supposed asymmetry in our engagement with evaluative and non-evaluative deviance in fiction.

Second, I argued that the diagnoses of the puzzle of imaginative resistance that assume the continuity thesis are proven wrong by our engagement with different types of counter-moral fictions. If the accounts of imaginative resistance that focus on the evaluative nature of the resisted scenarios were right, and imaginative difficulties were caused by the nature of evaluations, appreciators would resist participation in all instances of counter-moral fictions. And this is not the case. Again, a satisfactory account of our imaginative engagement with fiction needs to explain both the cases that cause imaginative difficulties and those that do not. And the fact is that the continuity thesis cannot account for the variability of resistance

phenomena. In this sense, I believe it is possible to say that the diagnoses of the causes of imaginative resistance are wrong: the features they present as the causes of imaginative barriers are found in narratives that do not cause imaginative problems.

If the continuity thesis fails to explain why we should think that evaluations in fiction are special and why our engagement with them is different, it seems that an account that claims that the import principle does not behave differently in evaluative and non-evaluative cases is more attractive. By the end of the previous chapter I pointed to a *discontinuity* thesis that would claim that both in evaluative and non-evaluative cases appreciators import their attitudes to the fictional narrative *unless* it directly contrasts with what is prescribed by the fictional perspective. However, I also noted that even if the discontinuity thesis does not assume an asymmetry between evaluative and non-evaluative scenarios in fiction, it would still need to account for those cases of counter-moral fictions that do trigger imaginative difficulties in appreciators. That is, the discontinuity thesis needs to be able to account for variations in our engagement with different types of counter-moral content in fictional narratives.

This chapter argues for a discontinuity thesis that can explain how appreciators engage with the diversity of counter-moral fictions explored in the first chapter. The main aim of this chapter is to determine how and why, in instances of fictional immorality, appreciators do not import their evaluative framework, and to explore how audiences can engage with radically different moral outlooks in these cases. While it does not assume an asymmetry between evaluative and non-evaluative scenarios in fiction, I argue that the discontinuity thesis does assume an asymmetry between fictional and actual immorality in fiction. This asymmetry allows us to explain why certain morally deviant scenarios in fiction cause imaginative difficulties, while others do not. The discontinuity thesis thus claims that appreciators do not *necessarily* import their evaluative attitudes; and that the import principle that mandates appreciators to favour their evaluative attitudes over the fictional prescriptions in some cases is sensitive to the distinction between fictional and actual immorality. That is, the discontinuity thesis claims that there is variability in the workings of the import principle, but that this variability is not determined by the evaluative nature of certain scenarios, but by the fictional/actual distinction.

I explore the notion of fictional context as that which allows appreciators to determine whether a counter-moral fiction constitutes an instance of fictional or actual immorality. The discontinuity thesis that I defend in what follows establishes that once the relevant fictional context is provided, and appreciators are sure that the narrative prescribes a counter-moral

make-believe outlook exclusively, they adopt what they would normally regard as deviant attitudes. The discontinuity thesis thus allows for the fictional endorsement of the deviant responses to the counter-moral content of the narrative. In this sense I argue that appreciators display allegiance to the immoral perspective prescribed by instances of fictional immorality.

With these objectives in mind, the first section of the chapter explores the notion of allegiance. I argue that in instances of fictional immorality we can speak of affect-based allegiance to the prescribed perspective. This allegiance allows appreciators to ignore what they would normally regard as morally relevant considerations. The second section explores the importance of genre considerations for narratives to achieve affect-based allegiance. I explore the accounts advanced by Shen-yi Liao, Bence Nanay, and Jonathan Weinberg to see how genre can significantly impact appreciators engagement to works of fiction. However, by the end of this section I show that even with the inclusion of genre, these accounts cannot explain allegiance variability in different types of counter-moral fictions. The third section thus proposes the notion of fictional context; the elements of the fictional context are what allow appreciators to determine whether a narrative constitutes an instance of fictional or actual immorality. And this, in turn, explains the discontinuity in appreciators' moral outlook when engaging with instances of fictional immorality. In addition to genre, I examine four other elements as part of the fictional context: authorial intentions, socio-historical context, fictional prescriptions, and modes of representation. By the end of the section I introduce the notion of aesthetic space as that which allows for the discontinuity: given that a narrative can be identified as an instance of fictional immorality, appreciators can ignore moral considerations during their imaginative engagement. Finally, section four examines the discontinuity thesis and its implications for our imaginative engagement with counter-moral fictions.

3.1 Counter-moral fictions and affect-based allegiance

The literature on imaginative resistance recognises in Hume the first discussion of the supposed asymmetry in our engagement with evaluative and non-evaluative deviance in fictional narratives. Hume notes that, while appreciators do not seem to find speculative errors in literary works problematic, they do need to make a "very violent effort" to engage with moral deviance. In particular, Hume refers to the works' ability to arouse "sentiments of approval or blame, love or hatred, different from the ones that long custom has made familiar to us". What is important to note, therefore, is that Hume is referring specifically to an emotional resistance in

appreciators to enter into deviant sentiments. That is, what seems puzzling about these cases is that appreciators encounter difficulties when imagining deviant evaluative scenarios because they are asked to imagine in a rich sense that involves more than just entertaining propositions; appreciators are asked to summon a wide range of attitudes that include affective responses. Tamar Gendler, for example, has noted that imaginative resistance does not seem to arise in instances of counterfactual reasoning where we are merely asked to suppose something is the case. Fictional narratives that present morally deviant scenarios seem to be problematic because they do not merely ask appreciators to entertain deviant propositions, but they ask them to respond accordingly.

However, if we go back to the discussion in the previous chapter on the solutions to the so-called puzzle of imaginative resistance we can see that much of the literature focuses on resistance to *propositions*. The previous discussion frames the imaginative difficulties in terms of either appreciators resisting imagining deviant propositions as true, or appreciators resisting to imagine explicit propositions concerning deviant evaluations. But, for the most part, the discussion fails to focus on what imagining those explicit propositions entails. If imaginative difficulties do not seem to arise in cases of counterfactual reasoning, we have reasons to think that the problem is not with appreciators entertaining explicit propositions concerning deviant evaluations, but with imagining these propositions in the rich sense described by Hume. And this richer sense of imagination involves adopting a perspective, with the corresponding attitudes, that endorses the deviant evaluations imagined. If this is so, then it seems that appreciators should have no problems with imagining a fictional world in which deviant evaluations are true. Imaginative problems would arise only in those cases where appreciators are asked to adopt a perspective that endorses deviant evaluations and respond accordingly.

Why is this relevant? As I noted in the previous chapter, Kendall Walton and Brian Weatherson identify four different (if related) puzzles comprised in what Gendler originally identified as a single puzzle. The alethic puzzle refers to why authorial authority is not enough to make certain claims true in the fiction. The imaginative puzzle refers to why appreciators find certain propositions difficult to imagine. The phenomenological puzzle refers to why certain propositions in fiction are striking. And the aesthetic puzzle refers to how evaluative deviance impacts the aesthetic value of certain fictional scenarios. But if we look closely at the formulation of these problems, most of the discussion lost sight of what was originally puzzling about these cases, namely why certain scenarios are difficult to imagine in a rich sense that involves adopting attitudes that include affective responses. And if our focus is on appreciators'

engagement with counter-moral fictions, it is precisely the phenomenon of *affective* resistance that should be at the heart of the discussion.

As I noted in the first chapter, engaging with counter-moral perspectives in fiction often does not require appreciators to imagine a fictional world in which deviant evaluations are true. That is, the imaginative engagement with counter-moral perspectives often does not involve imagining deviant evaluations as true. The distinction I made between counter-moral fictional perspectives and counter-moral fictional worlds aims at noting that in many cases appreciators are asked to engage with a deviant perspective while acknowledging its counter-moral character even *within* the fictional world. So if we go back to Walton's famous Giselda example, the problem is that fictional narratives do not merely ask appreciators to imagine that Giselda did the right thing in killing her daughter, but that they ask appreciators to sympathize with Giselda killing her daughter. Examining our engagement with counter-moral fictions thus requires us to focus on what sympathizing with fictional perspectives entails.

A narrative counts as an instance of counter-moral fiction not because it includes immoral characters, but because the narrative's fictional perspective endorses immoral characters. A fictional perspective endorses immorality by prescribing sustained strong pro-attitudes toward immoral characters. As such, a counter-moral perspective is that which prescribes sympathy for immoral characters. But fictional narratives are often complex. It is not uncommon to find that our sympathies swerve during our engagement with the story. Or even that we feel sympathy for the antagonists and antipathy for the protagonists during certain moments. Even more so, this is often not a failure in appreciators' engagement, but something that is encouraged by narratives. For this reason, Carl Plantinga defines mere sympathy as a pro-attitude rooted in emotional responses that include concern for the character, but that need not be sustained throughout the entire narrative. Sympathies can be short-term and shallow, and can be displayed toward characters that are not endorsed by the narrative's perspective, such as villains (Plantinga, 2010).

The sympathy that allows the *endorsement* of immoral characters and counter-moral perspectives in fiction must, therefore, be understood more strongly, in terms of allegiance. A counter-moral fiction is that which prescribes allegiance toward immoral characters. If we can say that the narrative's perspective endorses immorality it is because the strong pro-attitudes toward highly immoral characters are sustained throughout the engagement with the story. Allegiance refers to that strong pro-attitude that is extended throughout the narrative and that

maintains a continued interest in protagonists' well-being. Allegiance includes sympathies, but it also involves pro-attitudes that can overlook character flaws and unsympathetic actions (Plantinga, 2010).

The problem with claiming that the engagement with a deviant perspective requires a pro-attitude as strong as allegiance is that, while mere sympathy is simply rooted in emotional responses, allegiance is generally rooted in moral judgement. According to Murray Smith, allegiance refers to the sustained pro-attitudes appreciators feel toward characters who have earned their moral approval. It is this moral approval that grounds appreciators' wishing good things for a character. Smith claims that allegiance depends on appreciators recognising morally desirable traits in the protagonist of the narrative (Smith, 1995, 188). The prescribed perspective thus needs to emphasize these morally desirable traits to guarantee that appreciators will experience strong pro-attitudes throughout their engagement with the narrative.

Many of the narratives that secure allegiance for highly unsympathetic characters are stories that follow antiheroes. Plantinga claims that allegiance does not depend on characters behaving well at all times, "but just as much by the estimation that he or she is "fundamentally good" (whatever that may mean to the spectator) despite temporary bad behaviour, *or* is perhaps bad in some respects but travels a path of moral improvement" (Plantinga, 2010, 42). Antiheroes are protagonists that lack traditional heroic qualities and that are morally flawed in some respects. These flaws, however, are outweighed by the protagonists' moral virtues: antiheroes might be rough around the edges, but they ultimately aim at the greater good (Carroll, 2008; Eaton, 2010, 2012). In these cases, narratives secure allegiance that can overlook unsympathetic traits by emphasising other morally desirable features. Think, for example, of television series *House*. Dr Gregory House, the protagonist, is a misanthrope who is addicted to Vicodin. Not only is he rude and dismissive toward his colleagues and patients, but his addiction constantly puts them in danger. Although audience members are often prescribed strong con-attitudes toward him, allegiance to such an antipathetic character is secured throughout the narrative by emphasizing his ultimately redeeming feature: House is always focused on saving patients' lives, even when he has selfish motivations to do so.

However, I noted that instances of fictional immorality emphasise the immoral nature of the protagonists, and they prescribe a perspective that endorses such immorality. In this sense, it is important to note the differences between narratives that feature rough heroes and that prescribe a counter-moral perspective, and narratives that feature antiheroes that do not. Contrary to

antiheroes, the moral flaws of rough heroes cannot simply be written off as a kooky feature of their overall good character. A. W. Eaton identifies five features of the rough hero: (1) his flaws are grievous, (2) his flaws are an integral part of his personality, (3) he fully intends to be bad and is remorseless, (4) the audience is not prescribed to forgive him or dismiss his actions as the result of misfortune, weakness or ignorance, and (5) his vices are not outweighed by other more redeeming features (Eaton, 2012).

Rough heroes mean to be bad. More importantly, their moral flaws are not only a central part of their personality, but a central part of the narrative. Unlike villains, rough heroes are *endorsed* by the narrative's perspective. As I noted in the first chapter, Noël Carroll has argued against Eaton's account of rough heroes that we must not mistake a character's immorality with an endorsement of that immorality by the narrative. Thus, according to Carroll, rough heroes cannot be said to be endorsed by the narrative's perspective since the narrative clearly portrays them as evil (Carroll, 2013, 372). Carroll, nevertheless, fails to see what Eaton identifies as the rough hero's defining feature within a narrative: while he is presented as immoral, audiences are prescribed sustained strong pro-attitudes toward him. The narrative endorses rough heroes by prescribing these pro-attitudes. And if I argue that the fictional perspective endorses immorality it is precisely because appreciators are prescribed *allegiance* toward immoral characters. Rough heroes require a very special kind of allegiance that acknowledges the hero's depravity, but that guarantees our continued investment in his success.

In prescribing moral deviance deliberately, instances of fictional immorality do not prescribe a perspective that regards the immoral character of the protagonists as morally desirable. On the contrary, chapter one emphasised that these narratives require appreciators to acknowledge the deviant character of the perspective. So how can allegiance to immoral characters acknowledge their depraved nature while guaranteeing our continued investment in the narrative? Smith argues that the moral traits that ground allegiance do not need to be evaluated by audiences in absolute terms. In some cases, audiences ally with a protagonist who has morally undesirable traits because these are contrasted with a villains' more undesirable traits. Murray uses the example of Hannibal Lecter in *Silence of the Lambs*. In this case, Lecter's evil character is contrasted with the other crazed inmates (Smith, 1999, 226-227). This contrast, however, does not seem to be enough to ground allegiance. At most, showing that the protagonist's moral flaws are not as grievous as those of the villain would help us in understanding why we display reduced antipathy for these depraved characters.

In "Just what is it that makes Tony Soprano such an appealing, attractive murderer?", Smith argues that allegiance to depraved characters is grounded on two facts. First, these characters are represented in the narrative in such a way that emphasizes their regularity: audiences are groomed so that they come to see that the immoral characters are just like them. Following G. E. Lessing, Smith argues that seeing the immoral protagonist as ourselves is important in securing allegiance because our sustained pro-attitudes depend on us seeing him not as a monstrous figure, but as a mix of vice and virtue. The complexity of the characters allows audiences to ally with immoral characters in two ways: it gives appreciators some comfort in the thought that the protagonist is not 'evil incarnate', and it makes them think that they could find that fate themselves (Smith, 2011, 73-76). Second, Smith argues that the immoral traits are presented by the narrative in an attractive way: audiences find the moral transgressiveness of the immoral deeds alluring (Smith, 2011, 77-79).

It is possible, therefore, to speak of an affect-based allegiance. In these cases, appreciators ally with immoral characters because of their affective responses: they strongly sympathise with the characters in that they find them familiar and attractive. Audiences overlook their actual evaluative framework in favour of the counter-moral perspective prescribed by the narrative because they find the moral transgression appealing. Eaton argues that narratives that feature rough heroes exploit a widespread contamination tendency in which our moral assessments are unconsciously contaminated by other attractive non-moral features (Eaton, 2013). For example, Eaton quotes the well-known "halo biases", "according to which perceptions of a person's physical attractiveness positively influence judgements of things like writing quality or morally desirable traits such as trustworthiness and kindness" (Eaton, 2013, 377). Plantinga also notes that our tendency to allow non-moral factors to influence moral judgements shows how emotional manipulation can ground non-moral allegiance to immoral characters in fiction (Plantinga, 2010, 46-49).

Appreciators' endorsement of immoral characters must not be understood in terms of explicit ascription to immoral claims, but as allowing strong sympathies to characters they otherwise judge immoral. It is this affective manipulation that grounds non-moral allegiance. In these cases, appreciators do not need to find desirable moral traits in protagonists. All they need is to find them appealing, to feel close to them. This affective manipulation is achieved through what Carroll calls "emotional prefocus". Fictional narratives direct appreciators' focus toward certain features that can guarantee certain emotional responses from the audience (Carroll, 1999).

Nevertheless, Murray Smith disagrees with the notion of a non-moral allegiance. He argues that even in these cases, the non-moral elements do not displace moral factors, but rather help in ignoring *some* morally relevant features in favour of *other* morally relevant features:

> I maintain that moral evaluation lies at the core of allegiance. It is hard to think of cases in which a film elicits strong sympathy toward a character largely on the basis of amoral attributes; characters who appeal through wit or charm, for example, command our sympathetic allegiance because these amoral traits co-exist in the character with at least some morally positive traits (Smith, 2011, 84).

As said before, according to Smith, narratives need to establish familiarity with immoral characters so that appreciators come to see that they are, much like them, a mix of vice and virtue. He argues that allegiance is still moral in these cases because appreciators overlook a character's moral failings in virtue of his other virtues.

However, I believe that in focusing on Lessing's notes on tragedy, he misunderstands the role of familiarity in counter-moral fictions. Indeed, Lessing follows Aristotle, in arguing that for tragedy to achieve its desired aims, appreciators must see themselves in the protagonists. According to Aristotle, appreciators need to see themselves in the protagonist because otherwise they would be unable to respond emotionally to tragedy: to respond emotionally to poetry, appreciators need to feel that what is being represented *could* happen to them. In this sense, Aristotle and Lessing seem to argue that emotional responses to fiction are grounded on empathy. However, whether seeing ourselves in the fiction is necessary to respond emotionally, or not, is irrelevant for the discussion on allegiance: after all, if this was the case, feeling *with* fictional characters, as opposed to merely feeling *for* them, would be necessary for any type of emotional response to fiction, and it would not help in explaining allegiance to immoral characters.

I believe what Smith misses is that familiarity is relevant to allegiance not because we see ourselves, a mix of vice and virtue, in the fiction, but because of the parochial nature of moral judgement noted by both Eaton and Plantinga. Appreciators have a tendency to diminish the gravity of moral transgressions of those closest to them, and indeed they do allow for non-moral features to influence how they condemn the transgressors. Emphasising the ways in which morally flawed protagonists are one of us is, therefore, not only relevant for appreciators to see themselves in them and see they are not all bad, but for appreciators to manipulate their

moral judgements in virtue of their bond. For this reason, it is important to note that counter-moral narratives do not need to prescribe what Smith calls "perverse allegiance" to endorse immorality. According to Smith, a perverse allegiance is that which elicits strong sympathy for immoral characters *in virtue of the immoral actions*: "the truly perverse allegiance is one with a reprehensible character *on the basis of* their reprehensible actions or traits, not in spite of them" (Smith, 1999, 223). Counter-moral narratives need only prescribe an ambivalent allegiance in which audiences are aware of the deviant nature of the protagonist's character, but in which non-moral factors cause them to look the other way. Murray is right in noting that in ambivalent allegiance appreciators ally with the protagonist *in spite* of the moral transgressions, and not *in virtue* of them. But he is nonetheless wrong in thinking that in these cases allegiance is still driven by moral elements: the moral transgressions are ignored not because of other moral features, but because of the narratives' emphasis on non-moral features.

3.2 The role of genre in affect-based allegiance

What Tamar Gendler has called the second wave of literature on imaginative resistance, has noted how one of the big mistakes in early accounts consisted in focusing on isolated propositions with no surrounding context. More recent accounts of imaginative resistance have thus noted the importance of context to explain the variability within resistance phenomena. In particular, authors like Bence Nanay, Shen-yi Liao, and Jonathan M. Weinberg, have turned to genre to explain why certain propositions cause resistance in some contexts but not in others.

Bence Nanay (2010) argues that imaginative resistance arises because appreciators do not take the author to obey what Grice calls the co-operative principle. In these cases, appreciators do not understand how what the author has uttered can contribute to the conversation, or do not understand what the author meant by the utterance in the conversation. Because they regard the proposition as violating the co-operative principle, appreciators "resist" the proposition: they are popped-out of the narrative because of the confusion the utterance has caused. The attention is thus shifted from narrative to the author in the sense that appreciators focus on what the speaker could have meant that would have not violated the principle (Nanay, 2010, 596). However, Nanay notes that the co-operative principle depends on the context. This means that if appreciators expect to find a given utterance in that context, they will not need to shift their attention to the speaker to determine what she could have meant. And this context includes a

narrative's genre: "the co-operative principle which we take the author to observe can be different in the case of different texts from different *genres*" (Nanay, 2010, 599).

Shen-yi Liao also notes that focusing on genre explains the variability of resistance phenomena. After all, genre determines not just how artists construct the fictional worlds, but how audiences engage with them. Genres involve specific genre conventions which "constrain what is fictional because they constrain which implicit propositions and which inferential patterns are warranted for the fictional world" (Liao, 2016, 10). These genre conventions in turn generate specific genre expectations that guide appreciators' engagement with particular genres. The narrative engagement with works of fiction in which appreciators get aesthetic pleasure from imaginative prompts requires them to "place one's imaginings and related psychological responses under the governance of the narrative's prescriptions" (Liao, 2016, 6). Genre expectations should be understood as schemas employed by appreciators to guide their narrative engagement and place their imaginings and responses under the narrative's governance.[17] Liao argues that imaginative resistance emerges when a fictional prescription violates genre conventions: appreciators experience difficulties because what can and cannot be true in a story depends on genre conventions, and because appreciators' narrative engagement and responses depend on expectations that stem from genre conventions as well.

Liao and Nanay's accounts allow for narratives to prescribe affect-based allegiance precisely because a narrative's genre determines how the narrated events are framed. In the case of rough heroes, a genre account would claim that they do not cause imaginative resistance because appreciators expect these narratives to prescribe inappropriate attitudes toward immoral characters. The genre of rough heroes stipulates that narratives create a tension in appreciators in which they feel the urge to resist responding in the ways prescribed while at the same time feeling the urge of responding with pro-attitudes. The genre thus allows narratives to emphasize the immoral character of the hero for appreciators to condemn him, but at the same time it allows the narrative to generate pro-attitudes strong enough to ground non-moral allegiance. In this sense, while the narrative doesn't make it true in the fictional world that the hero's moral failings are moral virtues, it does make the pro-attitudes appropriate: the way in which the

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[17] While appreciators need to be familiar with genre conventions to be able to adequately employ schemas that guide their narrative engagement, it is not necessary for them to have an explicit and exhaustive knowledge of genre conventions. According to Liao, genre schemas are employed "quickly, automatically, and unconsciously" (Liao, 2016, 11). A successful narrative engagement requires practical competence, but this practical competence is achieved by being exposed to narratives with specific genre conventions.

narrative's perspective endorses the rough hero makes allegiance the appropriate attitude from appreciators.

Jonathan Weinberg for his part focuses on the architecture of imagination to explain how genre can constrain appreciators' engagement with evaluative deviance in fictional narratives. He argues that imagining involves entertaining certain contents in what he calls the "imagination box". The imagination box has the same format and structure of representations in the belief box, and this allows for its contents to interact with other psychological mechanisms in important ways. In particular, Weinberg notes that the contents of the imagination box interact with inference mechanisms, affect systems, the UpDater – which allows appreciators to update the contents of the IB in light of new information –, domain specific processes (including moral evaluation systems), and monitoring systems (Weinberg, 2008, 204). Genre determines how appreciators constitute the imagination box:

> The recognition of genre must then drive at least two kinds of configurations of the IB: what import/export rules it is to have to regulate the passing contents between the IB and the BB; and what further systems are to be allowed to operate on our imaginative representations and which to be prevented from doing so (Weinberg, 2008, 209).

Focusing on the architecture of imagination allows us to see that not only does genre allow for narratives to *prescribe* allegiance, but it is also what allows appreciators to ally with radically deviant perspectives in fiction. According to Weinberg genre allows for:

> the activation or suppression of different affective responses", and, more importantly, genre is responsible for "bringing some of these moral systems [Harm/Care, Fairness/Reciprocity, Ingroup/Loyalty, Authority/Respect, and Purity/Sanctity] more fully online, while forcing others to recede into the background (Weinberg, 2008, 211).

3.2.1 Intra-generic variations: resisting rough heroines

Accounts that rely on genre to explain resistance phenomena are attractive because they can account for variability: deviant claims cause imaginative resistance in some contexts but not others because appreciators expect deviance in some contexts but not others. However, genre solutions to resistance related puzzles still fail to account for variations *within genres*. For

example, there seems to be an asymmetry between the narrative engagement with male characters who transgress moral norms and female characters who do the same. This asymmetry can be found not only at the level of appreciators' responses but also at the level of artistic production: while the rough hero has thrived in recent years, the same cannot be said for rough *heroines*. Narratives that feature rough heroines are an interesting challenge to genre accounts precisely because they adjust to all genre conventions, and are still met with resistance.

It is important to note here, as it has often been noted in the literature on imaginative resistance, that resistance refers to a comparative difficulty, not an absolute imaginative failure. So, the phenomenon I want to highlight refers to the few instances of rough heroines in narrative works, compared to the high numbers of rough heroes, and the common failure of uptake from audiences: although the narrative might present a woman as a rough heroine, audiences often dismiss her as a simple villain. It is also important to remember, as Eaton has noted, that resistance comes in degrees; so the resistance to rough heroines also refers to the greater effort needed to generate pro-attitudes toward female protagonists who transgress moral norms.

Gone Girl is a very interesting example of a failed rough heroine. Gillian Flynn writes Amy Dunne as a funny, smart and focused woman. Her now famous Cool Girl monologue seemed to have all the right features to secure appreciators' allegiance. Amy angrily expresses how women have to subsume their identities to men's interests:

> Men always say that as the defining compliment, don't they? She's a cool girl. Being the Cool Girl means I am a hot, brilliant, funny woman who adores football, poker, dirty jokes, and burping, who plays videogames, drinks cheap beer, loves threesomes and anal sex, and jams hot dogs and hamburgers into her mouth like she's hosting the world's biggest culinary gang bang while somehow maintaining a size 2, because Cool Girls are above all hot. Hot and understanding. Cool girls never get angry; they only smile in a chagrined, loving manner and let their men do whatever they want. Go ahead, shit on me, I don't mind, I'm the Cool Girl. (…) And the Cool Girls are even more pathetic: They're not even pretending to be the woman they want to be, they're pretending to be the woman a man wants them to be. Oh, and if you're not a Cool Girl, I beg you not to believe that your man doesn't want the Cool Girl. It might be a slightly different version – maybe he's a

vegetarian, so Cool Girl loves seitan and is great with dogs; or maybe he's a hipster artist, so Cool Girl is a tattooed, bespectacled nerd who loves comics. There are variations to the window dressing, but believe me, he wants Cool Girl, who is basically the girl who likes every fucking thing he likes and doesn't ever complain.

As we saw in the first chapter, when she realises Nick has cheated on her after spending her money and dragging her back to his hometown, Amy decides she is tired of giving up her life for the sake of her ungrateful husband, and decides to enact her revenge by framing him for her own murder. The narrative should have had us nodding along as she slowly ruined her husband's life. We should have wanted to see him burn, we should have loved to see her win. Amy is as complex, smart, and determined as Walter White. And still audiences failed to see her as a rough heroine. Amy's failure as a rough heroine was most evident in David Fincher's 2014 film adaptation. The movie became just another iteration of the "crazy bitch" narrative: instead of Amy being a compelling and engaging morally flawed character, she became a villain so hated that audiences longed to see finished.

Flynn's novel prescribes allegiance toward Amy. Appreciators are prescribed to endorse Amy's false abuse accusations in order to see her plan of ruining her husband's life succeed. The novel emphasises appealing character traits, such as Amy's wit, intelligence and charm, and understandable motivations in order to secure appreciators' strong and sustained pro-attitudes that ground affect-based allegiance. These features fit the conventions of the rough hero genre. After all, it is the same wit, intelligence and charm that allows appreciators to overlook Walter White's poisoning of a child in order to advance his plans. Nevertheless, Amy becomes the villain: as I said before, David Fincher's interpretation of the work, which in turn grounds a different work of fiction in his film adaptation, prescribes allegiance to Nick Dunne as the sympathetic morally flawed protagonist.

So why were imaginative difficulties caused? Why did Fincher fail to respond with the prescribed affect-based allegiance toward Amy? Why did the movie switch the subject of the prescribed allegiance? My guess is that Fincher refuses allegiance to Amy because he thinks Flynn's novel can be regarded as a borderline case in the fictional/actual distinction.

In chapter one I advanced an analysis of *Gone Girl* as a borderline instance of the fictional/actual distinction in counter-moral fictions. I noted that in David Fincher's context, the myth of the false sexual abuse allegations is a widespread narrative. Although data have

proven it wrong again and again, most people remain convinced that false accusations regarding sexual violence are common. Adopting a fictional perspective that endorses a woman who fabricates such allegations would be tantamount to endorsing women who do the same in real life. *Gone Girl* the novel would thus be seen as endorsing these women at the expense of those men whose lives have been ruined.

Appreciators resist rough heroines because they regard the prescribed perspective as a live option in a given context. This means that even with the right genre conventions in place, when audiences detect what Gendler identified as a 'clamour for exportation' in narratives thanks to contextual considerations, they fail to respond with allegiance toward immoral characters. This shows that although genre considerations are relevant in explaining appreciators endorsement of deviant perspectives in fiction, other contextual considerations are just as relevant in explaining how audiences engage with certain types of counter-moral fictions but not others. These contextual considerations, as I argue in the following section, are what allow appreciators to determine whether the make-believe moral outlook advanced by the narrative has implications for their real-life moral outlook.

However, it seems that it is not just appreciators who resist rough heroines. Rough heroines are an interesting example because they show how contextual considerations impact the construction of genre conventions as well. I believe artists resist creating engaging morally transgressive female characters because the very genre conventions of rough heroes conflict with what is traditionally regarded as female traits. Rough heroines are resisted because they are *gender* convention and expectation discordant.

We can find many instances of antiheroines. But if we examine them closely we can see that they often exploit gender expectations in one way or another to secure narrative engagement. We have antiheroines with a strong motherly instinct, such as Beatrix Kiddo in *Kill Bill*. We can find *femmes fatales*, like Marvel's Black Widow or Nikita. More significantly, we can find several instances of antiheroines who are survivors of sexual violence, like Lizbeth Salander or Jessica Jones. That is, we accept morally flawed female characters inasmuch as they are carers, objects of the male gaze, or victims.

As noted by Margrethe Bruun Vaage, the few morally flawed female protagonists in popular TV are not allowed to be as transgressive as their male counterparts: their transgressions are not as grievous, their family life is not affected by their misdeeds, and their moral flaws are presented in a comedic and endearing tone (Vaage, 2016, 171-180). But the fact that, unlike

antiheroines, rough heroines are meant to be unapologetically bad, and the fact that they are meant *not* to have any morally redeeming features means that their transgressions need to be more than just innocent misdeeds.

The radical transgressions that characterise rough heroines imply that they need to part with those features that have traditionally been regarded as feminine: tenderness, graciousness, selflessness, sensuality. Women are brought up not only to be likeable and accommodating, but to aspire to universal approval, and rough heroines aspire to just the opposite. The interesting thing about Amy Dunne is that she becomes a rough heroine because she has grown tired of adjusting to gender expectations: amazing Amy, the perfect daughter, and cool Amy, the perfect wife. And so she transgresses moral norms because she wants to transgress gender role expectations. Moreover, rough heroines' greatest transgression seems to be the challenge to power dynamics. While rough heroes are endearing because they take the direction of their lives into their own hands, rough heroines are resisted precisely because they challenge women's subordinate position. In challenging women's role as passive, emotional and docile beings, rough heroines bring forward the social structures that keep women oppressed.

Of course the causes of resistance to rough heroines need to be examined in more depth. But what I want to note is that rough heroines reveal that resistance phenomena are also grounded on another feature of narrative engagement that has been largely overlooked: interpretive horizons. These horizons depend on the socio-historical context of reception and production of the narrative. This is to say that resistance phenomena are context dependent not only in that propositions are not found isolated, but contextualised by a narrative, as the second wave of literature on imaginative resistance has noted. Resistance phenomena, and the engagement with counter-moral fictions in general, are context dependant in that socio-historical contextual considerations condition appreciators' imaginative engagement in important ways. Although the most recent literature on imaginative resistance has emphasised context, authors have focused on the context of propositions. But a satisfactory account of resistance phenomena and imaginative engagement with counter-moral fictions must also take into consideration the contexts in which these propositions are produced and received.

3.3 Fictional context

Resistance phenomena show that our engagement with counter-moral narratives is context-dependent. Because this context includes elements such as a socio-historical context and genre,

I believe that appreciators' reception of counter-moral narratives depends on the fictional context. In this section I argue that the fictional context should be understood as the necessary elements to arrive at a correct interpretation of the work. In chapter one I argued that the recognition of the narrative's perspective and framework depends on identifying the author-narrator. I argued that this author-narrator should not be understood as the work's actual author, but as the external narrator that appreciators can reconstruct from all the elements available in the narrative. For this reason, I turned to Jerrold Levinson's hypothetical intentionalism. Levinson acknowledges that the relevant elements available in the narrative do not merely refer to the work's structure, but also to "the relevant surrounding context of creation" (Levinson, 1992, 224). Moreover, reconstructing the surrounding context of creation of the work is relevant not only for the identification of the narrative's perspective and framework, but for determining whether the perspective entails a make-believe or real-world moral outlook, and for distinguishing between fictional and extra-fictional perspective. The reconstruction of the narrative's context is what allows for appreciators to determine whether there is an underlying actual immoral attitude, whether the author is inviting them to share a real-world view, or whether the immoral view is normalized in the author's context. Thus, appreciators are able to distinguish whether a narrative constitutes an instance of fictional or actual immorality by reconstructing the fictional context, that is, the context that constitutes the identity of that specific narrative.

Contrary to the assumption at the heart of the continuity thesis, appreciators do not necessarily import to the fictional world their evaluative framework. The discontinuity thesis is sensitive to the distinction between fictional and actual immorality because it is this distinction that dictates whether appreciators will import their evaluative framework during their imaginative engagement. Just inasmuch as the fictional context sets the prescribed perspective that guides the narration of the fictional events, the fictional context shapes appreciators responses by helping them distinguish between make-believe and real-world moral outlooks. In those cases where appreciators cannot identify an extra-fictional perspective that prescribes an immoral real-world outlook, appreciators do not import their evaluative framework and manage to adopt the deviant perspective prescribed by the narrative. In these cases, appreciators display affect-based allegiance to deviant perspectives in fiction. This allegiance implies that appreciators' moral outlook is discontinuous from their real-world moral outlook.

This does not mean that all fictional narratives depend on a high level of discontinuity: it might be that the most common works of fiction build on our normal responses to set the framework.

But, contrary to what the continuity thesis claims, it is possible for appreciators to accept in works of fiction evaluative frameworks that contrast with their normal responses. While the adoption of deviant perspectives in fiction is not a simple task, I don't think it requires a violent effort of the imagination that is any different from the necessary effort to engage with factually deviant fictional worlds. All it takes is the right fictional context. Because of the deviant nature of the scenarios, the fictional context might need to do more work than on a non-deviant narrative. But this is anticipated by the import principle. The difference between the continuity and the discontinuity thesis is that the latter does not assume a difference between evaluative and non-evaluative scenarios in fiction. According to the discontinuity thesis, in both evaluative and non-evaluative cases, the import principle is constrained by the fictional prescriptions, so that appreciators import to the fictional scenario their actual attitudes and responses unless it directly contrasts with what is prescribed by the fictional narrative.

The discontinuity thesis, nevertheless, does assume an asymmetry between fictional and actual immorality that impacts the workings of the import principle. The asymmetry consists in the difference between make-believe and real-world moral outlooks. In instances of fictional immorality, the narratives prescribe a deviant fictional perspective that concerns a make-believe moral outlook exclusively. In these cases, the fictional prescriptions are directed at the fictional events and entities only, and the author-narrator is not trying to make claims concerning the actual state of the world. Precisely because in instances of fictional immorality the fictional perspective is quarantined in the fictional world, the narrative opens an aesthetic space in which appreciators can ignore normal moral and practical considerations. Narratives that constitute instances of actual immorality, on the other hand, include an extra-fictional perspective that prescribes a real-world moral outlook. This real-world moral outlook is directed at actual events and entities: the author-narrator is trying to make claims that demand standing in the actual world as well. Precisely because the prescriptions are not quarantined in the fictional world, instances of actual immorality do not open the aesthetic space that removes moral and practical considerations. And in these cases appreciators import their evaluative framework and dismiss the deviant real-world moral outlook prescribed by the narrative.

To distinguish whether a narrative constitutes an instance of fictional or actual immorality, and to determine whether they need to import their evaluative framework, appreciators need to examine the fictional context of a work of fiction; the elements that constitute the fictional context allow appreciators to arrive at a correct interpretation of the work that will in turn open the possibility of an aesthetic space that eliminates moral and practical considerations. The

fictional context consists of five elements: authorial intentions, socio-historical context, artistic conventions, fictional prescriptions, and modes of representation. The first three, authorial intentions, socio-historical context, and artistic conventions, correspond to what Lamarque and Olsen identify as the external reader perspective. By approaching the narrative as a *work*, appreciators keep in mind that the narrative is a cultural product that depends on a certain spatial and temporal location; by regarding it as a work *of fiction*, audiences are meant to keep in mind that the right attitude towards the fictive content is make-believing, rather than believing. The last two, fictional prescriptions and the modes of representation, correspond to the internal reader perspective. In what follows I briefly examine these five elements of the fictional context.

Authorial intentions

As I said before, I think Jerrold Levinson's hypothetical intentionalism is the best option when trying to reconstruct the fictional perspective. For audiences to be able to reconstruct the author-narrator that guides the tone of the narration, Levinson shifts away from actual authorial intentions and aims instead at what would be most reasonable to hypothesize by considering various elements of the work of fiction:

> The notion of a literary work's meaning, and thus of correct interpretations of it, is properly tied, as I have said, not to actual – even successfully realized – artist's intent, but to our best construction, given the evidence of the work and appropriately possessed background information, of the artist's intent to mean such and such for his or her intended audience (Levinson, 1992, 225).

Reference to hypothetical intentions is useful because it helps in setting the distance between fictional and actual prescriptions, and because it guides appreciators in establishing the fictional and extra-fictional perspectives that will ultimately determine appreciators' responses.

Socio-historical context

The possibility of hypothetical intentionalism is directly connected to the second element of the fictional context: the contextual construction of the work of fiction. As noted by Levinson,

any such plausible hypothesizing – any responsible 'psyching out' of the attitudes or values embodied in and put forward by a work – must be informed and constrained by a work's position in a communicative matrix whose dimensions include the artist's time and place, the artist's social climate, the artist's predecessors, the artist's *oeuvre* as a whole, the particular artform, tradition, genre, and problematic within which the artist is working, and even the artist's public self or identity.(Levinson, 1995, 188)

These considerations lead to what Levinson calls the 'thickly' implied author (Levinson, 1995, 189), and they are necessary for the interpretative process that is involved in the understanding of a fictional narrative inasmuch as they aid in reconstructing the author-narrator. Contextual considerations also help in establishing the interaction between implicit and explicit prescriptions, so that appreciators' are able to discriminate which elements should be counted as part of the fictional perspective. The location of the work of fiction within its contextual matrix helps in determining three things: (1) which elements found in the narration belong to the prescribed perspective and which do not; (2) which elements that are not explicitly found in the narrative should be assumed by appreciators to understand the prescribed perspective; and (3) what is the work's extra-fictional perspective. [18]

Artistic conventions

In addition to the historical and social context of the work, it is necessary to emphasize the role of artistic conventions as the third element of the fictional context. The artistic conventions help appreciators in determining how the prescribed perspective is embodied in the prescriptions to imagine, what elements should be taken into consideration as modes of presentation (Lamarque & Olsen, 1994) or expressive features (Currie, 2012), and ultimately, what is the adequate response to the content of the fictional narrative. The analysis of genre by authors like Nanay, Liao and Weinberg provides an example of how artistic conventions determine fictional prescriptions and audience responses. So, for example, the genre of rough heroes dictates that narratives prescribe pro-attitudes toward immoral characters; to do this,

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[18] An interesting analysis of the importance of contextual factors in the understanding of a narrative is found in Borges' "Pierre Menard, Author of *Don Quixote*", where he examines the differences between two identical Don Quixotes: the original, authored by Cervantes, and one authored by Pierre Menard, a fictional character. Both Walton (1987) and Danto (1981) have used this short story to explore the decisive character of a work's contextual location.

artistic conventions establish that the narrative must emphasise other attractive features that can ground appreciators' sustained sympathies.

Fictional prescriptions

The fourth element corresponds to the fictional prescriptions found in the narrative. These prescriptions can be of two different types: explicit and implicit. It is important to note that the explicit prescriptions refer, not only to those prescriptions that can be found explicitly in the text, but to those prescriptions established by what we recognize as the author-narrator. The fact that we recognize as explicit prescriptions only those established by the author-narrator helps appreciators to deal with cases of multiple and unreliable narrators in fiction. As such, Currie defines an explicit prescription as that "which meets two conditions: (1) S is naturally interpretable in such a way as to convey directly, rather than merely to implicate, the thought that P, and (2) an overall best interpretation of the text is one which treats S as reliable" (Currie, 2012, 13).

The implicit prescriptions, on the other hand, are more problematic. On the one hand, they refer to the prescriptions that are implicated by the explicit prescriptions. But, on the other hand, in those cases where there is a difference between the internal narrator and the author narrator, implicit prescriptions are not implicated by the explicit content of the narrative and need to be determined by a process of what Currie calls 'pragmatic inference'. This is the case of *Lolita,* where, as we saw at the beginning, the fictional prescriptions of the narrative condemn the actions narrated, while Humbert, the internal narrator, attempts to excuse them. It is because of this intricate relation between explicit content and prescriptions that the other elements of the fictional context are necessary.

Modes of representation

Finally, the way the content of the narrative is represented is important to determine the prescribed perspective, as it will set the tone that will allow appreciators to establish how to imagine the narrated events. The modes of representation thus refer to *how* the content of the fiction is presented to the appreciator. In this sense, these features mediate appreciators' access to the fictional events (Kieran, 2012, 685). Within the modes of representation, I include the rhetoric and artistic devices, the focus of the narration, the use of language, the poetic form,

elicited imagery, the expressive and aesthetic features, and other elements that set the tone of the narration.

The importance of the modes of representation is twofold. First, the modes of representation are decisive in those cases in which, as we saw above, the relation between the explicit content and the implicit prescriptions is not clear. As we said, the ironic tone set by the narrative in *Lolita* is what allows us to distinguish the fictional prescriptions and the prescribed perspective from the perspective presented by the internal narrator. Second, the modes of representation are essential in shaping appreciators' responses. In some cases, the lack of the adequate modes of representation causes the work of fiction to fail completely as audiences do not respond as the framework requires, and rather respond in a way that directly contradicts the prescribed perspective. Think for example of Ed Wood's horror films, or cheesy romantic fictions. In some other cases, different modes of representation of the same content yield different results in terms of appreciators' responses. More importantly, as we will see in the following section, the right modes of representation might lead audiences to respond in ways that contrast directly with their normal responses.

3.3.1 Aesthetic space

According to what I have said so far, instances of fictional immorality allow for appreciators to engage with radically different moral views because the deviant claims are quarantined in the fictional world: as said before, instances of merely fictional immorality only prescribe a make-believe moral outlook in which deviant prescriptions are directed at fictional events and entities. This quarantining effect of fictional immorality is what allows appreciators to ignore normal moral and practical considerations. It is in this sense that these narratives open up an *aesthetic space* that erases everyday considerations. Reconstructing the fictional context is of utmost relevance for engaging with counter-moral fictions precisely because only by establishing whether a narrative presents merely fictional immorality, and thus includes a quarantining effect, can appreciators determine whether they can ignore everyday considerations. The reconstruction of the fictional context allows appreciators to arrive at a correct interpretation of the work as an instance of either fictional or actual immorality, and this interpretation of the work creates the possibility of an aesthetic space in instances of fictional immorality.

The aesthetic space provides the necessary aesthetic distance to allow for the discontinuity of appreciators' evaluative attitudes. The aesthetic distance refers to appreciators' awareness of the fictional character of the prescriptions. This is possible thanks to the distinction between internal and external levels of appreciation noted by Lamarque and Olsen.[19] Even more so, it seems that without the aesthetic distance provided by the internal and external points of view, our engagement with radically different worldviews in fiction would be impossible. The interaction between these two perspectives is what allows appreciators to get 'caught up' in the fictional world while, at the same time, remaining aware of the fictional character of the narration. In this sense it is possible to say that the interaction between these two perspectives, and the resulting aesthetic distance, opens up an aesthetic space that will set up the limits to the fictional prescriptions and the responses. The aesthetic space refers to the locus of the imaginative engagement with fiction that eliminates moral and practical considerations.

As I said at the beginning, the fact that in instances of fictional immorality we can identify a fictional perspective that prescribes a make-believe moral outlook exclusively allows us to say that the deviant prescriptions are quarantined in the fictional world. In this sense the narrative opens an aesthetic space in which appreciators can ignore normal moral and practical considerations. As Kieran notes, this aesthetic space annuls our capacity to intervene and so "we are freed from practical reasons to intervene and thus respond emotionally to aspects of what is represented in ways we might or could not were we to be present at the actual scene" (Kieran, 2010, 686).

What I want to note is that the aesthetic space proposed by Kieran is only possible in instances of fictional immorality. Contrary to Kieran, I argue that the aesthetic space is not opened merely in virtue of the fictional nature of the narrative. That is, the aesthetic space is not opened simply because appreciators are unable to intervene when engaging with a work of fiction because it is fiction, as opposed to real life. The aesthetic space is opened when appreciators can ignore moral and practical considerations due to the scope of the fictional prescriptions. For this reason the possibility of the aesthetic space depends on the reconstruction of the fictional context. In instances of merely fictional immorality, authors are not trying to make deviant claims outside the realm of their fictional worlds. On the contrary, in cases of actual immorality the interaction between the readers' internal and external points of view finds that the fictional perspective is

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[19] As Lamarque and Olsen note, the interaction of these two different types of points of view not only accounts for the pleasure we get from imaginative engagement, but it explains puzzling questions such as the incompleteness of fictional characters, pleasure from negative emotional experiences, and our interest in fiction (Lamarque & Olsen, 1994).

actually coupled with an extra-fictional perspective. This means that, along with the deviant make-believe moral outlook, narratives prescribe a deviant real-world moral outlook. This real-world moral outlook is directed at actual events and entities: the author-narrator is trying to make claims that demand standing in the actual world as well. Precisely because the prescriptions are not quarantined in the fictional world, instances of actual immorality do not open the aesthetic space that removes moral and practical considerations. And in these cases appreciators import their evaluative framework and dismiss the deviant real-world moral outlook prescribed by the narrative.

3.4 The discontinuity thesis

As we have just seen, the elements of the fictional context allow appreciators to determine whether a narrative constitutes an instance of fictional or actual immorality. The fictional context thus helps appreciators in deciding whether the narrative opens up an aesthetic space in which they can ignore moral and practical considerations. In those cases where the narrative opens such an aesthetic space, appreciators' evaluative attitudes can be discontinuous with their actual real-world attitudes. The discontinuity thesis claims that appreciators do not necessarily import their evaluative attitudes during their imaginative engagement with fiction. The advantage of the discontinuity thesis is that it can explain the variations in our engagement with different types of counter-moral fictions. Contrary to the continuity thesis, the discontinuity thesis can explain why some counter-moral fictions cause imaginative difficulties and others do not. In what follows I examine what this discontinuity thesis entails for our engagement with different types of counter-moral content in fiction.

To explain the variations in our engagement with the diversity of counter-moral fictions, the discontinuity thesis argues for an asymmetry in the import principle for fictional and actual immorality. Instances of actual immorality break the quarantining nature of fiction because they include claims about the actual world, while instances of fictional immorality do not. According to the discontinuity thesis, this difference explains an asymmetry in the import principle for instances of fictional and actual immorality. In instances of merely fictional immorality, appreciators adopt the prescribed deviant fictional perspective because the counter-moral attitudes are quarantined in the fictional world. This means that the deviant perspective is directed at fictional events and entities exclusively. In instances of fictional immorality appreciators adopt the deviant framework that is prescribed by the narrative with

the corresponding responses, and they bypass their actual evaluative framework. So, for instances of fictional immorality, the import principle can be formulated as follows:

Import principle: for fictional immorality, appreciators import their evaluative attitudes *unless* prescribed otherwise by the fictional perspective.

Instances of actual immorality, however, present what Gendler called 'clamour for exportation'. Appreciators do not adopt the prescribed perspective because the extra-fictional perspective found in the narrative prescribes an immoral real-world outlook that concerns the actual state of the world. Because the deviant claims are directed at real events and entities, appreciators favour their actual evaluative attitudes and import them during their imaginative engagement. For instances of actual immorality the import principle can be formulated as follows:

Import principle[1]: for actual immorality, appreciators import their evaluative attitudes *regardless* of what is prescribed by the narrative.

This asymmetry in the import principle explains that instances of actual immorality cause imaginative difficulties and instances of fictional immorality do not. Affect-based allegiance to fictional counter-moral perspectives is possible in instances of fictional immorality precisely because appreciators ignore their actual evaluative attitudes in favour of the deviant perspective prescribed by the narrative. This means that the asymmetry in the import principle causes an asymmetry in our affective responses. This asymmetry in the affective responses in turn explains that appreciators engage with deviant perspectives in fiction because they ground a non-moral affect-based allegiance to counter-moral perspectives.

Matthew Kieran identifies what he calls 'emotional asymmetries' in our engagement with fiction. According to Kieran, these emotional asymmetries occur in those cases where the aesthetic distance and the modes of representation cause a discontinuity in our emotional responses. The discontinuity can be of two different types: 1) appreciators can have the same emotions but with asymmetric valences, that is, they value in fiction an emotion that they would not enjoy in an actual scenario; 2) and appreciators can have asymmetric emotions, that is, appreciators allow themselves to have emotions they wouldn't normally have in a given scenario. According to this view, affect-based allegiance is possible because "the narrative artistry that is often concerned with soliciting empathy and sympathy can facilitate the suspension of moral judgement, norms, and values" (Kieran, 2012, 683).

To account for these emotional asymmetries, Kieran turns to Daniel Jacobson's (2000) distinction between the criteria of 'fittingness' and 'appropriateness' of emotional responses. Fittingness refers to the conditions of warrant: reasons to think that X is Y. That is, fittingness refers to epistemological considerations. Appropriateness, on the other hand, refers to "what to feel, all things considered". This means that the notion of appropriateness includes prudential and moral reasons as well. Jacobson uses offensive jokes as an example:

> even if it is granted that a joke is offensive, and that it would therefore be wrong to be amused by it, it does not follow that the joke cannot be funny. The judgement that an emotion is wrong to feel, or that it would be bad for you to feel it, is logically distinct from the judgement that the response is unwarranted (that X isn't Φ) (Jacobson, 1997, 173).

Kieran is right in arguing that these emotional asymmetries explain much of our engagement with deviant works of fiction. But as I said in the previous section, to be able to account for the complexity of our engagement with different types of counter-moral fictions, it is important to explain why the aesthetic space is not always opened, and why emotional asymmetries do not always occur. The discontinuity thesis that I'm proposing agrees with Kieran in noting the role of the aesthetic space and emotional asymmetries in our engagement with some types of counter-moral fictions. But at the same time, it acknowledges the importance of other contextual considerations as part of the conditions of possibility for emotional asymmetries and the discontinuity of appreciators' evaluative framework. I believe Kieran is wrong in placing too much weight on the modes of representation to explain emotional asymmetries. The aesthetic space does not simply depend on how the content of the fiction is represented. Other considerations are relevant to determine whether appreciators can ignore moral reasons not to engage with immorality in a work of fiction. As such, the discontinuity thesis I defend depends on all the elements of the fictional context to explain the cases in which appreciators can identify an aesthetic space that removes moral considerations and that allows for emotional asymmetries, and the cases in which moral considerations remain. So, contrary to Kieran, I argue that the emotional asymmetries in our engagement with immorality in fiction are only possible for instances of fictional immorality.

Instances of actual immorality preclude the emotional asymmetries that ground non-moral allegiance because the aesthetic space is not opened. In these cases appreciators do not ignore moral and practical considerations, and, as a result, non-moral allegiance is not possible. That

is, in instances of actual immorality, although the modes of representation of the narrative might give us reasons to think that a deviant response is fitting, the fact that the perspective includes claims about the actual world means that the aesthetic space is not opened, and this forces us to consider moral and practical reasons as well. So although the prescribed perspective is such that a deviant response *might* be fitting given how the fictional scenario is framed, appreciators acknowledge that (1) the response is nevertheless inappropriate due to moral reasons, and (2) the inappropriateness of the response *is* relevant because the lack of aesthetic space means moral considerations remain. In these cases, the inappropriate nature of the response precludes a strong imaginative engagement with the narrative. Affect-based allegiance is not achieved in instances of actual immorality precisely because appreciators do not allow non-moral considerations to impact their sympathies during the imaginative engagement.

Narratives that constitute instances of fictional immorality, on the other hand, open up an aesthetic space that removes moral and practical considerations. In these cases, affect-based allegiance is achieved precisely because the fictional nature of the prescriptions allows appreciators to let their sympathies be contaminated by non-moral factors. In these cases, appreciators only take into account whether a prescribed response is fitting given how the fictional prescriptions are framed in the narrative by the modes of representation. That is, when it comes to fictional immorality, appreciators only take into consideration whether the prescribed perspective gives them reasons to respond in determined ways. The fact that Walter White is portrayed as an intelligent and resourceful man gives us reasons to ally with him regardless of his moral character. This ultimately means that, when it comes to instances of fictional immorality, the fact the counter-moral prescriptions are quarantined in the fictional world means that the notion of ethical appropriateness becomes irrelevant. Appreciators can ignore moral considerations to ally with deviant fictional perspectives.

In this chapter I have explored how the difference between fictional and actual immorality impacts appreciators' engagement with narratives. Appreciators imaginatively engage with certain types of counter-moral fictions because there is discontinuity in their evaluative attitudes. I have argued that certain elements of a fictional narrative provide a fictional context that enables this discontinuity in the cognitive-affective responses to counter-moral content. The emotional asymmetries that result from this discontinuity guarantee the non-moral

allegiance to counter-moral perspectives in instances of fictional immorality that ground a rich imaginative engagement. The following chapter focuses on emotional responses to fiction to further explore how emotional asymmetries are possible, and how the notions of fittingness and appropriateness of emotional responses operate differently for the different types of counter-moral fictions.

4. Emotional realism and the discontinuity thesis

The previous chapter examined the discontinuity thesis as an explanation for how appreciators engage with different types of counter-moral content in works of fiction. The discontinuity thesis I defended claims that appreciators do not necessarily import their evaluative attitudes in their engagement with counter-moral fictions. According to this discontinuity thesis, the fictional context of the narrative provides appreciators with a framework of responses that can be discontinuous with appreciators' normal set of responses to a given scenario. By the end of the chapter I examined what Matthew Kieran calls "emotional asymmetries" to show how, contrary to what is predicted by the continuity thesis examined in the second chapter, appreciators' affective responses do not always follow the responses they would have when faced with an actual scenario. Contrary to Kieran, however, I argued that these asymmetries are possible not only thanks to the modes of representation of fictional narratives, but to other contextual considerations that allow appreciators to ignore moral and practical reasons in certain cases. The distinction between fictional and actual immorality proposed in the first chapter explains how the quarantining effect of fictional immorality opens an aesthetic space that removes moral considerations and that allows for emotional asymmetries. Moreover, I concluded that the fact that the aesthetic space removes moral and practical considerations means that the notion of ethical appropriateness becomes irrelevant for emotional responses to merely fictional immorality.

The aim of this chapter is to examine emotional responses to fiction to explore how emotional asymmetries are possible, and how the notions of fittingness and appropriateness of emotional responses to fiction operate differently for different types of counter-moral content. The main question is whether the emotional asymmetries imply a difference in the *type* of emotions we experience; that is, it is important to answer whether emotional asymmetries are possible because the 'emotions' we experience during the imaginative engagement are not in fact instances of genuine emotions, as some theorists claim. I argue that emotions toward fiction *are* instances of genuine emotions, but that their criteria of appropriateness depend on the fictional context examined in the previous chapter. This chapter sides with realist accounts of fictional emotions to explain both the emotional asymmetries noted by Kieran, and those instances where emotional asymmetries do not occur thus causing imaginative difficulties.

To do this, in the first section of the chapter I examine some of the solutions to what has been called "the paradox of fiction". Because it seems that the easiest way to explain emotional asymmetries is to claim that 'emotions' toward fiction are not instances of genuine emotions, I begin by examining the accounts that argue in favour of emotional *irrealism*, that is, accounts that claim that emotional responses to fiction are only *quasi-* emotions. In particular, I examine Kendall Walton and Stacie Friend's accounts. I then go over the criticisms that can be advanced to emotional irrealism to show that an account that claims that emotional responses to fiction are genuine emotions provides a more satisfactory account of our engagement with fictional narratives. The second part of this section focuses on *realist* solutions to the paradox of fiction, that is, those accounts that claim that emotional responses to fiction constitute genuine emotional responses. I examine some of the accounts that have been advanced to see how they overcome the criticisms made to irrealist accounts, and how they can explain emotional asymmetries. The second section of the chapter examines the criteria of appropriateness of such genuine emotional responses directed to fictional scenarios. The aim of this section is to determine how a realist account can account for emotional asymmetries by alluding to differences between the criteria of appropriateness of emotions directed toward fictional and actual scenarios. Finally, the third section explores in depth the discontinuity of genuine fictional emotions. I examine Jonathan Gilmore's discontinuity of the criteria of appropriateness of emotions in fiction, and argue that his criticism fails because he mischaracterises the notion of perspective and framing. To conclude, I present an argument in favour of discontinuity that solves the problems found in Gilmore's account.

4.1 In favour of emotional realism

How can we be emotionally involved in fiction if we know in advance that the events we are witnessing are not real? Aristotle already noted in his *Poetics* that the aesthetic pleasure we get from artistic representations depends on us knowing we are safely watching from a distance. However, at the same time he was convinced that for catharsis to work, fear or pity would have to be genuinely felt by appreciators as if they were part of the tragic events. That is to say that being aware of the distance that separates them from the fictional world does not mean appreciators can establish a contemplative distance from their own immersion in the artwork. Those who participate in tragedy can only purge themselves from the negative emotions by yielding to them; participation is in this sense a true *pathos*.

The paradox of fiction refers to the problem that arises from this peculiar feature of our engagement with fictional narratives. According to Tamar Gendler and Karson Kovakovich, the problem noted by Aristotle shows that audiences respond to fictional scenarios in two different ways: cognitively, they acknowledge that the scenarios presented in the fictional narrative are not actual; emotionally, however, they respond as if they were (Gendler & Kovakovich, 2006). The paradox of fiction presents a triad of propositions that seem plausible when considered individually, but which result in an inconsistency when considered together. Gendler and Kovakovich formulate the paradox as follows:

1) The response condition: We have genuine rational emotions toward certain characters (and situations) in works of fiction.

2) The belief condition: We believe these characters (and situations) to be purely fictional.

3) The coordination condition: In order for us to have genuine and rational emotional responses towards a character (or situation), we must not believe that the character (or situation) is purely fictional.

Dissolving the paradox requires us to abandon one of the three conditions. Jerrold Levinson (1997) has provided a useful breakdown of the solutions that have found adherents in the philosophical literature. Among the solutions that deny the response condition we can find the surrogate-object solution, the irrationalist solution and the make-believe solution. The surrogate-object solution[20] claims that it is not the fiction that is the object of the emotional responses, but rather other entities that exist or that are believed to be existent.[21] The irrationalist solution denies the response condition by arguing that when responding emotionally to the fictional narratives, appreciators are actually being irrational for responding to something they know does not exist.[22] The make-believe solution denies the response condition by claiming that the emotional responses appreciators experience in their engagement with fictional narratives are not actual emotional responses, but only imagined or make-believe

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[20] Currie calls this the "transfer strategy" (Currie 1990, 188).

[21] Levinson identifies different versions of the surrogate-object solution. The thought theory, defended by Lamarque (1981), Carroll (1990), and Smith (1995), claims that the objects of emotional responses are the thought contents afforded by the fictional narrative. Charlton (1984), on the other hand, claims that the responses are in fact directed at real individuals or events that are similar to the events presented by the fictional narrative; this is what Levinson calls the shadow object solution.

[22] Colin Radford's account (1975) is an irrationalist solution to the paradox inasmuch as he argues that, while the emotional responses can be said to be genuine, they are irrational for being responses to what is not believed to be real.

emotions.[23] Make-believe accounts of emotional responses toward fiction can be labelled as *irrealist* accounts because they argue that these responses are not genuine emotions.

The paradox could also be dissolved by denying the belief condition. This type of solution argues that appreciators respond emotionally to the narrative because during their imaginative engagement they do not believe the events and characters to be fictional. Levinson calls this the suspension of disbelief solution.[24] Advocates of this solution argue that during the imaginative engagement with the fictional narrative, appreciators get carried away and they temporarily forget they are witnessing events they know not to be real.[25]

Finally, the paradox could also be solved by denying the coordination condition. This group of solutions to the paradox claims that it is possible to have full-fledged emotional responses without believing the character or situation to exist.[26]These solutions have been called 'antijudgmentalist accounts' because they deny that emotional responses to fiction require existential judgements. Antijudmentalist accounts of emotional responses toward fiction can be labelled as *realist* accounts, contrary to make-believe solutions, because they defend that they are genuine emotions.

I only focus on the debate between the make-believe and the antijudgmentalist solutions because I am interested in examining whether it is possible to say that the emotions toward fiction are genuine, full-fledged emotional responses, and on the implications of the nature of these emotional responses for explaining emotional asymmetries. In the following paragraphs I examine the arguments in favour of a make-believe solution to the paradox, that is, the arguments advanced in favour of an irrealist account of fictional emotions, and the arguments in favour of a realist solution. For this reason, this section does not address whether having

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[23] Walton's *quasi*-emotions (1990; 1997) are the most influential version of the make-believe solution. Levinson (1990; 1997) also claims that the emotional responses toward fiction cannot be regarded as full-fledged emotions. More recently, Stacie Friend has also defended a make-believe solution by articulating an interesting defence of Walton's quasi-emotions (Friend, 2003).

[24] Carroll refers to this solution to the paradox of fiction as "the illusion theory of fiction" (Carroll 1990, 63).

[25] As many authors have noted, this solution has not been popular in recent years. Currie notes that such an account is not attractive because, not only does it seem implausible to claim that audiences get momentarily confused, but those moments of confusion would be too brief to underwrite the emotional responses experienced toward fiction (Currie 1990, 188). David Suits, however, seems to defend a version of this view. He argues that it is possible to say that appreciators believe in the events narrated in the work of fiction, since it is possible to say that believing is not an all-or-nothing attitude (Suits, 2006).

[26] The antijudgmentalist position seems to be the most popular version of the solution to the paradox of fiction. Authors defending a version of an antijudgmentalist solution include Richard Moran (1994), Derek Matravers (1998), Berys Gaut (2007), Jenefer Robinson (2005), Aaron Meskin and Jonathan Weinberg (2003), Greg Currie and Ian Ravenscroft (2002).

emotional responses toward fiction is rational; section two focuses on the issues of the rationality and appropriateness of emotional responses to fiction.[27]

The debate between realist and irrealist accounts of emotional responses to fiction is relevant for the discontinuity thesis because we need to determine how appreciators can experience radically different emotional responses to counter-moral content in fictional narratives and in real life scenarios. The previous chapter examined what Kieran calls "emotional asymmetries". These emotional asymmetries referred to the differences found in appreciators' emotional responses toward fictional scenarios and their real life counter-parts. Deviant emotional responses ground what I have called affect-based allegiance to counter-moral perspectives in fiction. That is, the radically different emotional responses to counter-moral content in fiction are what sustain the non-moral pro-attitudes toward immoral characters prescribed by deviant perspectives in fiction. These emotional responses drive appreciators to overlook morally undesirable traits and to adopt what they consider a counter-moral perspective.

As I said, it would seem that the easiest way for the discontinuity thesis to explain emotional asymmetries, and the resulting affect-based allegiance to counter-moral perspectives in fiction, would be to argue for emotional irrealism. One could argue that emotional responses to immorality in fiction are sometimes radically different to appreciators' actual perspective because they are only make-believe emotions. This line of argument could claim that if appreciators actually lack the relevant evaluative attitudes that would ground the deviant responses in fiction, their emotional responses during their imaginative engagement are not instances of genuine emotions. However, in what follows I argue that irrealist accounts are flawed, and that they cannot successfully explain our emotional engagement with fictional narratives. Given that emotional realism is more successful in explaining the imaginative engagement with fiction, this chapter examines how a realist account can accommodate the emotional asymmetries to explain our imaginative engagement with radically different perspectives in works of fiction.

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[27] I also leave aside the discussion on the surrogate-object solutions to the paradox. In what follows, I take as a given that the object of the emotional responses are the fictional events and characters. Thus, I do not examine Levinson, Carroll, and Smith's suggestion that the emotions are actually directed at the thought content afforded by the fictional narrative. Finally, I do not address in depth the objections against the suspension of disbelief either. As I have mentioned, Currie notes that, even if it was the case that audiences get momentarily confused, this brief confusion would not be able to ground the complex emotional responses that appreciators seem to experience toward fiction. It is interesting to emphasise, however, that, as Jenefer Robinson notes, the momentary confusion might be better interpreted as a "selective focus of attention", in which appreciators do not pay attention to the fact that the events are not real (Robinson 2005, 149).

4.1.1 Irrealist accounts of emotional responses toward fiction

In the previous chapters I examined whether the engagement with counter-moral fictions depends on the continuity of our evaluative attitudes, or whether it is possible to say that appreciators are willing to leave behind their evaluative framework for the sake of fiction. In the last chapter I argued that emotional asymmetries support the discontinuity of our evaluative framework insofar as emotional responses ground non-moral allegiance to counter-moral perspectives in fiction. But if it is possible to say that appreciators respond emotionally to fiction in ways they would not respond to actual scenarios, the first question that needs to be answered is whether the 'emotions' they experience during the imaginative engagement are genuine emotions.

As I have said, the accounts identified as make-believe solutions to the paradox of fiction deny the response condition. These accounts claim that the responses experienced during the imaginative engagement with fiction are not full-fledged emotions. For this reason, Berys Gaut refers to these accounts as *emotional irrealism*. It is important to note from the start that these accounts do not deny that appreciators genuinely feel *something* in their engagement with fiction; but they argue that the responses felt by appreciators cannot be identified *literally* as instances of emotions. Walton thus argues for the negative claim that the "genuine emotional responses to works of fiction do not involve, literally, fearing, grieving for, admiring fictional characters" (Walton 1997, 38). As Levinson puts it, "The issue is not whether make-believe can cause various emotional reactions, but whether those reactions, given that certain cognitive conditions are not satisfied, qualify as full-fledged emotions of the ordinary sort"(Levinson 1997, 27).

For Levinson, the main problem with emotional responses toward fictions is that they lack the necessary existential belief that grounds genuine emotional responses. As a consequence, these emotion-like responses also lack the relevant motivational force or behavioural consequences that follow genuine emotions (Levinson 1997, 26). The lack of these two features is also what drives Walton to classify emotional responses toward fictional narratives as *quasi*-emotions. It is important to note, however, that Walton worries less about the lack of an existential belief, and more about the lack of motivational force. This is because Walton does not want to endorse a cognitivist account of emotions. So, according to Walton, quasi-emotions lack the motivational force that characterises genuine emotional responses. Quasi-emotions are,

nevertheless, really felt. Even though they lack an existential belief at their core and they lack the motivational force, Walton notes that quasi-emotions are phenomenologically similar to actual emotions (Walton 1990, 251).

So, what exactly are quasi-emotions? Walton defines them as fictional truths referred to the appreciator as a reflexive prop (that is, props that generate other fictional truths about themselves) in the game of make-believe; these fictional truths are generated by her mental state. Since these emotions refer only to fictional truths about us as appreciators, they cannot be thought to be genuine. Again, Walton does not mean to say that appreciators are *pretending* to feel: they do actually experience something that fictionally is the experience of the emotion (Walton 1990, 247). So, according to Walton, it is fictional that Charles fears the slime, but he does not feel fictional or pretend-fear. Quasi-emotions are caused by the psychological participation in the game of make-believe: "Participation involves imagining about ourselves as well as about the characters and situations of the fiction – but not just imagining *that* such and such is true of ourselves. We imagine *doing* things, *experiencing* things, *feeling* in certain ways" (Walton 1997, 38). Think for example of Stephen King´s *Cujo*. The novel tells the story of Cujo, a St. Bernard dog who is bitten by a rabid bat and goes mad, killing several people. According to Walton, the *quasi*-fear I experience while reading the novel is explained by my imagining *from the inside*. During my imaginative engagement, I imagine myself inhabiting the same world as Cujo, I imagine myself seeing Cujo as it goes on a murderous rampage. As a result, I experience certain feelings: my palms start sweating, my heart races. And so it is *fictionally true* that I fear Cujo, I experience *quasi*-fear.

To explain why this imagining from the inside does not cause actual but quasi-emotions, Walton turns to simulation theory. According to Walton, the psychological participation in fiction can be understood as a simulation because the relevant inputs are not beliefs, but imaginings. And if it is possible to say that the inputs are just pretend versions of the states that are simulated during the imaginative engagement, it is also possible to say that the outputs of the simulation are pretend versions of the simulated states. The outputs are just simulated states because they are run *off line*, that is, they lack the relevant link to *behavioural manifestations* (Walton 1997, 43). So, while these simulated states might be phenomenologically similar to actual emotions, it is necessary to say that they only occur in imagination inasmuch as they are not manifested in changes in behaviour.

However, as we will see in the following section, Greg Currie and Ian Ravenscroft argue that simulation theory is compatible with emotional *realism* (Currie and Ravenscroft 2002, 189). They agree with Walton that imagination takes as its inputs counterpart states to perception, belief and desire. But they also note that emotions can take as their input these counterpart states as well. Moreover, Currie and Ravenscroft do not think that the lack of behavioural *manifestations* is enough to claim that emotions have counterpart states in imagination. While they agree that simulation is run off line, and therefore it remains disconnected from action, this does not mean that the affective states that result from that simulation are not cases of genuine full-fledged emotions.

Like Gendler and Kovakovich, Currie and Ravenscroft use Antonio Damasio's work to show that merely imagined scenarios cause genuine emotional responses. Damasio's experiments show that patients with damage to their prefrontal cortex are incapable of reacting emotionally to imagined situations (and even images), and therefore find it difficult to avoid high-risk actions by anticipating the emotional responses and bodily changes. This means that genuine emotional responses to imagined scenarios are an important part of practical reasoning. Currie and Ravescroft also note that emotional responses to imagined scenarios have important consequences for thinking about the world as others think about it. Emotional responses to imaginings that assist in planning and in understanding others are not different to emotional responses to fictional scenarios, but rather form a single psychological kind (Currie and Ravenscroft 2002, 197-199). While these emotions toward imagined scenarios might not have actual behavioural manifestations, they do have a motivational force in that they impact practical reasoning, they are an important part of planning future actions and of understanding others.

The main argument against Walton's quasi-emotions, is that there are many instances of genuine, full-fledged emotions that do not have behavioural *manifestations*. We can find many cases where we experience strong, genuine emotions, and yet fail to act on them. For example, I might experience anxiety before giving a talk in a conference, and yet I manage not to storm out of the room; or I might experience anger when my dog destroys an important document, and yet I manage not to yell at him. If this is so, then it would mean that behavioural manifestations cannot be a necessary condition for emotions to count as genuine. And, if behavioural manifestations are not a necessary condition for emotions being genuine, it cannot be said that emotions toward fiction are not instances of genuine emotions due to the lack of behavioural manifestations.

The notion of behavioural manifestation itself is worth examining. Walton argues that genuine emotions carry a motivational force, and that this motivational force has behavioural manifestations. Because emotions toward fiction do not present behavioural manifestations they do not seem to have motivational force and, therefore, are not instances of genuine emotions. But the motivational force of emotions should not be understood simply as behavioural *manifestations*, that is, as visible immediate changes in behaviour. On the contrary, it looks like the motivational force of emotions would be better understood as a *disposition* to behave in certain ways. And this disposition need not be manifested in immediate actual behaviours. Damasio's experiments show that emotional responses to imagined scenarios do have an impact on the agent's disposition to behave in certain ways: patients who are incapable of reacting to imagined scenarios fail to avoid high-risk actions. Emotional responses to imagined scenarios feed into practical reasoning even if they do not display immediate behavioural manifestations.

We can say, therefore, that emotional responses to imagined scenarios *do* have a motivational force, even when this motivational force is not displayed in actual behavioural manifestations during the imaginative engagement. Richard Moran notes that emotions toward fiction fit the pattern of genuine emotions directed at modal facts: things that could have happened, things that could have been different, things that we might have done differently (Moran 1994, 78). In these cases, the lack of behavioural manifestations might be better explained, not by the lack of a motivational force, but by a context that is considered unsuitable for action (e.g. the fact that I'm reacting to something that could have been, but that wasn't). Or, as Gaut suggests, we could also explain the lack of behavioural manifestations during the imaginative engagement by the absence of desires and appropriate existential beliefs (Gaut 2007, 36). For example, the fear I experience while reading *Cujo* might dispose me to run and hide; but at the same time I do not believe Cujo exists, and thus decide it is absurd to hide under the bed.

On the other hand, the motivational force of emotions could also be manifested in certain bodily changes that dispose the agent to react in certain ways, and that are definitely present in emotional responses toward fiction. For example, the bodily changes that we undergo when experiencing fear actually prepare us for the fight or flight response, and so they reveal a disposition to behave in certain ways. And we can actually see these bodily changes in responses to merely fictional scenarios: I experience muscular tension and an accelerated heart rate when reading *Cujo*.

Finally, it is interesting to note that the motivational force of emotional responses toward imagined affairs might also be manifested in what Gendler calls contagion or affective transmission, that is, "cases where mere contemplation of an emotionally charged situation causes the thinker to behave in a way consistent with the belief that the situation is sufficiently probable so as to influence prudent behaviour" (Gendler 2003, 131). Engaging with fictional narratives that trigger intense emotional responses often causes this type of affective transmission. For instance, even when I know *Cujo* to be fiction, if my fear is intense I might avoid contact with my dog after reading the novel, or I might be particularly attentive to signs of rabies or a potential attack. In these cases, the emotions I experience during my imaginative engagement with the fictional narrative display their motivational force in actual temporary changes in behaviour.

If quasi-emotions are really felt and they have a motivational force, why should we think that they are not instances of genuine, full-fledged emotions?

Stacie Friend argues in favour of quasi-emotions on cognitivist grounds. While Walton refuses to endorse the principle that emotions require beliefs, Friend holds that propositionally contentful belief states constitute an essential part and individuate emotions (Friend 2003, 38). And precisely because emotions directed at fictional scenarios are not grounded in beliefs but imaginings, it is necessary to say that they are not instances of genuine emotions. According to Friend, the cognitivist claim is necessary to explain both the motivational force and the rationality of emotions. And since emotions toward fiction lack these two features, there is good reason to think of them merely as quasi-emotions.

Friend acknowledges that, as noted by Moran, emotional responses to fiction are similar to emotional responses to other entertained scenarios. But she argues that neither of these cases should be considered genuine emotions. While it might be that the thought is causally related to the response, Friend claims that unless it can be established that the propositional content constitutes a component, the response cannot be said to be a genuine emotion (Friend 2003, 39-40). The phenomenological similarities between responses to imaginings and responses to beliefs are not sufficient to claim that they are both cases of genuine emotions.

Friend notes that appreciators' dispositional beliefs[28] form a belief stock. But she also notes that it is possible for appreciators to imagine things that contrast with their belief stock. In fact,

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[28] Friend distinguishes between dispositional and occurrent beliefs (Friend, 2003, 42). Beliefs are occurrent when the subject is consciously aware of them, when she is actively entertaining them. Beliefs are dispositional when

the practice of fiction depends on appreciators being capable of bracketing their beliefs to participate in the imaginings prescribed by the fictional narrative. This is possible because appreciators are capable of compartmentalizing the imaginings. Those imaginings that contrast with the belief stock remain attached to the content of the fictional narrative, and are not incorporated into the belief stock.[29] The same thing happens with emotions toward fiction. According to Friend, it is possible to identify both occurrent and dispositional emotions; dispositional emotions form an emotional stock that is consistent with our belief stock (Friend 2003, 44). On her view, emotional responses to fiction are not consistent with the belief stock because they do not have beliefs, but imaginings, as their constitutive element. To explain these emotions, not only would we need to accept that emotions sometimes are not constituted by a belief state, but we would need to accept contradictions within the emotional stock (Friend 2003, 43-44).

Even if we denied the claim that emotions are constituted by beliefs, and, therefore, we denied that our emotional stock needs to be consistent with the belief stock, it would still be necessary to account for the inconsistencies within the emotional stock that would derive from the emotional asymmetry in our engagement with some instances of counter-moral fictions. For example, we would need to account for the fact that we feel strong sympathy for Walter White but not for Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán. Friend claims that "Avoiding contradictions among our emotions can be just as important to rationality as avoiding contradictions among our beliefs, because they too play a role in practical reasoning: inconsistent desires will prevent us from attaining our goals" (Friend 2003, 44). For this reason, Friend claims that emotional responses to fiction are never incorporated to the emotional stock because they cannot be detached from the make-believe. And this is explained by the fact that emotional responses to fiction are not instances of genuine emotions. Inasmuch as they cannot be detached from the representation, and be incorporated into the emotional stock, it must be said that such responses are only quasi-emotions.

Friend's argument for quasi-emotions looks like a tempting way to explain asymmetric emotions and the discontinuity thesis. As I said before, if it is true that the engagement with counter-moral fictions is possible because of an asymmetry between emotional responses to

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the subject possesses a belief, but she is not actively and consciously thinking about it. The subject's set of beliefs about the world forms her belief stock; these beliefs are dispositional while they are not being actively used by the subject.

[29] Friend takes the notions of incorporating and compartmentalizing from Richard Gerrig (1993). She notes that it is also possible to add beliefs to our belief stock as a result of our imaginative engagement.

fictional and real scenarios, it might be better to say that we experience radically different emotional responses to fiction because these responses are not instances of genuine, full-fledged emotions. Moreover, the discontinuity thesis seems to endorse the claim that there is an important distance between imagining and believing. Inasmuch as imaginings can remain attached to the fictional narrative, appreciators do not need to import their belief stock, thus allowing for important differences between their evaluative attitudes in fiction and in their everyday lives. At the same time, the fact that imaginings are not incorporated into the belief stock allows appreciators to engage with what they recognise as immorality in fiction, as it happens in cases of fictional immorality. And, if this is so, it is tempting to say that the emotional asymmetry is enabled by the difference between imaginings and beliefs. Appreciators would then allow themselves to respond to fiction in ways they would not normally allow because the quasi-emotions do not require them to modify their belief and emotional stocks. Emotional responses to fiction would then be liberated from appreciators' actual affective responses.

However, there is an important difficulty in Friend's account. According to her, the link between emotions and practical reasoning requires that the emotional stock does not contain inconsistencies. It is, therefore, necessary to claim that emotional responses to fiction are not incorporated to the emotional stock, as they would be inconsistent, which is why they can only be regarded as quasi-emotions. But she overlooks the fact that our emotional stock, that is, the set of our everyday *genuine* emotional responses, often includes conflicting emotions. Patricia Greenspan notes that rational subjects often experience contrary emotions. For example, I experience both happiness and sadness when I realise my daughter has grown and is no longer a baby. It would follow from Friend's argument that either I have to be regarded as irrational, or some of my responses are not instances of genuine, full-fledged emotions.

Friend argues that, just as the belief stock must remain without contradictions and depends on an effort to represent the world correctly, the emotional stock needs to remain without contradictions to fulfil its role in practical reasoning. Quasi-emotions are only quasi-emotions because they cannot be incorporated to the emotional stock; and they cannot be incorporated to the emotional stock because that would cause important inconsistencies. However, Greenspan argues that the appropriateness of emotions is not quite the same as truth. So, while beliefs aim at representing the world correctly, emotions have different criteria of rationality. In the case of emotions, appropriateness "depends on the adequacy of certain reasons for an emotion, the facts that make it suited to its object" (Greenspan 1980, 236). For an emotion to

be appropriate, therefore, it needs to be justified. Contrary to truth that depends on the correct representation of the world, appropriateness allows for conflicting emotions inasmuch as two different emotions can be appropriate for different reasons.[30]

The second section of this chapter will go over the notions of rationality and appropriateness of emotional responses toward fiction in more detail, but I would like to point out here that the emotional asymmetry and the discontinuity found in the engagement with counter-moral fictions might be explained precisely because the fictional context provides a different justification for otherwise inappropriate emotions. As Friend rightly argues, the emotions toward fiction remain attached to the fictional narrative. But this is not because they cannot be incorporated into the emotional stock, but because it is the fictional narrative that provides the necessary justification to hold conflicting emotions.[31]

So, if the presumed asymmetry between quasi-emotions and emotions can be explained away by showing that conflicting emotions are common (and rational), and if the lack of either an existential belief and behavioural manifestations can also be explained without alluding to quasi-emotions, it looks like there are no good reasons to claim that emotional responses to fiction are instances of quasi-emotions, and not instances of genuine, full-fledged emotions.

4.1.2 Realist accounts of emotional responses toward fiction

While irrealist accounts of emotional responses toward fiction initially seemed like an attractive candidate to explain the emotional asymmetries that ground non-moral allegiance to certain types of counter-moral fictions, the difference between 'quasi-emotions' and genuine emotions was unsupported by either the lack of behavioural manifestations or emotional inconsistencies. Therefore, there do not seem to be good reasons for defending that emotional responses toward fiction are not instances of genuine emotions. Realist solutions to the paradox of fiction claim that emotional responses toward fiction are instances of genuine, full-fledged

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[30] Friend acknowledges that her account of quasi-emotions depends on a cognitivist account of the emotions. The idea of an emotional stock clearly depends on emotions being constituted by a propositionally contentful belief state. But Greenspan's argument for the different criteria of rationality of emotions and beliefs aims precisely at showing that cognitivism is wrong. Without cognitivism, Friend's account of quasi-emotions is subject to the same criticisms advanced against Walton.

[31] As was just said, the justification of emotions works unlike truth: while truth depends on judgements to fit the facts, the justification for emotional responses depends only on having reasons to experience those emotions. When it comes to emotions toward fiction, the fictional narrative is just what provides appreciators with the reasons to experience certain emotions over others. These reasons, nevertheless, can only be found in the narrative and our experience of it, and thus remain attached to it.

emotions. As said before, these accounts deny that genuine emotional responses require beliefs. And because they argue that genuine emotional responses toward fiction are possible because emotions do not require the corresponding belief, Gaut refers to them as realist accounts of emotion. Contrary to the make-believe solutions examined above, these accounts argue that it is possible to say that appreciators experience genuine emotions during their imaginative engagement.

Realist accounts of emotional responses toward fiction seem to be intuitively attractive because they take into consideration the phenomenological robustness of the emotional experience during the imaginative engagement. They need to explain, however, (1) how it is possible for these responses to feel genuine without the necessary beliefs, and (2) what happens to the motivational force of emotion if it does not lead to behavioural manifestations. In the following paragraphs I examine some examples of realist accounts of emotions toward fiction[32] to show that they can successfully accommodate an answer to the above questions, and that they are, therefore, better candidates to account for a rich imaginative engagement with fiction. The emotional asymmetries noted in the previous chapter will, therefore, need to be explained from emotional realism as well. I do not argue in favour of a particular version of emotional realism. Instead, in examining some realist accounts, I argue that emotional realism can accommodate the discontinuity thesis by explaining emotional asymmetries.

As I said in the previous section, unlike Walton, Greg Currie and Ian Ravenscroft argue for emotional realism from simulation theory. They argue that, while it is necessary to posit imaginative counterparts of mental states, it is not necessary to posit an imaginative counterpart of emotions, such as quasi-emotions. According to them, emotions should be understood as "perception-like sensitivities to what we might call, generally, *degrees of congruence*. There is a high degree of congruence between the world, or some aspect of it, and myself when the world is, roughly speaking, the way I want it to be" (Currie and Ravenscroft 2002, 193-194). Emotions thus depend on other mental states to respond to the degrees of congruence. When it comes to emotions in response to imagined scenarios, emotions take as their input the imaginative counterparts of the relevant mental states (Currie and Ravenscroft 2002, 196).

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[32]The chapter focuses on antijudgmentalist solutions to the paradox of fiction, although there are other types of realist accounts. I do not examine thought theories (Carroll, 1990; Lamarque, 1981; Smith, 1995b). I take as a given that emotional responses toward fiction are actually directed at the fictional characters and events. I do not examine Alex Neill's amendment to the coordination condition either, although it can be regarded as a version of an antijudgmentalist solution. Neill argues that emotional responses to fiction do not depend on the judgement that something is the case, but rather they depend on the judgement that something is *fictionally* the case (Neill, 1993).

Appreciators respond to the degree of congruence between the fictional world as presented by the narrative and how they want it to be. In this sense, they argue that imagination is "transparent to emotion": actual emotions take imaginative counterparts of the relevant mental states as their input. Emotional responses toward fiction are genuine emotions, and they feel like genuine emotions, even in the absence of belief, because actual emotions can take imaginings as their input, not just beliefs.

According to simulation theory, appreciators respond emotionally to fiction because they simulate a hypothetical reader who learns about the events narrated in the work of fiction. The imaginative engagement thus consists in this role-playing in which appreciators form off-line versions of the states (or I states) of this hypothetical reader. These I states are the input necessary for emotional responses (Currie, 1997). The reason why emotions toward fiction lack behavioural manifestations is because they are run off-line. They do, nevertheless, have a motivational force insofar as they play an important role in practical reasoning. As we saw before, Currie and Ravenscroft take Damasio's findings on the relevance of emotional responses to imagined scenarios, to show that their role in practical reasoning gives simulation theory important reasons to hold these emotions are genuine.

Aaron Meskin and Jonathan Weinberg argue[33] that Currie and Ravenscroft's account fails, among other reasons, because it is egocentric: simulation theory requires that appreciators use their own beliefs to model the beliefs of someone else (Meskin and Weinberg 2003). This would seem problematic for explaining the emotional asymmetry found in our imaginative engagement with deviant perspectives in fiction. Emotional asymmetries are so called because some of the responses we experience when engaging with fiction significantly contrast with the attitudes we would normally have in an actual scenario. So, if this simulation model is necessarily egocentric, it is not clear how it would be able to explain those cases where responses toward fiction significantly depart from the responses appreciators would normally

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[33] Meskin and Weinberg do not take posture in the realist/irrealist debate, although they do provide an explanation for the phenomenological robustness of emotional responses to fiction and for the lack of behavioural manifestations. They use the cognitive architecture developed by Shaun Nichols and Stephen Stich to advance an explanation for the emotional responses to fiction. According to them, emotional responses to fiction can be explained by alluding to the Possible Worlds Box (PWB). This box takes input from perceptual systems and it contains representations that mimic beliefs. The PWB is connected to the affect system, the same system attached to the belief box, and can thus cause emotional responses that are phenomenologically robust. In their account, the lack of behavioural consequences is explained because the PWB is not connected to the action system (Meskin and Weinberg 2003, 30-31). While they do not want to argue in favour of emotional realism, their account might be seen as an argument against positing quasi-emotions. As we saw in the previous section, Walton's main argument for quasi-emotions was the lack of behavioural manifestations. So if we can explain why emotional responses to fiction lack this feature, it might be enough to show that it is not necessary to distinguish between quasi and genuine emotions.

have. Meskin and Weinberg are nevertheless wrong in claiming that Currie and Ravenscroft's account is necessarily egocentric. Currie explicitly characterizes simulation as role-playing; and this role playing "involves a substantial departure from my normal, real-life mental set" (Currie, 1997, 73). Currie and Ravenscroft's simulation account can explain emotional asymmetries from a realist perspective by claiming that during their imaginative engagement appreciators simulate someone with a radically different perspective; and this simulation works as an input for genuine emotional responses that are run off-line.

Tamar Gendler and Karson Kovakovich's solution to the paradox of fiction is also a realist account that can solve the problems that irrealist solutions could not. They argue that emotional responses to fiction can be explained because "we tend to initially interpret all cognitive and sensory input as indicative of the presence of the ordinary source of phenomena of its type. Such instantaneous interpretations are not robust enough to be properly considered beliefs" (Gendler and Kovakovich 2005, 247). For example, if I watch *Cujo*'s 1983 film adaptation, the sudden appearance of rabid Cujo in my screen is enough for me to interpret it as the presence of an actual rabid dog, thus triggering an affective response. So, while their solution to the paradox of fiction depends on preserving the belief (in the fictional character of the scenario) and the response condition, they still note that those who deny the belief condition, the illusion theorists, are right in showing that appreciators seem to treat fictional characters and events in the same way as real characters and situations (Gendler and Kovakovich 2005, 243).

Gendler and Kovakovich, like Currie and Ravenscroft, use Damasio's experiments to show that fictional emotions are instances of genuine, rational emotions. The imaginative experience of potential consequences of our actions triggers automatic responses, and it is crucial for practical reasoning that these responses exhibit the same characteristics as emotions toward real events. Gendler and Kovakovich refer to these emotions as simulated emotions, and they argue that they are indirectly connected to action precisely because of their role in practical reasoning. Thus, they argue that the differences between actual and simulated emotions are found in the way the emotions are processed, but not in their motivational structure (Gendler and Kovakovich 2005, 249-250). According to them, simulated emotions are instances of genuine emotions. Because simulated emotions are responses to imagined events, Gendler and Kovakovich argue that simulated and fictional emotions, emotional responses to fiction, are similar.[34] While the former refer to projections, the latter refer to situations we believe to be

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[34] Robert Stecker argues against Gendler and Kovakovich that there are important differences between fictional and simulated emotions to be noted. So, while it might be true that simulated emotions are instances of genuine

fictional. But they are both genuine because they are genuinely felt. Fictional emotions are genuine and rational emotional responses toward characters and events we believe to be fictional. Actual and fictional emotions differ in their subject-matter. But, just as simulated emotions, they are essential to our practical reasoning. And this is not new: Gendler and Kovakovich note that many authors have defended the importance of engaging with fictional scenarios to broaden our range of simulated encounters that would help in our practical reasoning (Gendler and Kovakovich 2005, 252).

Gendler and Kovakovich's account is compatible with emotional asymmetries. They argue that emotional responses toward fiction are genuine because imagination works like a simulation: the imaginative engagement with a work of fiction is simply like engaging with a simulated event the agent knows to be fictional. If the work of fiction should be understood as a simulated scenario, the modes of representation that inform the fictional perspective shape the simulation and our responses to it. The importance of framing is clear when we consider that, according to Gendler and Kovakovich, appreciators interpret the input presented by the simulation as

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emotions, fictional emotions are not. He argues that simulated emotions are strongly bound to action, since they are part of deliberation, but that fictional emotions are dissociated from action because they do not seem to imply a behavioural disposition. The main reason for this difference is that fictional emotions are effectively distanced from the fictional scenario. This distance "occurs when one both lacks an inclination to act on and has an inclination to reflect on one's emotional response to a state of affairs as well as to the state of affairs itself" (Stecker 2011, 305). Because appreciators are distanced from fictional scenarios, they are actually capable of reflecting on and learning from their emotional responses. The phenomenological similarities between genuine emotions and fictional emotions disappear when we consider that, according to Stecker, the distance causes emotions toward fiction to be voluntary: "(…) whether and how we respond to fiction seems much more optional than whether and how we do so in the face of real events. People have blamelessly different emotional responses to the same fictional events" (Stecker 2011, 305-306).

I believe, however, that Stecker's criticism is flawed on three grounds. First, it is not clear why the distance from action characteristic of fictional emotions cannot be found in simulated emotions as well. While it is true that simulated emotions play an important role in deliberation, and are therefore *connected* to action, it does not follow that simulated emotions are necessarily followed by an immediate behavioural manifestation. Second, and more importantly, it does not seem clear to me that fictional emotions imply a reflective distance from our emotional experience. Our capacity to reflect on our emotions toward fiction can only be said to occur on a reflection on our imaginative engagement with the fictional narrative, but not *during* the emotional experience itself. That is, in a later reflective exercise of my imaginative engagement with *Cujo* I might realise that my fear is absurd given that rabid dogs do not go on murderous rampages. But it might be difficult to do so while I am being carried away with fear during my imaginative experience of the novel. The emotional responses toward fiction are often so intense that it is difficult to distance ourselves from what we are feeling. Moreover, my capacity to reflect on my emotional experience is not exclusive to emotional responses toward fiction. On careful reflection I might come to see that my fear of daddy longlegs spiders is just as absurd as my fear of Cujo. This means that it is not clear that our emotional response toward fiction can be subject to a simultaneous reflective revision any more than genuine emotions are. Third, fictional emotions can be as overwhelming as genuine emotions. The variations of the intensity of emotional responses might be explained by the expressive features of the narrative and its aesthetic merits. But in any case, it does not seem like emotional responses in fiction are voluntary. It could be, however, that when Stecker talks about the voluntary nature of emotions to fiction he is trying to account for the emotional asymmetry. In this sense, he is right to point out that there seem to be differences in how appreciators *allow* themselves to respond emotionally to fictions in ways they would not normally respond. And, as I said before, a realist account of fictional emotions needs to be able to explain these differences.

"indicative of the presence of the ordinary source phenomena of its type". This means that if the narrative frames the fictional events as having certain evaluative properties, and the simulation is adequate, appreciators will interpret the fictional scenario as having just such evaluative properties and will respond accordingly.

Jenefer Robinson also advances a realist solution to the paradox of fiction that emphasizes the role of a narrative's formal devices and a subject's interests, and that is thus a successful explanation of emotional asymmetries. Like Gendler and Kovakovich's account, her characterisation of fictional emotions does not depend on a propositional counterpart of belief in imagination. Robinson denies the coordination condition inasmuch as she argues that a belief is not necessary for an emotional response. Instead, she argues that emotional responses are processes. The process begins with an affective appraisal, a non-cognitive evaluation that triggers a set of physiological responses, and that is followed by a cognitive monitoring of the situation (Robinson, 2005). Some processes might be more complex that others, so that the affective appraisal might be triggered by a perception or a thought. What is attractive about Robinson's account is that she can easily accommodate the cognitive element found in some emotional responses, without claiming that a propositional attitude is in fact a constitutive element of the emotion. The most complex cases of emotion might be those where there is "cognitive activity prior to the affective appraisal, but it is only after there is an affective appraisal that there is an emotional response. (…) To put the point dramatically, what turns a cognition into an emotion is an affective appraisal and its concomitant physiological changes." (Robinson 2005, 62)

What are the consequences of this approach to emotion for emotions toward fiction? Robinson claims that the emotional processes in fiction are the same as when appreciators respond to an actual scenario. Depending on the type of fictional narrative, appreciators are responding either to perceptions, as it would be the case of visual narratives, or thoughts, as it would be the case of literary fictions; in addition to this, appreciators also respond to the aesthetic features or formal devices of the narrative. If everyday emotional processes start with an affective appraisal of a situation that puts the subject's interests, or those she feels close to, at stake, fictional narratives trigger the appraisal by getting appreciators involved with the characters and the situations narrated via the prescribed perspective. This non-cognitive appraisal in turn triggers in appreciators physiological responses that focus the attention on the emotional situation even further. Finally, appreciators carry out a cognitive monitoring of the situation

that confirms or disconfirms the original appraisal, and that influences the action tendencies (Robinson 2005, 113-116).

According to Robinson's account, therefore, the phenomenological similarities between actual and fictional emotions are explained by the fact that the affective appraisal triggers the same physiological responses as in real life scenarios. Fictional emotions are really felt because the bodily changes appreciators feel are the same. The behavioural differences, on the other hand, are explained by the results of cognitive monitoring. The cognitive monitoring tells appreciators that the events are fictional, and that they have no control over them. What is important to note is that this says nothing about the genuineness of the emotional response, since the behavioural output is not part of the emotional process, even in cases of emotions toward real events. The motivational force of emotions toward fiction is manifested differently because the cognitive monitoring of the emotional process shows that the situation assessed is in fact fictional. The cognitive monitoring of the emotional process helps in solving another issue highlighted by Friend. The reason why fictional emotions do not have a direct and immediate impact on practical reasoning, as actual emotions do, and on appreciators' belief stock, is because the cognitive monitoring directs the right behavioural consequences. Emotional responses toward fictional narratives are instances of genuine emotions as they involve an affective appraisal, certain physiological changes, and a cognitive monitoring.

Robinson's account can, in addition to this, explain the emotional asymmetries found during our imaginative engagement with deviant narratives. As said before, she emphasizes the role of a work's formal devices, the modes of representation, in manipulating appreciators' responses. But this feature can also be found in Gendler and Kovakovich's view. What is most interesting in Robinson's account, and what makes it more attractive for explaining not only genuine emotions toward fiction but *asymmetric genuine emotions* toward fiction, is the emphasis she puts on a subject's interests and their role in triggering affective appraisals.

In chapter 3, I argued that familiarity is important when prescribing deviant non-moral allegiance because it is this familiarity that drives appreciators to overlook moral judgements in favour of other non-moral considerations. Robinson's account helps in explaining how familiarity grounds affective-allegiance to deviant perspectives in fiction. The prescribed perspective of a work of fiction shapes appreciators' interests by getting them involved with the characters and situations narrated. As such, the prescribed perspective shapes emotional responses by showing that the characters appreciators' feel close to, and their interests, are at

stake. Familiarity is important for the engagement with fictional narratives because it makes appreciators feel that the characters' interests are their interests as well. This triggers affective appraisals that have at their core not *our regular interests*, but our interests as shaped by the fictional perspective. It is important for appreciators to feel like immoral characters endorsed by the narrative are one of their own because making them feel close brings their interests in line. The reason why we find asymmetric genuine emotions toward fiction is because the narratives trigger affective appraisals of appreciator's interests as they were shaped by the fictional perspective.

Irrealist accounts of emotional responses toward fiction had only the lack of appropriate beliefs and behavioural consequences as a motivation to suggest that emotional responses to fiction cannot be understood as instances of genuine emotions. The accounts presented above, however, are able to explain how fictional emotions are instances of genuine emotions even in the absence of those features. Realist accounts, therefore, seem more attractive to explain the emotional experience during the imaginative engagement as they can account for the phenomenological similarities without having to propose a counterpart of an existing state. Moreover, the realist accounts examined above can explain why emotional asymmetries occur when engaging with some instances of counter-moral fiction.

4.2 Appropriate responses to fiction

So far I have argued that audiences engage with fictional counter-moral perspectives because the emotional responses they experience during their imaginative engagement ground non-moral allegiance. Appreciators experience emotional responses to fictional counter-moral perspectives that they would not normally approve in actual scenarios; and, in turn, this means that they ally with counter-moral perspectives they would not normally support. The discontinuity thesis that claims that appreciators do not necessarily import their evaluative attitudes during their imaginative engagement, needs to be able to account for such emotional asymmetries to explain the discontinuity of evaluative attitudes. In the previous section I claimed that, although it seems attractive to explain emotional asymmetries by arguing that responses toward fiction are only quasi-emotions, emotional irrealism does not provide a satisfactory account of our emotional engagement with fictional narratives. On the contrary, emotional realism has proven to be a more attractive account of emotional responses toward

fiction. It can explain the phenomenological robustness of the emotional experience; and it can account for the presumed lack of motivational force. In addition to this, we have seen that realist accounts can explain emotional asymmetries. Nevertheless, it is still necessary to determine whether genuine asymmetric emotions in fiction can be evaluated under the same criteria of appropriateness. In the previous chapter, I concluded that the notion of ethical appropriateness becomes irrelevant for emotional responses to merely fictional immorality. However, if fictional emotions are instances of genuine emotions, it would seem that the criteria of appropriateness should remain the same. That is, if these asymmetric emotions are genuine emotions, why is ethical appropriateness irrelevant in instances of fictional immorality? This section examines the notions of rationality and appropriateness when applied to emotional responses to fiction to determine why the notions of fittingness and appropriateness can be said to work differently for different types of counter-moral fictions.

As I mentioned in the discussion of Friend's account of quasi-emotions, while rationality in beliefs seems to depend on truth and consistency, Patricia Greenspan argues that emotions do not follow these criteria of rationality. According to Greenspan, the difference between truth and appropriateness is that truth depends on judgements to fit the facts, while appropriateness of emotions depends only on the notion of justification. That is, emotional responses are not appropriate insofar as they represent the state of the world correctly, but in that the subject has reasons to experience such responses. Greenspan thus argues that the difference between fittingness and justification disappears when it comes to emotions: emotions are fitting when they are justified. Appropriateness of emotions, thus, depends only on having certain reasons for experiencing an emotion; these reasons are what make the emotions suited to their object. If reasons are what determine the fittingness of emotions to their objects, Greenspan notes that it might be possible to have reasons to feel conflicting emotions to the same object: two conflicting emotions might both be appropriate for different reasons (Greenspan 1980, 236).

But even if it is possible to say that two conflicting emotions are appropriate in this sense to their object, we might still want to argue that a set of reasons should outweigh the other. So, while both emotions might be appropriate for different reasons, the conflict in emotions should be resolved by comparing their justification. Greenspan notes that while it is *possible* to solve a conflict in our emotions by comparing reasons, it is not *necessary* to do so. Emotions involve an evaluative attitude. Even the reasons a subject might have against having an emotional response are not enough to cancel the reasons she has for experiencing the emotion. Emotions "are based on reactions to particular facts, as they come into consciousness, rather than

consideration of all the relevant reasons" (Greenspan 1980, 237). Robinson agrees that each appraisal focuses on specific salient features of the situation according to the subject's interests: "Our emotional pathways are fast and dirty, emphasizing the situation as perceived in terms of my interests and desires. I get not a dispassionate picture of the total situation, but a partial picture based on what appeals to my interests." (Robinson 2005, 53)

This suggests that it is not necessary to propose different criteria of rationality and appropriateness for actual and fictional emotions to account for the asymmetry. If Greenspan is right and emotions' appropriateness is determined by the reasons that justify the emotion, the fictional narrative, and its fictional context, might give appreciators different reasons to experience asymmetric emotions. That is, the fictional narrative, with its fictional context, might give appreciators reasons to respond emotionally in ways they would not normally respond when facing an actual scenario. Moreover, in instances of fictional immorality, the quarantining effect of the fictional prescriptions might give appreciators license to favour a certain set of reasons over others, and to include others altogether; it might give them license to favour considerations of fit over moral considerations.

4.2.1 Rationality and appropriateness of fictional emotions

According to Greenspan, the criteria of appropriateness of emotional responses to fiction depends on the notion of justification. That is, an emotional response toward a fictional narrative is appropriate if we have reasons that would make the response fitting. So, if our aim is to determine whether appropriateness works differently for genuine emotions toward fiction and genuine emotions toward real scenarios, it is necessary to examine what counts as a legitimate reason to say a given emotion is justified.

It could be that both emotions toward fiction and emotions toward real scenarios are justified by actual attitudes. The problem, however, is that emotional responses being justified by actual attitudes would fail to explain the emotional asymmetries explored in the previous chapter. Instead, it seems that *imagined* attitudes provide reasons for an emotional response to fiction being fitting. Nevertheless, it does not seem to be the case that any imagined attitude can count as a reason during our emotional engagement with fictional narratives. As Gaut rightly notes, we can assess appreciators' responses to fiction. We can say that some responses to fictional narratives are not warranted by the narrative, while some others are. So this means that fictional

emotions must also be guided by a criterion of rationality, even if this criterion does not refer to actual beliefs that would serve as reasons to justify an emotion (Gaut 2007, 218-219).

The criterion of rationality for appreciators' emotional responses must refer to their capacity to identify reasons, and to respond appropriately to these reasons. In the case of fictional emotions, these reasons must be found in the imaginings prescribed by the fictional narrative. So, while fictional emotions are instances of genuine emotions, the reasons that make them rational are found in the imaginings prescribed by the narrative, rather than in appreciators' actual attitudes. Gaut thus proposes the following criterion of rationality for fictional emotions[35]: "The rationality of fear of objects believed to exist requires one to believe that they are dangerous; and the rationality of fear of objects merely imagined to exist requires one (correctly) to imagine that they are dangerous." (Gaut 2007, 220) It is important to note that the differences in the rationality conditions of actual and fictional emotions could be used as an argument in favour of the make-believe accounts of fictional emotions, but Gaut argues that this difference "need not be traced to a difference in the emotion: the difference can be traced to a difference in the mode of cognition of their objects – that is, to whether they are imagined or believed to exist." (Gaut 2007, 223)

It is possible to say, therefore, that appreciators' emotional responses to fiction are justified by what I have previously identified as the fictional context. Appreciators follow the fictional prescriptions to determine which emotional response would fit the scenario presented by the narrative. But it is important to note that the reasons to feel a fictional emotion are not just found in a set of propositions made true by the narrative. As argued by Greenspan and Robinson, the appraisal involved in the emotional response depends on the subjects' interests. The rationality of fictional emotions is not just a matter of what response is merited all things considered, but it depends on a partial consideration of the fictional scenario according to appreciators' interests. And, again, it is important to remember that appreciators' interests in the fictional narrative are moulded by the perspective. As we saw in the first chapter, the narrative unveils the fictional world from a specific point of view that frames not just the narrative, but appreciators' responses. So, while the rationality of actual emotions depends only on the subject's actual interests (her beliefs and desires), the rationality of fictional emotions

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[35] Gaut proposes two other criteria of rationality for fictional emotions that I will not examine in this chapter: a motivational criterion and an affective criterion. Under the motivational criterion, "An emotion is irrational if it motivates action, though its subject lacks motivation-relevant beliefs." (Gaut 2007, 223) The affective criterion, on the other hand, claims that an emotion is irrational "if experiencing it involves suffering to no point" (Gaut 2007, 225).

depends on appreciators' interests according to the narrative's prescribed perspective. The key to the asymmetry that appreciators allow in their responses to fiction and real life might be in how their interests are manipulated by the fictional perspective.

Precisely because emotional responses do not only attend to what is true in the fiction, Currie introduces the notion of congruency as a criterion for the appropriateness of emotional responses to fiction. Emotional responses to fiction are appropriate if they are congruent with the narrative. Congruency here refers not only to the events narrated, but to the emotion expressed, to the perspective that frames the narration (Currie 1990, 213). The notion of expression is not unproblematic, but Currie tackles the issues by alluding to the author-narrator. As we saw in the previous chapter, hypothetical intentionalism seems essential in trying to identify the prescribed perspective. In this sense, the audience is not trying to reconstruct the intentions of the actual author, but they aim at the best reconstruction of the author given all the available evidence. Applied to emotional responses and the notion of congruency, appreciators' fictional emotions are appropriate if they are congruent with the emotions expressed by the author-narrator, that is, the emotions expressed by the perspective and prescribed by the framework. According to Currie, a sensitive reader is that who responds according to what the perspective prescribes.

In the case of fictional narratives, however, the reasons to feel are not exhausted by the fictional truth and the fictional perspective. As said in the previous chapter, the fictional context also includes the formal aspects of the narrative. Appreciators' responses are partly shaped by the aesthetic devices deployed by the narrative. Robinson rightly notes that in the case of artworks, affective appraisals are manipulated by the aesthetic features of the work. An appropriate response to the fictional narrative, therefore, will also have to consider the formal features and the aesthetic merits of the work. Currie claims that a refined response is one that is not only congruent, but also aesthetically justified by the formal features of the work: "The sensitive reader is one who knows what emotion is expressed in the work and is therefore able to respond congruently to it; the refined reader is one who responds congruently only to works that have a certain kind of merit." (Currie 1990, 214)

4.2.2 Ethical appropriateness of emotions toward fiction

It could be argued, however, that the criteria examined in the previous paragraphs refer only to the criteria of *rationality* of fictional emotions, and that the notion of appropriateness of

emotions should include further considerations beyond the considerations of fit. So if the goal is to determine whether it is possible to say that asymmetric emotions to fiction are governed by different criteria of appropriateness, the analysis should take into account moral considerations and not just fittingness. Paisley Livingston and Alfred Mele argue that moral considerations are relevant for whether certain emotional responses to fiction are appropriate. They argue that, in addition to congruency and the aesthetic merits of the work, appreciators should consider the moral content of the narrative when determining whether a response is artistically merited (Livingston and Mele 1997). According to the authors, the criteria of appropriateness of emotional responses to fiction should take into consideration the artistic merits of the work, rather than only the aesthetic features; and they argue that moral considerations are an important part of the artistic value of an artwork. If, as we saw in the previous section, the appropriateness of emotion was determined solely by the fictional prescriptions, the perspective, and the formal devices, it would be possible to defend what Livingston and Mele call the "autonomy of fictional events thesis": the thesis that only fictional events are relevant in determining the appropriateness of emotional responses (Livingston and Mele 1997, 166). However, they argue against the autonomy of fictional emotions, and claim instead that the criteria of appropriateness of emotional responses to fiction follow the criteria of actual emotions, and that the moral considerations need to be taken into account to determine whether a response is appropriate to its object.

In the previous chapters I argued that the fictional context includes also contextual considerations, not only regarding the origin of the work (as this is necessary to reconstruct the author-narrator, and determine whether a work is an instance of fictional or actual immorality), but also regarding the reception of the fictional narrative. It should not be surprising, therefore, that these contextual factors need to be considered when determining what are the appropriate responses to a given fictional scenario. And if these considerations are part of the fictional context and, therefore, of the artistic identity of the work, it should not be surprising either to claim, as Livingston and Mele do, that the artistically justified emotional response needs to account for moral considerations as well:

> Moral factors, we claimed above, are also directly relevant to an artistic appreciation of a work of fiction. This is the case because people can skilfully devise fictions that we have good reasons to deem immoral, in which case we should not want, for a variety of reasons, to be the kind of people who experience congruent emotions. Although the objectionable emotions are

congruent to the fiction, they are *not* congruent to the kind of life we value
and want to lead.(Livingston and Mele 1997, 172)

According to this view, fictional emotions are artistically justified and, therefore, appropriate, only when they are morally justified.

Livingston and Mele further argue that if the moral criterion is decisive for the appropriateness of emotional responses to fiction, some appropriate responses are those that in fact violate Currie's criterion of congruency. In some cases, appropriate emotional responses are not those that are congruent with the emotions expressed by the narrative, but rather those that are contrary to the emotions expressed by the narrative on account of its moral defects (Livingston and Mele 1997, 173). Thus, when it comes to counter-moral fictions, a fictional emotion would be appropriate when it fails to follow the framework prescribed by the narrative.

The problem with Livingston and Mele's account, however, is that presents the same difficulties noted in the chapter on the continuity thesis: it is not clear why moral considerations always need to be imported to the fictional narrative. In the second chapter I argued that it is not enough to claim that moral considerations are special, so that appreciators need to import to the fictional world the stock of moral reasons that would be part of the criteria of appropriateness of actual emotions. The discontinuity thesis argued, on the contrary, that the aesthetic distance, that is, the lack of practical consequences of the engagement with a fictional narrative, is what allows appreciators to leave behind their evaluative framework to adopt the perspective prescribed by the narrative. The discontinuity thesis needed an explanation for the possibility of manipulating appreciators' evaluative framework; and if the narrative, through the perspective and the aesthetic features, manages to make otherwise unacceptable responses fitting within the boundaries of the fictional context, it is not clear why moral reasons would not fall under the scope of this discontinuity.

Livingstone and Mele's account would only work for showing that in instances of actual immorality appreciators need to take into account moral and practical reasons in determining the appropriateness of their emotional responses. They are right in noting that in some cases contextual considerations should make us ignore the prescribed responses, and thus make the criterion of congruency irrelevant. But as I have argued in previous chapters, this only is the case for those narratives whose fictional prescriptions include claims about the actual world. Only in these cases we can say that the necessary aesthetic space was not opened, and thus moral and practical considerations remain. The fact that in instances of fictional immorality the

deviant claims are quarantined in the fictional world is what allows us to say that moral considerations can be ignored.

Peter Goldie rightly distinguishes between narrative appropriateness and ethical appropriateness, and notes that these two senses of appropriateness can diverge (Goldie 2003, 61-64). Narrative appropriateness refers to the sense highlighted by Currie, that is, to the congruence of the responses to the prescribed perspective and to their fit according to the relevant aesthetic considerations. Ethical appropriateness refers to the appropriateness of responses according to moral and prudential considerations. But, like I said, in some narratives these considerations can be ignored because the deviant perspective entails fictional immorality only. Emotional responses to fiction, according to Goldie, can be radically different to the emotional responses appreciators normally experience precisely because the two senses of appropriateness can diverge. Goldie argues that the discordance between narrative and ethical appropriateness is possible thanks to the expressive qualities of the work, its aesthetic features, and the aesthetic distance. The aesthetic distance, in turn, is made possible by the quarantining effects of some fictional narratives, namely, those that are instances of fictional immorality.

Therefore, in cases of fictional immorality, the notion of appropriateness does not include ethical appropriateness; in instances of actual immorality, on the other hand, because of the lack of aesthetic distance, appropriateness includes both narrative and ethical appropriateness. The criteria of narrative appropriateness of emotional responses to fictional immorality are different to the criteria of our everyday responses precisely because the framework manipulates our perspective to adopt the prescribed point of view. And the reason why appreciators allow for this manipulation is because the responses to the fictional scenario are dissociated from action.

Daniel Jacobson and Justin D'arms also argue that moral considerations should not be taken into account when assessing emotional responses to fiction. Contrary to Goldie who distinguishes between narrative and ethical appropriateness, Jacobson and D'arms distinguish between criteria of fittingness and criteria of appropriateness. In "The moralistic fallacy", they argue that the fittingness of emotional responses refers merely to whether it is right to ascribe a certain property to an object, and in this sense to the epistemological conditions that warrant a response, rather than considerations that would include moral and prudential reasons (Jacobson & D'Arms, 2000, 66). The notion of fittingness they use refers to what Goldie identified as narrative appropriateness, that is, it refers to considerations relating to the

endorsement of warrant of the responses in the fictional narrative. In this sense, to engage with a fictional perspective means to react as dictated by the framework. And to react as required by the point of view of the narrative means simply to recognise that a certain response is fitting or merited: "Judgements of warrant merely establish what there is most evidence to feel, desire, or believe; they focus on epistemic, as opposed to moral or prudential reasons" (Jacobson, 1997, 173).

According to Jacobson and D'arms, appropriateness, on the other hand, includes what Goldie calls ethical appropriateness. In their view, appropriateness refers to what to feel, *all things considered*. That is, appropriateness includes prudential and moral reasons as well. They argue that there are different questions we can ask regarding our responses:

> One can ask a prudential question, whether it is good for you to feel F; or a moral question, whether it is right to feel F; or one can ask the all-in question of practical reason, whether F is what to feel, all things considered. But none of these questions is equivalent to the question of whether F is fitting in the sense relevant to whether its object X is Φ. (Jacobson & D'Arms, 2000, 71)

The important thing to note is that while ethical appropriateness, the *all-things-considered* version of appropriateness, might be relevant for actual emotions, the fictional character of the narrative in some cases removes the need for prudential and moral considerations. It is, therefore, necessary to emphasise again the asymmetry between fictional and actual immorality. Instances of actual immorality require appreciators to evaluate the prescribed responses *all-things-considered* because the relevant aesthetic space is not opened. Emotional responses toward actual immorality should be assessed under criteria of appropriateness that includes ethical, not just narrative, appropriateness. Instances of fictional immorality, on the other hand, allow for criteria of appropriateness that only includes narrative appropriateness precisely because the prescriptions do not include claims about the actual state of the world, and they are quarantined in the fictional narrative.

4.3 The discontinuity of genuine fictional emotions

Jonathan Gilmore distinguishes between a continuity thesis and a discontinuity thesis[36] regarding the criteria of appropriateness of emotional responses to fiction (Gilmore, 2011). The thesis of the continuity of the criteria of appropriateness of fictional emotions claims that these criteria remain identical for fictional and actual emotions; the thesis of the discontinuity of the criteria of appropriateness claims that fictional and actual emotions are governed by different criteria of appropriateness. Livingston and Mele's account would fall under the scope of the continuity thesis, inasmuch as they argue that moral considerations relevant for the appropriateness of actual emotions are imported to the imaginative engagement. On the contrary, Gilmore argues that "there is a difference in what sorts of considerations would qualify as potential reasons for an emotion when the emotion is directed at what is supposed to be, alternatively, real and imagined" (Gilmore 2011, 470).

Gilmore focuses on the representational aspect of emotions. While he acknowledges that it might not be an essential component, he notes, like Robinson, that this representational aspect might work as the epistemic means to identify or individuate emotions. With this representational aspect in mind, he focuses the analysis of appropriateness in terms of considerations of fit, or narrative appropriateness. He thus argues that an emotion is appropriate if it rightly represents its object:

> Thus, I propose, it is a necessary and sufficient condition of an emotion being apt (rational, fitting, or otherwise warranted, in the narrow representational sense) that it correctly represents its object as having the value-relevant properties that are criterial for that emotion, and that the emotion is experienced in virtue of that representation being correct. (Gilmore 2011, 474)

Moral considerations, therefore, are not included in the notion of appropriateness *unless* the emotion concerns the morally evaluable qualities of its object (as it is the case with emotions such as remorse) (Gilmore 2011, 472).

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[36] As I said before, it is important to note the differences in the continuity and discontinuity theses identified by Gilmore and those examined in the previous chapters. Gilmore's analysis has a narrower scope: the continuity and discontinuity theses he identifies refer only to the continuity or the discontinuity of the criteria of appropriateness of fictional emotions. As I have argued, however, the continuity and discontinuity theses that have been examined so far in this work refer to the continuity or discontinuity of appreciators' evaluative attitudes, and how this impacts the engagement with counter-moral fictions.

As emphasised in the first chapter, fictional narratives always present the events from a specific perspective, and they use the aesthetic features to manipulate appreciators responses. It thus seems more relevant for the analysis of the appropriateness of emotional responses to fiction to focus on *how* the events are represented, rather than only looking at what is true in the fictional world. The considerations of fit in the fictional world would therefore refer to *how* the events are represented (Gilmore 2011, 479). For this reason, the notion of framing is relevant for the discussion. Framing refers to the way fictional events are represented so as to elicit specific emotional responses. From these differences in *representation,* that is, differences in framing, it might be easy to see how the criteria of appropriateness vary from fictional to actual scenarios. It can be argued that in fictional scenarios the object of the emotion is in fact *represented as having different evaluative properties* that warrant a contrary emotion. Gilmore argues, however, that the problem with this defence of discontinuity is that it only shows that the appropriate emotions change when the objects themselves change. The real question that the discontinuity thesis needs to answer is, according to Gilmore, "Can we have contrary but apt responses to a scenario as-presented-in-a-fiction and that scenario presented in the *same* manner – that is, identically framed – in real life?" (Gilmore, 2011, 479).

The problem with Gilmore's criticism of this version of discontinuity is that he mischaracterises how framing works. According to him, the fictional framing *modifies* the object of the emotion. And so, this would not show that contrary emotions are appropriate for the same object, it would only show that contrary emotions are appropriate to different objects. This, however, would only be the case for fictions that I have identified as cases of immoral fictional worlds: in these cases the fictional worlds make it true that the object of the emotion possesses evaluative properties we would not normally ascribe. If this was the case, it could be argued that these are not contrary emotional responses to the same scenario, but contrary emotions to different scenarios, that is, to scenarios that are presented as having different evaluative properties. On the contrary, what Gilmore fails to see is that the difference between fictional truths and framing, is that the latter refers not to what is the case in the fictional world, but to the perspective that qualifies the events narrated. In this sense, it is possible to say that framing does not alter the object, but rather alters the subject and her appraisals insofar as it prescribes specific responses to the events narrated. The relevant question that the discontinuity thesis needs to answer is, therefore, "how can the same subject experience contrary emotions in virtue of contrary appraisals of the same object?" And the answer is that she experiences

contrary emotions precisely because they same object is framed differently, presented in different manners.

As I said in the first chapter, the role of the perspective in the narrative is to guide appreciators' responses to the fictional events. As noted by Gilmore, the perspective or framing refers to how the fictional events are represented. But this *how* should not be understood as changing the events that are narrated. The *how* aims at asking appreciators to respond in certain ways to what is narrated; it is thus possible to imagine two different fictions that narrate the same events from different points of view. But, again, this wouldn't entail a change in the objects of the representation. Framing doesn't modify the objects it represents, but aims at modifying the subject inasmuch as it aims at guiding how the subject should view and respond to what is narrated. This is what makes the cases of fictional immoral perspectives interesting. As said in the first chapter, narratives that present an immoral fictional perspective do not make deviant evaluations true in the story. In these cases the imaginative engagement is not sustained by the object possessing the opposite evaluative properties, but by the subject ignoring these negative evaluative properties as reasons not to feel the emotions prescribed by the narrative. Walter White is not represented in *Breaking Bad* as anything but despicable; the narrative does not try to convince appreciators that what he is doing *is* laudable. What the narrative does is portray Walter White in such a way that his attractive qualities are emphasised; and, as we saw in the previous chapter, the sympathy elicited by the attractive qualities makes appreciators ignore their moral judgements. Appreciators ally with Walter White not because he is portrayed as the good guy, but because he is represented in such an attractive way that the moral considerations lose relevance.

What the discontinuity thesis argues is that framing modifies the subject's interests, so that the objects fit the subject's interests differently. And this is what causes genuine asymmetric emotional responses. In the previous sections I argued with Greenspan and Robinson that the appraisals involved in emotions are directly related to the subjects' interests. And Gilmore fails to see this. His criticism depends on understanding emotions as the ascription of evaluative properties that are independent from the subject making the attribution. But taking into consideration that emotions depend on appreciators' interests, and the role of perspective in manipulating those interests, it is possible to present a good argument in favour of the discontinuity thesis. The criteria of appropriateness are discontinuous because appreciators' interests are not the same in fictional and actual scenarios. This makes it possible to defend a robust version of the discontinuity thesis that explains contrary emotions to the *same objects*.

This version of the discontinuity thesis grounds the criteria of appropriateness in the representation because the narrative's perspective is what determines appreciators' interests. This is also why it is important to frame the problem of the discontinuity of the criteria of appropriateness in terms of what Currie (1997) calls "the problem of personality": the reason why there seems to be an asymmetry in the criteria of appropriateness of actual and fictional emotions is because appreciators' interests in the imaginative engagement do not follow their everyday interests.

So how can the discontinuity thesis explain the personality problem that ultimately explains the asymmetry in the emotional responses? Gilmore is right in arguing that some of the contrary reactions can be explained by automatic and subdoxastic tendencies, such as priming, emotional contagion, mirroring or resonance mechanisms, or empathy (Gilmore 2011, 482). All these mechanisms seem to help in manipulating appreciators' interests and, therefore, appraisals during the imaginative engagement. Robinson, on the other hand, emphasises the role of the narratives' formal devices as coping mechanisms that guide and manage fictional emotions:

> In general, then, formal devices guide our emotional responses to literary works, focusing attention and influencing both out initial affective appraisals and subsequent cognitive evaluations of content. But in addition they guide our cognitive *re*appraisals, helping us to *cope* with the unpleasant aspects of the content. (Robinson 2005, 207)

Finally, I want to note that there are limits to the discontinuity of emotional responses to fiction that I think ground the limits to the discontinuity in appreciators' moral attitudes in fiction. First, if, as Robinson argues, emotional responses are constituted by non-cognitive affective appraisals that cause physiological responses and that are later monitored cognitively, I believe we might find some cases where the initial negative affective appraisal is too strong and where the necessary coping mechanisms for a reappraisal are not displayed. For example, I believe that *Breaking Bad* never showed Walter White poisoning Brock, a child, because the impact would be too strong and the audience would fail to sympathise with White again. I suggest that in these cases appreciators are incapable of carrying out the necessary cognitive monitoring of the situation according to what the fiction requires, and they thus fail to respond accordingly.

Second, I believe in instances of actual immorality appreciators do not accept the manipulation of their interests during the imaginative engagement that would make deviant emotional

responses appropriate. In these cases, as I said in the previous chapter, because appreciators realise that the prescriptions include claims about the actual world, they import their evaluative attitudes and, thus, their interests remain unchanged. Moreover, in these cases it is not just that appreciators import their interests, but that they realise that moral and prudential considerations stand in assessing the appropriateness of the responses because the relevant aesthetic space is not opened.

In this chapter I argued that it is not necessary to claim that appreciators sometimes experience emotional responses to fiction that they would not normally allow because they are only quasi-emotions. I argued that realist accounts of emotions toward fiction can accommodate these asymmetric emotions. Moreover, I argued that these deviant emotional responses are possible because the criteria of appropriateness of emotional responses depends on the narrative's prescribed perspective; and, in instances of fictional immorality, appropriateness of emotions toward fiction do not include ethical appropriateness due to the quarantining effect of the prescriptions. In the following chapters I explore how fictional narratives should be assessed in virtue of the considerations of appropriateness of emotional responses to fiction, and how appreciators' responses should be assessed when responding with deviant responses that do not conform to what they normally consider appropriate.

5. The diversity of counter-moral fictions and the ethical criticism of art

In the first chapter I noted that HBO's television series *The Wire* has been widely praised for how it explores the complex interaction between race and poverty in inequality in the United States. The show has even been used by lecturers at Harvard, University of California – Berkeley, and Duke in courses on sociology and social anthropology. I noted, however, that critics have largely ignored that the show also contributes to the erasure of black women from public narratives, in that it completely overlooks the specific structural injustices faced by black American women. How do *The Wire*'s moral strengths and failings impact its aesthetic value?

Advocates of the ethical criticism of art claim that considerations of ethical value are relevant to considerations of aesthetic value, in virtue of the link between the aesthetic experience and the moral experience that some artworks provide. To say that a work of fiction is ethically criticised means that its ethical defects have an impact on its aesthetic value. In previous chapters I examined how counter-moral fictions prescribe the adoption of deviant perspectives by appreciators, so that their evaluative attitudes during their imaginative engagement with fiction are discontinuous from their actual evaluative framework. I argued that counter-moral fictions prescribe a framework that includes emotional responses appreciators would normally consider inappropriate, and that this is possible because fictions emphasise non-moral features that lead appreciators to ignore morally relevant considerations. This chapter examines how counter-moral fictions can be ethically criticised in virtue of their deviant prescriptions. I do not deny that these fictions have a moral dimension, but I argue that we should take into consideration the distinction between fictional and actual immorality proposed in the first chapter to determine the legitimacy of the ethical assessment of works. I claim that only instances of actual immorality are relevant for ethical criticism inasmuch as only in these cases appreciators participate in actual deviant views.

Cases like *The Wire* have hardly caught ethical critics' eye. The discussion on the interaction between a narrative's ethical and aesthetic values has centred on moral flaws endorsed by the *narrative's perspective*. A narrative like *The Wire* is not regarded as problematic because, as I said on the first chapter, its perspective does not seem to endorse the erasure of the issues faced by black American women. The ethical critic is interested in an ethical evaluation of a narrative's intrinsic features, to see how the intrinsic ethical value interacts with the aesthetic value of the work. This chapter, however, examines the possibility of an intrinsic moral

judgement of counter-moral fictions by questioning what should be regarded as a narrative's *intrinsic moral flaws*. I argue that, even among those fictional narratives whose counter-moral content is intrinsically related to the prescribed perspective, not all fictions with counter-moral content can be legitimate candidates for ethical assessment; and that among those narratives that *could be* legitimately ethically assessed, the real target of the ethical judgement is not the fictional narrative *itself.* I argue that we cannot properly speak of ethical demerits *of a work of fiction*, and that thus we can only aspire to an extrinsic ethical assessment of a narrative that depends entirely on contextual considerations: in certain contexts, we have reasons to regard certain works of fiction as morally defective and to reject them, but these reasons are external to the narratives. Precisely because of this, I argue that it is cases like *The Wire* that are truly relevant, and that should be the main focus of the ethical critic. However, since the ethical assessment can only be extrinsic and context dependent, I conclude that ethical considerations cannot systematically bear on the aesthetic value of a narrative.

The first section of the chapter examines two arguments in favour of the ethical assessment of fictions: the merited response argument advanced by Berys Gaut, and the Ethical Fittingness Theory advanced by Alessandro Giovannelli. The second section goes back to the distinction between fictional and actual immorality, and examines how these two different types of counter-moral fictions fit the requirements of the ethical critic. I argue that, in principle, only actual immorality is a legitimate candidate for ethical assessment. However, in the final section I argue that in instances of actual immorality the ethical assessment is not directed at the narrative's intrinsic features, but at actual views held by real people. I claim that the only legitimate ethical assessment of a narrative is an *extrinsic* assessment that examines the contextual matrix of the creation and reception of a work of fiction. I conclude by advancing the consequences of an extrinsic ethical assessment for the discussion on the interaction between the ethical and aesthetic value of a work.

5.1 The ethical criticism of fiction

To say that a fictional narrative is subject to ethical criticism means not only that we can morally judge it, but that its ethical defects or merits have an impact on its aesthetic value.[37]

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[37] Berys Gaut refers to aesthetic value as "the value of an object *qua* work of art" (Gaut, 1998, 183). Robert Stecker, on the other hand, distinguishes between aesthetic and artistic value, and claims that the notion of aesthetic value refers to the capacity to deliver an aesthetic experience, that is an "experience valued for its own sake in virtue of being directed to forms, qualities, and meaning properties of an object" (Stecker, 2005, 139). Because this chapter does not focus on the value interaction claim, I will not examine the interaction between the

This means that an account of the ethical criticism of fiction includes two different claims: first, that fictional narratives are subject to ethical evaluation (amenability claim[38]); and second, that considerations of ethical value are relevant for considerations of aesthetic value (value interaction claim[39]). This chapter focuses on the amenability claim to see whether an ethical assessment of fictions that prescribe counter-moral imaginings is legitimate.[40]

So what does the ethical critic have in mind when speaking of an ethical assessment of works? There are several ways in which an artwork can be ethically assessed. We can evaluate an artwork, for example, for the consequences it has on its context and for the effects it has on its audience. We can also morally evaluate the conditions under which an artwork was produced. We can even assess an artwork in the light of how it reflects the artist's moral character. The ethical critic notes, however, that all these types of evaluation are directed at extrinsic features of the work, and so they are not really cases in which we genuinely ethically evaluate *the work* itself. The relevant assessment when inquiring about the intrinsic value of an artwork *qua* artwork, must be an intrinsic assessment of *the work's features*. An artwork can be ethically assessed according to whether we can identify intrinsic moral merits and demerits: "Intrinsic ethical flaws are ethical flaws in the attitudes that works manifest toward their subjects" (Gaut, 2007, 229). Thus, given that ethical criticism is interested in the interaction between an artwork's ethical and aesthetic value, the amenability claim refers to an intrinsic ethical assessment that has the artwork *itself,* and its features, as its object.

For works of fiction to be *intrinsically* ethically assessed they would have to be so assessed in virtue of their moral content. Fictions with moral content can be legitimately ethically judged because it is the artist herself who encourages the audience to consider certain ethical issues during the engagement with the narrative. According to Noël Carroll, in these cases the ethical evaluation is valid because it "is not invoking criteria alien to its value as the kind of artwork

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aesthetic and the artistic value of a fictional narrative. Therefore, like Gaut, I will refer to aesthetic value in its more general sense.

[38] I use this term following Alessandro Giovannelli (Giovannelli, 2013).

[39] Robert Stecker identifies two different types of interaction between ethical and aesthetic value: ethical-aesthetic, and aesthetic-ethical interaction. The *ethical-aesthetic* interaction refers to the effects of the ethical defects or merits on the aesthetic value of a work. The *aesthetic-ethical* interaction refers to the impact of a work's aesthetic value on its ethical value (Robert Stecker, 2005, 138). The discussion on the ethical criticism of art has mainly focused on the ethical-aesthetic interaction.

[40] For a discussion on the accounts that focus on the interaction claim see Noël Carroll's 'Art and Ethical Criticism: An Overview of Recent Directions of Research' (Carroll, 2000), and Alessandro Giovannelli's 'The Ethical Criticism of Art: A New Mapping of the Territory' (Giovannelli, 2007). While I do not examine the different arguments that have been advanced in favour of ethical demerits having an impact on a work's aesthetic value, the final section of this chapter does explore the consequences of my arguments against the amenability claim for the value interaction claim.

it is; it is a matter of evaluating the work in terms of the norms (genre norms) of the kind of artform to which it belongs" (Carroll, 2000, 359). However, it is not enough to say that these narratives are subject to ethical evaluation merely in virtue of their content; after all, we can find, for example, several cases of fictional narratives that contain scientific claims but that are not judged in terms of their scientific value. Rather, certain fictions with ethical content invite audiences to engage in a moral experience that is directly related to the aesthetic experience of the narrative. In these cases not only can we identify an ethical content in the narrative, but it is possible to say that the imaginings prescribed are intrinsically related to the ethical dimension of the narrative. This is to say that the aesthetic pleasure appreciators get from participating in these fictional narratives is directly tied to a moral experience of the fictional events. But how is it possible to say that audiences undergo a moral experience during their engagement with the fictional narrative, and how could it be argued that this moral experience allows for the ethical evaluation of fiction?

A work of fiction prescribes a perspective that guides the narration of the fictional events. This perspective necessarily implies an attitude toward the narrated events. As we saw in the first chapter, Berys Gaut argues that fictional narratives express a manifested attitude as the perspective displays "pro or con attitudes toward some state of affairs or things, which the work may do in many ways besides explicitly stating an opinion about them" (Gaut, 1998, 183). Robert Stecker also emphasises the role of the perspective in the ethical criticism of art as the exploration of the perspective allows for works to express ethical judgements or points of view (Robert Stecker, 2005). Furthermore, because the work prescribes a perspective that implies an attitude toward the narrated events, it is possible to say that the work endorses the point of view it presents.

The prescribed perspective brings with it a set of prescribed responses to the point of view advanced by the narrative. That is, not only does the narrative endorse the attitudes it expresses, but it prescribes the assent to the manifested attitude by appreciators responding in the ways prescribed. For this reason, according to Gaut, the attitudes of the works are manifested in the responses they prescribe to the audience: "the novel does not just present imagined events, it also presents a point of view on them, a perspective constituted in part by actual feelings, emotions, and desires that the reader is prescribed to have toward the merely imagined events." (Gaut, 1998, 193) Appreciators allow cognitive-affective attitudes that endorse the point of view advanced by the narrative because the responses are the result of this perspective-taking.

The fact that appreciators assent to the manifested attitudes of the work by responding in the ways prescribed is part of an overall moral experience that, according to the ethical critic, impacts the audience's actual moral powers. According to Noël Carroll, narratives with the relevant moral content exercise appreciators' moral capacities. Works of fiction "expand our emotional powers of discrimination" and they "sensitize us to, as Aristotle would say, the right reasons and objects for the emotions in question" (Carroll, 2000, 367). Fictional narratives can also "amplify our morally relevant powers of perceptual discrimination", and this "enhances our ability to reflect on further moral situations". So, in summary, fiction "can contribute to the enlargement of our capacity for moral understanding" not because it teaches moral norms and concepts, but because it teaches "how to apply them to concrete cases, engaging and exercising our emotions and imagination, our powers of perceptual discrimination, moral understanding and reflection, in ways that sustain and potentially enlarge our capacity for moral judgement" (Carroll, 2000, 368-369). Gaut argues that works of fiction possess cognitive-affective value because a narrative gets the audience to engage vividly with the points of view it explores, so that we are more disposed to "reordering our thoughts, feelings, and motivations in light of it" (Gaut, 1998, 195). Stecker also argues that some works engage their audience in a meaningful moral experience in virtue of,

> what they can do for their audience: advance moral understanding, comprehend points of view previously unavailable to us, empathize with those who find value in a certain practice. (…) A morally insightful or sensitive work has the capacity to deliver moral insight or enhance the moral sensitivity of at least some of its audience. (Stecker, 2005, 144)

But just as fictions can engage their audience in a positive moral experience that advances appreciators' moral powers, they can also confuse their moral understanding. Artworks with a counter-moral dimension "encourage audiences to indulge in morally flawed emotional responses for the wrong objects and/or the wrong reasons" (Carroll, 2000, 367) and they "encourage confusion by misdirecting moral perception and emotions by proffering distorting instantiations of moral maxims and concepts" (Carroll, 2000, 369). Counter-moral fictions can be ethically assessed precisely because they encourage this negative moral experience that can, in principle, corrupt appreciators' moral capacities.

Given this moral experience provided by the narrative, two different elements of fictional narratives are relevant for the arguments in favour of the amenability claim: the prescription of

the fictional perspective, and the prescribed responses to the perspective. To reiterate, a work prescribes a set of imaginings concerning the state of the fictional world as seen under a specific perspective. This perspective implies an attitude towards the narrated events. In this sense it is possible to say that fictional narratives express attitudes toward the moral content they explore. By prescribing a perspective under which the fictional events are narrated, the work also prescribes a set of cognitive-affective responses to the fictional events narrated in the work. Because appreciators respond in the ways prescribed by the narrative, we can say that they assent to the attitude manifested in the work.

In what follows I examine two different arguments in favour of the amenability claim: what Giovannelli has called the Ethical Fittingness Theory (EFT), and the merited response argument advanced by Gaut. Giovannelli's EFT focuses on the manifested attitudes expressed in the prescribed perspective, while Gaut's argument focuses on the prescribed responses to the work's manifested attitude. As I said at the beginning, in this chapter I do not examine the arguments in favour of the interaction claim because I want to focus on the legitimacy of the amenability claim for the different types of counter-moral fictions. In the third section, however, I do explore the consequences of the legitimacy of the amenability claim for the value interaction claim, and I discuss how my account fits into the wider debate on the ethical criticism of fiction.

5.1.1 Ethical fittingness theory

According to the amenability claim, works of fiction are subject to ethical assessment. Alessandro Giovannelli argues that works of fiction are ethically judged in terms of how their ethical perspective fits the extra-fictional reality, that is, they are assessed in terms of whether their ethical perspective is correct or true. He calls this argument for the amenability claim Ethical Fittingness Theory (EFT).

As I said before, Giovannelli's argument focuses on the narrative's prescribed perspective to ground the legitimacy of ethical criticism. He notes that works of fiction express an ethical perspective insofar as they express a perspective concerning the events they represent. This ethical perspective should be understood as "what [the works] seem to 'say', recommend, commit themselves to, and sometimes attempt to persuade audiences of" (Giovannelli, 2013, 337). It is the judgement of this perspective that serves as the basis of the ethical judgements of the works; all the other types of ethical judgement mentioned above depend on the

judgement of the work's perspective. According to EFT, "evaluating a work for its ethical perspective amounts to (1) assessing the perspective's fittingness with respect to extra-fictional reality and doing so by extra-fictional criteria, and (2) attributing such a perspective to the work." (Giovannelli, 2013, 338) To explain why a work's ethical perspective can be evaluated, EFT focuses on what Giovannelli calls a work's fittingness commitments. We can identify two different fittingness commitments in a works perspective. First, a work's commitment to embody the ethical perspective. Second, a work's commitment to the ethical perspective fitting the extra-fictional reality.

Giovannelli's EFT claims that an ethical assessment of a work of fiction is legitimate if we can be justified in attributing the perspective to the work, and, more importantly, if we are justified in attributing to the work a commitment to the perspective's fittingness to extra-fictional reality according to extra-fictional criteria. The ethical assessment in these cases is legitimate because the work's commitment to the perspective's fittingness to extra-fictional reality implies what Gendler calls 'clamour for exportation': "A work is racist, sexist, or instead morally uplifting for its targeting, in incorrect or correct ways, our world made of actual people and events, albeit often in indeterminate ways." (Giovannelli, 2013, 339) Giovannelli acknowledges that if we remove this exportation and we restricted the scope of the prescriptions to their fictional application exclusively, namely, if the prescriptions were quarantined, we could not say that we can ethically judge the work, even if we use ethical vocabulary to assess it.

Thus, it is important to note that according to EFT, the ethical assessment of narratives, although grounded on the work's commitment to embody the perspective, is legitimised by the work's commitment to extra-fictional fittingness. The thing is that, according to Giovannelli, every artwork with an ethical perspective should be taken to having the two fittingness commitments mentioned above: "Yet any artwork that has an ethical perspective in the sense spelled out above thereby has ethical commitments. Because of this, the supergenre of works with fittingness commitments is pervasive and easily established" (Giovannelli, 2013, 341). That is, every fiction with an ethical perspective can be legitimately ethically assessed in virtue of EFT.

5.1.2 Merited response argument and the affective-practical ethical assessment of fiction
As I said before, if the fictional narrative indeed endorses the attitudes expressed by the perspective, then it also prescribes appreciators to assent the manifested attitude by responding

in the ways prescribed. Appreciators allow cognitive-affective attitudes that endorse the point of view advanced by the narrative because the responses are the result of this perspective-taking. According to Berys Gaut's merited response argument, the object of the ethical assessment of counter-moral fictional narratives is the fact that they prescribe unmerited responses towards the attitudes manifested in the work. By prescribing an immoral perspective, the narrative invites appreciators to respond with a set of cognitive-affective responses that are inappropriate.

The argument goes like this. A work of fiction prescribes a set of imaginings and a perspective that guides these imaginings. A counter-moral fiction counts as counter-moral because of the counter-moral character of the imaginings and the perspective it prescribes. Along with the imaginings and the perspective, the counter-moral fiction also prescribes a set of deviant cognitive-affective responses that matches the counter-moral attitude manifested by the work. The prescription of the perspective and the corresponding responses in a counter-moral fiction implies the prescription of a deviant evaluation of the state of affairs narrated by the work. That is, the evaluations implied in the responses do not match the events narrated in the work. Thus, the narrative prescribes an unmerited response toward the manifested attitude inasmuch as it requires the acceptance of a deviant evaluation (Gaut, 1998, 195).

Stecker also emphasises the normative aspect of the merited response argument. Precisely because the fictional perspective prescribes an unworthy response, audiences have moral reasons to reject the prescribed responses. So, even when we might find examples of appreciators who respond to the fictional perspective in the ways prescribed, the fact is that the work is subject to ethical criticism in virtue of the unmerited responses prescribed (Stecker, 2005, 145-146).

Furthermore, Gaut notes that these unmerited responses are not just imagined, but actual responses, as I argued in the previous chapter. The responses appreciators have toward the fictional events narrated presented under the prescribed perspective are genuine responses that occur during the imaginative activity. Gaut claims that these responses would have an impact on the audience's attitudes toward a similar state of affairs in the real world. According to Gaut, "the attitudes people (and works) manifest toward imagined scenarios have implications for their attitudes toward their real-life counterparts, for the attitudes are partly directed toward kinds, not just individuals." (Gaut, 1998, 187) This means that for Gaut the responses appreciators have toward the fictional narrative have as their object not just the fictional state

of affairs explored by the perspective, but the actual state of the world: "works that manifest certain attitudes towards fictional entities implicitly manifest the same attitudes to real entities of that kind" (Gaut, 2007, 236). Thus we can say that for Gaut the prescribed responses are actual responses in two ways: they are real, not merely imagined responses; and their object is the actual state of the world, not just a set of fictional prescriptions presented by a work of fiction. If all this is true, then the fictional narrative endorses the actual attitudes it expresses, and it prescribes appreciators to assent to the manifested attitude by responding in the ways prescribed. Because of this, the ethical criticism of art relies on what Gaut calls the affective-practical conception of ethical assessment. This claims that "not just actions and motives, but also feelings that do not motivate, are ethically significant" (Gaut, 1998, 186).

Gaut thus claims that fictions can be legitimately ethically assessed on two grounds: the prescribed responses are unmerited, and they are real responses that are directed at real events and characters. The responses are unmerited insofar as they imply the acceptance of a deviant evaluation; that is, the responses are unmerited because they fail to take into account moral considerations in determining whether the prescribed response is appropriate to the narrated events. Moreover, these unmerited responses are not only prescribed toward the fictional events narrated in the work, but they are directed at the actual world because emotional responses are directed at kinds, and not just individuals.

5.2 Fitting the requirements of the ethical critic

The two arguments examined above allow us to say that a legitimate ethical assessment of fictional narratives is sustained on three grounds: (1) on the expression of an immoral perspective, (2) on the assent to the manifested attitudes of the work via the cognitive-affective responses to the perspective, and (3) on the fact that the object of those responses are not just the fictional entities, but an actual state of affairs. To examine the legitimacy of the amenability claim, I believe it is important to bring back the distinction between the two types of counter-moral content in counter-moral fictions: *fictional* and *actual* immorality. This distinction has important consequences for when the counter-moral content of a narrative can be regarded as an *intrinsic moral flaw* that can be legitimately ethically assessed; and, therefore, it has consequences for how we can say that the narrative's moral features interact with its aesthetic value.

As I said before, fictional immorality refers to the prescription of content-immoral imaginings, imaginings that involve a perspective the agents (both the author and the audience) take to be immoral. These fictional narratives prescribe appreciators to adopt a deviant fictional perspective with the corresponding deviant responses. However, I have argued that fictional immorality is quarantined to the fictional world inasmuch as it only refers to *fictional prescriptions*: the author is not trying to make a claim about the actual world. These fictional narratives are created *as deviant*. In these cases the author prescribes counter-moral scenarios as counter-moral; and she intends for the audience to recognize the counter-moral nature of the prescriptions.[41] Cases of *actual* immorality in fiction, on the other hand, also involve the prescription of counter-moral imaginings. However, I have argued that actual immorality is not confined to the imaginative activity, inasmuch as its immoral prescriptions include actual immoral views that the author holds in the actual world. In this sense, these narratives normalize counter-moral prescriptions. The counter-moral fictional prescriptions are not to be regarded as deviant, but are prescribed in a perceived continuity with (deviant) moral claims about the actual state of the world.

So how do these different types of counter moral fictions fit the requirements of the amenability claim to say that they are legitimate candidates for ethical assessment?

5.2.1 Actual immorality

Because cases of *actual* immorality include claims about the actual world, it is possible to say that the prescription of an immoral fictional perspective expresses an immoral *extra-fictional* perspective, and actual immoral attitude held by the author or normalized in an immoral social context. In these cases we could say that the assent to the fictional perspective entails the assent to the extra-fictional perspective. The fictional perspective expressed in the work is coupled with an actual perspective, and they are inseparable. In these cases, therefore, the assent to the fictional perspective would mutate into an endorsement of the extra-fictional perspective expressed in the work via a fictional perspective. Actual immorality in fictional narratives closes the aesthetic space inasmuch as it is no longer possible to identify the differences between prescriptions that only concern the fictional world, and prescriptions that refer to the

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[41] It is important to note that, since the relevant ethical assessment focuses on the evaluation of the work, I do not address instances where certain members of the audience fail to recognize the limited scope of the fictional prescriptions. This failure of uptake cannot be blamed on a narrative that is clearly created *as deviant*. But it is important to note cases I have previously identified as borderline instances of actual immorality, where the failure of uptake leads us to revise the categorisation of certain narratives.

actual world as well; as a result, the prudential and moral reasons remain, and the narrative could be legitimately subject to ethical evaluation.

Instances of actual immorality are *plausible* candidates for ethical criticism as per Giovannelli's EFT inasmuch as the fictional perspective is coupled with an extra-fictional perspective. In this sense we can say that the fictional perspective is committed to its application to extra-fictional reality as well, and thus it should be measured by extra-fictional criteria (Giovannelli, 2013, 338-339). The fittingness commitments at the core of instances of actual immorality in fiction allow us to say that the imaginative activity includes not merely fictional entities but the actual state of the world.

Because instances of actual immorality include what Giovannelli calls extra-fictional fittingness commitments, the prescribed responses are directed not only at the narrated events, but at the actual extra-fictional reality. In this sense, instances of actual immorality are legitimate candidates for ethical assessment as per Gaut's affective-practical ethical assessment as well. The responses prescribed by the narrative's perspective are unmerited because they require appreciators to endorse a deviant evaluation that is unsupported by the narrated events. Moreover, because of the narrative's extra-fictional fittingness commitments, the notion of appropriateness of responses should include moral considerations. The prescribed responses are unmerited precisely because moral considerations render them inappropriate.

So far it looks like actual immorality could be legitimately ethically assessed inasmuch as its fictional perspective is coupled with an actual perspective that is committed to its extra-fictional application. However, I've identified some instances of actual immorality that import immoral attitudes found at their context of origin, but which the narrative's perspective does not seem to effectively endorse, such as *The Wire* and *True Detective*: the immoral attitudes can be found in the background, and they certainly impact the construction of the narrative. What should we do about these cases? Should we not consider them morally relevant when assessing the narrative? The views reflected in these narratives are certainly committed to an extra-fictional application. So while the *fictional perspective* does not seem to endorse them, the *actual* perspective displays an unexamined immoral attitude. And this should be relevant for the ethical critic since this short-sightedness definitely tampers with our aesthetic enjoyment of the narrative. I come back to these cases in the final section of the chapter, but what I want to note here is that these cases would be dismissed by the ethical critic because the

lack of endorsement from the perspective would imply an extrinsic ethical assessment, instead of an intrinsic evaluation.

5.2.2 Fictional immorality

Instances of fictional immorality, however, do not satisfy the conditions for the ethical assessment of fiction established by both Giovannelli and Gaut on three grounds: (1) in fictional immorality we can identify a distinction between fictional and extra-fictional perspectives, (2) in instances of fictional immorality the aesthetic space implies that the notion of appropriateness of responses does not include moral considerations, and (3) in instances of fictional immorality, the objects of the responses are the fictional events and entities only. In what follows I argue *against* the intrinsic ethical assessment of fictional immorality on these three grounds.

Against Giovannelli's EFT: The distinction between fictional and extra-fictional perspectives

As I argued in the first chapter, it is important to distinguish between fictional and extra-fictional perspectives. The fictional perspective refers to the prescribed pro or con attitudes toward the narrated events as they are represented in the work. The fictional perspective refers to the author-narrator's attitude toward the events in the fiction. As such, I said that the fictional perspective prescribes a make-believe moral outlook. The extra-fictional perspective refers to a real-world moral outlook that is directed toward the actual state of the world. This is the perspective the author-narrator *would* hold toward real events and people. As I said in previous chapters, it is this extra-fictional perspective that can present a 'clamour for exportation' in that it invites appreciators to adopt a real-world moral outlook as a result of their engagement with the narrative.

I argued that the work's manifested attitude should be identified with the fictional perspective that concerns a make-believe moral outlook only, while the extra-fictional perspective concerns a real-world moral outlook directed not only at the fictional events, but at an actual state of affairs. The extra-fictional perspective can be regarded as a meta-perspective because not only does it involve a real-world moral outlook, but it is often directed at the responses prescribed by the fictional narrative: the extra-fictional perspective can invite appreciators to reflect on the prescribed make-believe moral outlook in light of a real-world moral outlook.

The argument for the amenability claim advanced by Giovannelli conflates the distinction between fictional and extra-fictional perspective because it conflates an important difference between fictional prescriptions and the ulterior claims about the world that the author could be putting forward. The difference between these two types of perspectives is emphasized by those cases, noted by authors like Stecker, Kieran and Jacobson, where the engagement with a deviant perspective in fiction is aimed at highlighting problematic aspects of our actual moral beliefs.[42]

Giovannelli's EFT argued that the ethical assessment of narratives is legitimate because we can attribute the ethical perspective to the work, and more importantly, because we can attribute to the work a commitment to the perspective's fittingness to extra-fictional reality. However, fictional immorality does not fulfill neither of these conditions. Due to the distinction between fictional and extra-fictional perspectives we can say that it is the extra-fictional perspective that is relevant for ETF. In instances of merely fictional immorality we cannot attribute a counter-moral extra-fictional perspective to the work. And, precisely because these works do not include a counter-moral extra-fictional perspective it is not possible to attribute to the work a commitment to the perspective's extra-fictional fittingness. As Giovannelli himself notes, the ethical evaluation ceases to be legitimate if we can restrict the scope of the perspective's commitments to the fictional reality. The ethical evaluation of fictional immorality is thus illegitimate precisely insofar as we are not justified in attributing fittingness commitments to the work of fiction. So, while we are right in attributing the commitment to extra-fictional fittingness to instances of actual immorality, it is certainly not the case for fictional immorality.

What I want to argue in distinguishing between merely fictional and actual immorality in counter-moral fictions is that we can have instances of narratives that embody a counter-moral perspective without any commitment to the exportation of such views. Fictional immorality has no extra-fictional commitments because it makes no extra-fictional claims. The problem with Giovannelli's account is that, given that he argues that every work with an ethical perspective includes fittingness commitments, he would not agree that fictional immorality is not a legitimate candidate for ethical evaluation. I believe Giovannelli would argue that the lack of a counter-moral extra-fictional perspective in cases of fictional immorality would mean that they cannot count as a counter-moral ethical perspective. That is, Giovannelli's account

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[42] While I agree that some instances of fictional immorality present an immoral perspective only to further a moral claim, I don't think it is necessary (or indeed possible) to sanitize immoral perspectives. Eaton presents a compelling criticism to Kieran's cognitive immoralism on these grounds (Eaton, 2012, 289).

seems committed to the claim that without fittingness commitments a work of fiction cannot be said to embody a counter-moral perspective. However, as I have argued in the first chapter, I believe that instances of fictional immorality should count as cases of counter-moral perspectives, even without extra-fictional fittingness commitments. As I said before, these works *do* prescribe a counter-moral perspective because they prescribe content-immoral responses to the events narrated. And, more importantly, I have argued that these are not merely provisional prescriptions.

Against Gaut's affective-practical ethical assessment of fiction: Aesthetic space and appropriateness of responses

As I have argued, instances of fictional immorality include only a deviant fictional perspective that prescribes a counter-moral make-believe outlook. Because the works do not include an extra-fictional perspective, their deviant prescriptions are quarantined in the fictional world. In the chapter on the discontinuity thesis I argued that due to their quarantining nature, instances of fictional immorality open an aesthetic space that removes moral and practical considerations. For this reason, in the previous chapter I claimed that Livingstone and Mele's argument in favour of including moral considerations in the notion of appropriateness of emotions only works for instances of actual immorality insofar as in these instances we cannot speak of an aesthetic distance. Only in these cases we can say that the necessary aesthetic space was not opened, and that thus moral and practical considerations remain.

While I agree with Gaut that the emotional responses prescribed to appreciators during their imaginative engagement should be understood as instances of genuine emotions, I argued in the previous chapter that in cases of fictional immorality the notion of appropriateness does not include moral considerations. I argued, following Peter Goldie, that in instances of fictional immorality the notion of narrative appropriateness of responses does not include ethical appropriateness. Narrative appropriateness refers only to whether the prescribed responses fit the prescribed perspective; that is, it is concerned only with whether appreciators have reasons to respond in the ways prescribed according to what the narrative represents and, more importantly, *how it represents it*. I argued that the criteria of appropriateness of emotional responses to purely fictional perspectives are different to normal criteria of appropriateness because the latter include ethical appropriateness, while the former do not. Narrative

appropriateness in cases of fictional immorality is concerned with the framing of the fictional events.

Daniel Jacobson has argued that the merited response argument conflates two different kinds of considerations: considerations over the endorsement of warrant of the responses, and considerations over the ethical endorsement of the fictional perspective. As said in the previous chapter, Jacobson argues that whether a narrative merits a response depends on "what there is most evidence to feel, desire, or believe; [judgements of warrant] focus on epistemic, as opposed to moral or prudential reasons" (Jacobson, 1997, 173). Jacobson argues that Gaut, on the other hand, confuses whether a response is merited with whether it is appropriate *all things considered* (Jacobson & D'Arms, 2000). Taking this distinction into account, while it might be true that these deviant responses are not appropriate to feel *all things considered*, Jacobson argues that they are merited; that is, given how the perspective represents the narrated events, appreciators do have epistemic reasons to say that the prescribed response fits the perspective.

However, while I agree with Jacobson's criticism of Gaut's merited response argument, what I want to note is that in instances of fictional immorality the problem with Gaut's argument is not merely that the responses are merited even if inappropriate *all things considered*. But rather that in instances of merely fictional immorality there is no appropriateness *all things considered* because the aesthetic space removes the moral, practical and prudential considerations that are included in the notion of appropriateness *all things considered*. That is, my claim is that the prescribed deviant responses to fictional immorality are not only merited but appropriate.

Gaut's argument for the ethical assessment of works of fiction ignores the aesthetic space opened by the quarantining nature of fictional immorality. While Gaut's argument shows that actual immorality is a legitimate candidate for ethical assessment because it prescribes unmerited responses that fail to comply with ethical appropriateness, he fails to show why this is also the case for fictional immorality. Gaut does not argue for why narrative appropriateness should include ethical appropriateness even when, as Matthew Kieran argues, the aesthetic space removes practical concerns. The fact that the prescriptions are only meant to stand in the fictional narrative allows us to say that the moral and the prudential considerations for the appropriateness of responses can be ignored. In the following chapter I argue that it is in this sense that the responses are only content-immoral. Without the prudential and moral questions, it is not possible to say legitimately that the response is bad to feel, or wrong. Given that fictional immorality does not imply the expression of an actual immoral attitude, and given that

the responses to the fictional perspective have only the fictional events as their objects, we have to say also that the imaginative engagement with fictional immorality occurs in an aesthetic space that eliminates moral and prudential considerations. It is in this sense that the engagement with fictional immorality is quarantined to the fictional world, and it is why the moral experience provided by the counter-moral narrative cannot be subject to an affective-practical ethical assessment. And it is not clear why we should ethically evaluate counter-moral narratives that prescribe only content-immoral responses, and that are not committed to the export of such responses.

The object of the cognitive-affective responses in fictional immorality

If in cases of merely fictional immorality the counter-moral perspective is only a fictional perspective, and we cannot identify an extra-fictional perspective, there is no reason to claim that these works are committed to extra-fictional fittingness. That is, if the fictional perspective concerns only the fictional events, there is no reason to think that the set of cognitive-affective responses prescribed to the audience is directed at actual events or people. As we saw above, according to Gaut, the affective-practical ethical assessment of art stands because affective responses are directed towards kinds and not just individuals (Gaut, 1998, 187). In the following chapter I present in detail a criticism of Gaut's argument regarding the objects of the responses. But what I want to note here is that even if we granted that affective responses are directed at kinds, it does not seem clear why the quarantining effect of fiction would not be enough to neutralize the ethical assessment of appreciators' responses.

Giovannelli seems to agree with Gaut when he argues that we are justified in ethically assessing fiction because there is a risk of exportation that comes with the extra-fictional fittingness commitments (Giovannelli, 2013, 339). But, again, this seems to work only for fictional counter-moral perspectives that include an actual perspective committed to extra-fictional application. So in cases of fictional immorality there is no reason to think that our responses are directed are real events or people. Now, if the responses are only directed at fictional events and characters, as is the case with fictional immorality, it is not clear why they would be subject to an affective-practical ethical assessment. While I agree that we might be ethically judged for holding an attitude, even if it does not motivate to action, it is less clear why we would be subject to ethical judgement for merely *fictionally endorsing* a deviant attitude during the imaginative engagement with a fictional narrative.

The following chapter explores in depth the arguments against assessing emotional responses directed at fictional events and characters. For the time being, it is enough to show that the object of the prescribed responses in instances of fictional immorality include only fictional events and characters, and are not directed at the actual state of affairs.

5.2.3 Borderline cases

As I said before, it is important to note that the distinction between fictional and actual immorality is not straightforward. We can find what may be considered borderline cases of fictional immorality: narratives that were created by the artist as instances of fictional immorality, that are regarded by the reader as instances of fictional immorality, but whose context *of reception* is susceptible to take the fictional prescriptions as an invitation to believe. This happens when the deviant scenario is still part of what William James calls a 'live option', that is, when a significant number of people in the context of reception still believe the immoral claim to actually hold. In these cases, regardless of authorial intentions, we might consider an instance of fictional immorality as actual immorality because the perspective explored is still considered a live option in the context we inhabit. So, although we recognize that the fictional nature of the prescriptions is meant to neutralise the export of the perspective to the actual world, we might also realize that other readers would take the immoral perspective to stand in the actual world. The fact that these narratives can be regarded as instances of actual immorality would give us reasons to treat them as such, and thus these narratives are also plausible candidates to ethical evaluation.

So far I have argued that only instances of actual immorality are, in principle, legitimate candidates to be ethically criticised because only these include an immoral extra-fictional perspective. However, the argument that I have presented so far does not show that the amenability claim is invalid. Rather, so far I have only showed that the scope of works that can be legitimately ethically criticised is limited to instances of actual immorality. As I said at the beginning, the ethical criticism of works of fiction depends on an ethical assessment of a work's intrinsic features. In the following section I examine whether it is possible to say that a work's extra-fictional perspective counts as an intrinsic moral defect that can ground the intrinsic ethical assessment.

5.3 The extrinsic ethical assessment of fiction

Instances of fictional immorality involve a counter-moral perspective because they prescribe content-immoral imaginings and responses to the audience. However, contrary to instances of actual immorality, narratives that are fictionally immoral are created and received as deviant: they depend on the recognition of the deviant nature of the prescriptions. Thus, appreciators are aware at all times that if the aesthetic distance was removed, moral considerations would become relevant, and they would override aesthetic considerations. I have argued that fictional immorality cannot be legitimately ethically assessed precisely because the perspective and the responses are quarantined in the fictional world. So, although we use moral terms to refer to the content of the narratives and their perspective, we cannot ethically assess them in the relevant way.

On the contrary, according to what was said in the previous section, cases of actual immorality would seem to be legitimate candidates for ethical evaluation. In these cases, the prescribed perspective, and therefore the prescribed responses, include, in Giovannelli's terms, extra-fictional commitments: the fictional perspective is coupled with an extra-fictional perspective that includes actual attitudes, and that is therefore committed to the accuracy of the moral claims endorsed by the perspective. The extra-fictional commitments come from this actual extra-fictional perspective that informs the fictional perspective. We can say that in these cases the participation in the fictional perspective is really a participation in an actual immoral perspective. This is why narratives that are instances of actual immorality seem to be legitimate candidates for ethical assessment.

However, if we look closely we can see that the only reason actual immorality could be legitimately assessed is because it includes an actual extra-fictional perspective. It is this actual perspective that includes the extra-fictional commitments. And so, it seems that what is being ethically evaluated is not the fictional narrative itself, but rather actual immoral views that are held by real people. The ethical assessment of actual immorality in fiction assesses something else through the narrative: the author's moral character, the artistic practices, the socio-historical context. The *fictional* perspective in instances of actual immorality is itself only content-immoral: it voices counter-moral views. And what is properly immoral, that is, what is intrinsically properly morally defective is the extra-fictional perspective that accompanies the fictional perspective. I do not claim that the content in instances of actual immorality is not counter-moral, it certainly is morally inaccurate. What I claim is that, like instances of fictional immorality, works that present actual immorality are only content-immoral *themselves*: their

moral content can be judged as accurate or inaccurate. But this seems to be a weaker claim than to say that they are intrinsically morally defective. The proper moral judgement is directed at the agents and the institutions that hold and perpetuate the immoral views, and so the moral defects stem from extrinsic features, namely, the actual immoral attitudes held by real agents. The ethical judgement of these narratives is thus extrinsic, not intrinsic as required by the ethical critic.[43]

If this is true, however, not only is the ethical judgement extrinsic to the narrative, but it is also context dependent: these fictional narratives are only plausible candidates for ethical evaluation inasmuch as we have an immoral context that would couple the fictional perspective with an actual perspective with extra-fictional commitments.

5.3.1 Contextual autonomism

What does this mean for the value-interaction claim? I have tried to show that the amenability claim only obtains for instances of actual immorality. Moreover, because the legitimacy of the ethical assessment of the works depends on the extra-fictional perspective, I have claimed that the ethical assessment of the works is not an intrinsic assessment of the work's features, but an *extrinsic assessment of the work's features in the light of views held by real people in an actual context*. Because the assessment depends on these contextual factors, the ethical assessment of the works is unsystematic. In some contexts we can say that the fictional perspective is coupled with an extra-fictional perspective that makes the works a legitimate subject of ethical assessment.

Why should this be relevant for the ethical critic? Because if the intrinsic features of the narrative only acquire moral relevance due to extrinsic features that are context dependent, we cannot say that there is an intrinsic relation between the ethical and the aesthetic value of a narrative. The interaction between the ethical and the aesthetic value of works of fiction is *unsystematic* as well. In some contexts, certain instances of counter-moral fictions yield a deficient aesthetic experience. Not because of intrinsic features of the work, but because in

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[43] Eileen John argues that it would be simplistic to evaluate art in its own terms only. Rather we take art to be the kind of thing that has broader implications in human life. In this sense, "there is something structurally similar in the ways a person or an artwork asks to be valued. As people, whatever the evaluative standards we actively strive to meet (…), we are open to evaluation on criteria that we don't necessarily acknowledge or even understand" (John, 2006, 339). While I agree with her, what I argue is that the ethical evaluation of counter-moral fictions is only an extrinsic evaluation, contrary to what the amenability claim requires.

certain contexts we have overriding moral considerations that lead us to refuse to participate in the fictional narrative.

Thus, my discussion on the amenability claim has important implications for the value-interaction claim. When it comes to ethical criticism, I believe that we should favour a version of moderate autonomism that I call Contextual Autonomism. According to contextual autonomism ethical considerations are relevant for aesthetic considerations only in certain contexts, namely, when the context is such that we can regard the work as an instance of actual immorality. The view is a version of what Giovannelli identifies as moderate autonomism because it argues that the ethical assessment on occasion impacts the aesthetic value of a work, but in an unsystematic way (Giovannelli, 2007, 123-124). It is contextual because both the amenability and the value-interaction claim depend on contextual considerations; it is unsystematic because it does not depend on intrinsic features of the work that can guarantee that the legitimacy of the assessment and the interaction between ethical and aesthetic value remain the same at all times.

Moderate moralism and moderate immoralism[44] seem *prima facie* plausible, and compatible with the view I have defended in this chapter. These moderate accounts are consistent with one another insofar as they both argue that ethical considerations *systematically* bear on aesthetic considerations *in certain kinds or genres of works:* in certain kinds of works, whenever there is an ethical defect or merit, it counts as an aesthetic defect or merit. For instance, moderate moralism would argue that in works of realist fiction, ethical considerations have a bearing on works' aesthetic value. Moderate immoralism, on the other hand, argues that a work being ethically blameworthy systematically bears positively on its aesthetic value in certain kinds or genres of works. For example, moderate immoralism would argue that in works that present rough heroes, the ethically blameworthy features have a positive impact on their aesthetic value. So, as Giovannelli notes, these two positions are compatible as long as the relevant genres do not overlap.

However, the contextual autonomism I have put forward argues that, insofar as the ethical assessment depends on contextual factors, it is extrinsic and unsystematic. Thus, the value-interaction claim cannot depend on intrinsic features such as genre, as moderate moralism and immoralism would argue. Contextual autonomism could be made compatible with these

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[44] To identify moderate moralism and immoralism, I follow Alessandro Giovannelli's taxonomy of the debate on ethical criticism of art .

moderate positions if they accept that the "kinds of works" they are referring to consists not on an intrinsic feature, such a genre, but on whether the work is an instance of fictional or actual immorality. But they would have to accept that ethical criticism depends on an extrinsic contextual assessment of works.

6. **Fictional emotions and the ethical assessment of imagining. In favour of response** *amoralism*

The previous chapter examined the possibility of ethically assessing counter-moral fictional narratives. As we saw, according to the ethical critic, fictional narratives would be subject to ethical criticism because they invite audiences to participate in a moral experience that is directly related to the aesthetic experience of the narrative. If it is true that audiences participate in a moral experience prescribed by counter-moral narratives, then not only are the narratives subject to ethical criticism, but audiences who engage in this moral experience are equally subject to ethical assessment. That is, if we can say that fictional narratives can be ethically assessed for inviting audiences to imaginatively engage with certain scenarios, it is surely because the imaginative engagement itself is subject to ethical evaluation. According to the arguments I examined, a legitimate ethical assessment of fictional narratives is sustained on three grounds: (1) on the expression of an immoral perspective, (2) on the assent to the manifested attitudes of the work via the cognitive-affective responses to the perspective, and (3) on the fact that emotional responses toward fiction are instances of genuine emotions, and their objects are not just the fictional entities but an actual state of affairs.

In the previous chapter I showed, however, that it is necessary to take into consideration the distinction between fictional and actual immorality in counter-moral fictions. With this distinction in place, it is possible to say that fictional immorality in counter-moral fictions is not subject to an intrinsic ethical assessment inasmuch as it does not include an extra-fictional perspective that includes actual immoral attitudes concerning the real world. This being the case, assenting to the fictional perspective does not entail assenting to an immoral manifested attitude, and the objects of the emotional responses elicited by the narrative are only the fictional events and characters. On the other hand, actual immorality in counter-moral fictions seemed to be the only plausible candidate to an intrinsic ethical assessment. It is in instances of actual immorality in fiction that we can find the expression of attitudes that concern the actual state of the world. However, this should be identified as an extra-fictional perspective. As I said at the end of the last chapter, in instances of actual immorality it is the artist and her socio-historical context that are ethically assessed, not the narrative itself. Certain features of the work of fiction become morally relevant only in certain contexts, namely in those contexts where we can identify an extra-fictional perspective coupled with the fictional perspective. The ethical assessment of actual immorality in counter-moral fictions is thus extrinsic to the

narrative. The intrinsic ethical criticism of fiction loses purchase on both kinds of counter-moral content.

It is still possible, nevertheless, to claim that, while narratives are not subject to ethical assessment *themselves*, audiences who imaginatively engage with these counter-moral fictions are. In the end, Gaut's claim is that the affective practical ethical assessment concerns *feelings*, even those that do not motivate. The ethical assessment of fictional narratives could be derived from the ethical assessment of appreciators' engagement with the counter-moral content. Last chapter showed that (1) the expression of an immoral perspective, and (2) the assent to the manifested attitudes of the work do not apply to cases of fictional immorality. But chapter 4 argued that emotional responses to fiction are instances of genuine emotions. It could still be argued, therefore, that fictional narratives are subject to ethical assessment inasmuch as the audience's imaginative experience can be ethically assessed. If emotional responses toward fiction are instances of real emotions, regardless of whether a narrative is an instance of actual or fictional immorality, appreciators might be assessed for pleasurably participating in counter-moral fictions by adopting the prescribed perspective.

This chapter focuses on the moral value of content-immoral imaginings and affective responses. I focus on two lines of argument that can be advanced in favour of the ethical assessment of our imaginative engagement with counter-moral fictions. The first focuses on the moral value of imagining *with feeling*. It can be argued that content-immoral imaginings and their corresponding affective responses have either an intrinsic or an extrinsic moral value. The second line of argument focuses on the motivational force of fictional emotions. This can be regarded as a consequence-based argument. If, as I have argued, emotional responses toward fiction are instances of genuine emotions they must carry a motivational force; the motivational force of deviant emotional responses to fiction can therefore serve as the basis for an argument in favour of the ethical assessment of the imaginative engagement with counter-moral fictions.

I argue that none of these approaches can ground the ethical assessment of our responses to counter-moral fictions. On the contrary, by the end of the chapter I claim that deviant responses to fictional scenarios are so dissociated from practical and moral concerns that it is possible to defend response *amoralism*, namely, that our responses during imaginative engagement with fiction cannot be ethically assessed. In light of the distinction between fictional and actual immorality, I argue that only responses to actual immorality can be ethically assessed because

they cannot be quarantined. But I argue that in these cases they are assessed *qua* responses to actual events and entities.

The first section of the chapter focuses on the arguments for ethically assessing the imaginative experience of counter-moral fictions that track the moral value of such imaginings and their corresponding responses. I first examine the extrinsic argument, which claims that imaginings and responses can be ethically assessed in virtue of their objects. In this section I examine Allan Hazlett and Berys Gaut's arguments to reiterate how they fail in accounting for the ethical assessment of the engagement with fictional immorality. I categorise these arguments as extrinsic because they ground the ethical assessment on the fact that the objects of emotional responses to fiction are objects that fall outside the scope of the fictional world. The second part of the section examines the intrinsic argument in favour of the ethical assessment of engaging with immorality in fiction. I examine two different versions of the argument: the Moorean and the Aristotelian version. I show that both of them fail to account for the ethical assessment of the imaginative engagement with fictional narratives. I categorise these arguments as intrinsic because they claim that the assessment does not depend on entities outside the fictional world, but on the imaginative activity itself. The second section of the chapter focuses on the motivational force of emotions. I argue that no matter whether we favour the desire or the emotion models of motivation, it is not possible to assess emotional responses to fiction in virtue of their motivational force.

6.1 The moral value of content-immoral imaginings and content-immoral responses

Counter-moral fictions prescribe that appreciators imagine counter-moral perspectives. Appreciators could be ethically assessed, therefore, in virtue of their imagining these counter-moral perspectives. However, it would be very difficult to argue that what is subject to ethical assessment is merely imagining a counter-moral perspective, after all imagination is used in other types of mental projects that do not seem to be legitimate candidates for ethical assessment. For example, counter-factual reasoning could make use of imagining morally deviant perspectives, and yet, it would be hard to argue that someone is at fault for doing so. Imaginatively engaging with fictional perspectives, nevertheless, involves something more than just *imagining*, as we have seen in previous chapters. The prescription of a perspective by a fictional narrative involves the prescription of cognitive-affective responses as well. This is

to say that appreciators are not merely imagining, but they are imagining a deviant perspective with the corresponding responses. And, as I argued on chapter 4, these emotional responses are not merely imagined responses, but instances of genuine emotions. Appreciators could, therefore, be ethically assessed in virtue of imagining counter-moral perspectives *with feeling*. It is these responses that could be subject to ethical assessment.

Advocates for response moralism argue that our emotional responses to fictional scenarios are subject to ethical assessment, that they can be evaluated as bad to feel or wrong. This section examines two strategies for arguing for response moralism: an extrinsic and an intrinsic argument. An argument for the *extrinsic* value of imagining with feeling focuses on the object of the responses to ground the ethical assessment. As I said above, I regard this argument as extrinsic because it depends on the responses to fiction being directed at objects that fall outside the scope of the fictional world and the imaginative activity. In this section I show that this argument fails because it cannot account for the quarantining nature of fictional immorality. An argument for the *intrinsic* value of imagining with feeling, on the other hand, claims that responses toward fiction can be ethically assessed *regardless* of whether they are directed at fictional entities only. This argument counts as intrinsic precisely because the ethical assessment depends on the responses to fiction themselves, and thus makes the fictional/actual distinction irrelevant. While this argument looks promising, I argue that it also fails insofar as the fictional responses do not entail the actual endorsement of the deviant perspective by appreciators.

6.1.1 The extrinsic value of imagining with feeling

As I said, the extrinsic argument for response moralism claims that our responses to fiction can be ethically assessed in virtue of their objects; and these objects include entities that fall outside the scope of the fictional world. Allan Hazlett and Berys Gaut advance versions of the extrinsic argument. As we saw before, Allan Hazlett argues that our responses to fictional scenarios involve responses to real events and people. He claims that the engagement with fiction can only function under the assumption that a fictional world is similar to the actual world. The similarity assumption specifies that fictional worlds are similar to the actual world in *certain* aspects. These aspects form a similarity class (Hazlett, 2009, 251).

Hazlett's version of the extrinsic argument claims that our responses to fiction can be assessed because *when* the objects of our responses are part of the similarity class, they are also

responses to real events and people (Hazlett, 2009, 253). However, it doesn't seem clear that the objects of our responses to fiction are *always* part of the similarity class. Hazlett accepts that there are instances of unrealistic fictions, that is, fictions that are dissimilar to the real world. In these cases, the objects of our responses are not part of the similarity class, and thus our emotional responses are not directed at real entities and events. Think again of Stephen King's *Cujo*. As I said, the novel follows the story of a dog that is bitten by a rabid bat and goes on a murderous rampage. When reading the story, I recognise that rabid dogs are not part of the similarity class: I acknowledge that while rabies causes hydrophobia and makes animals aggressive, rabid dogs do not engage in murderous rampages *in real life*. The object of my fear, then, is only Cujo[45], not real rabid dogs.

The problem with Hazlett's argument is that it does not work as a general argument for the assessment of responses to fiction. This version of response moralism depends on our counter-moral responses being directed at objects that are part of the similarity class. But, as we saw in previous chapters, the problem with Hazlett's argument is that it is not clear why the objects of our responses should *always* be taken to be part of the similarity class when they involve moral evaluations. That is, it is not clear why there cannot be instances of morally unrealistic fictions, in which the objects of the appraisals involved in the emotional responses are not part of the similarity class. If instances of *fictional* immorality are recognised as *deviant* by both the author and appreciators, it is precisely because they recognise that the works are dissimilar to the actual world in this aspect. Without the inclusion of the objects of deviant evaluations in the similarity class, Hazlett's response moralism cannot claim that deviant responses to fiction entail deviant responses to actual entities.

Hazlett could still argue that while our responses to fiction cannot be legitimately ethically assessed in all cases, his argument works for showing that our responses to fiction can be legitimately assessed when their objects are part of the similarity class. Insofar as instances of

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[45] As we saw before, Tamar Gendler has noted that there are many instances of affective contagion when we engage in imaginative activities. In some cases, an emotional response to an imagined scenario is so strong that "it causes the thinker to behave in a way consistent with the belief that the situation is sufficiently probable so as to influence prudent behaviour" (Gendler, 2003, 131). This affective contagion means that even when I know *Cujo* to be fiction, if my fear is intense I might get scared when I hear my dog coming up the stairs, or when they approach me in the dark. However, it is hard to see how this could benefit Hazlett's argument. The contagion refers to responses directed at real-life counterparts. But this says nothing about the object of the responses to the fictional scenario. One could argue that our responses to fiction can be ethically assessed in virtue of the consequences it could have for subsequent responses. But we would need to first examine the effects of contagion to determine how significant it is.

actual immorality include claims that concern the actual state of the world, we could say that the objects of the deviant prescribed responses include actual events and people.

However, I believe we need to wonder whether this is enough to ground response moralism. I said before that response moralism claims that the emotional responses *to fiction* can be ethically assessed. Hazlett's extrinsic argument would only allow us to evaluate responses to the actual state of the world through the fictional narrative, but not the imaginative engagement itself. That is, if responses can be assessed because their objects include claims about the actual world, then it would seem that what we are ethically assessing are the responses to the attitudes toward real events and people that are presented in the fictional narrative. So it could be said that we are not evaluating the responses to a fictional narrative, but the responses to the views held by real people. For example, in the case of *The Birth of a Nation* we are evaluating appreciators' responses to Dixon and Griffith's white supremacism. And we would have to wonder whether this is enough to claim that *responses to fictional narratives* are bad to feel or wrong.

Berys Gaut's affective-practical assessment of imaginative engagement can also be read as an extrinsic argument for the ethical assessment of responses to fiction. According to Gaut, even affective responses that do not motivate to action are ethically significant (Gaut, 1998, 186). Responses to fiction can be ethically assessed because "the attitudes people (and works) manifest toward imagined scenarios have implications for their attitudes toward their real-life counterparts, for the attitudes are partly directed toward kinds, not just individuals" (Gaut, 1998, 187). When our responses to fiction are directed at kinds that also have instances in real life, they have implications for our attitudes toward their real-life counterparts (Gaut, 2007, 236). Gaut asks us to imagine a man who fantasises about raping *imagined* women. According to Gaut, the reason why his fantasies can be ethically assessed is that the fact he imagines them *as women,* "reveals something about his attitude toward real-life women" (Gaut, 1998, 187-188).

Gaut is wrong, nevertheless, to claim that our affective responses are directed at kinds. Rather, affective responses are directed at individuals. Only certain dispositional affective states seem to be directed at kinds, like my fear of spiders, and even in these cases it could be argued that these are *dispositions* to enter into an affective state that differ from occurrent emotional responses. In the following section it will be clear why the notion of *dispositional* states, and how they differ from occurrent emotion, is relevant for response moralism. However, even if

we granted Gaut that responses to fiction are directed at kinds, his argument can be objected in the same way as Hazlett's. It isn't clear why they shouldn't be simply understood as responses toward *kinds-in-the-fictional-world*. That is, it is not clear why the objects of these deviant responses are always taken to be the kinds of objects that are shared between the actual and the fictional worlds. Even when our imagining might involve kinds, imaginatively engaging with fiction depends on our ability to see when fictional and actual kinds differ. While reading *Cujo,* we might imagine of the rabid-dog-kind that they kill people; nevertheless, we do not believe of actual individuals belonging to the rabid-dog-kind that they go on murderous rampages. Even when imaginings involve kinds, we do not take imagined kinds to necessarily be similar to real kinds. So it is not clear why our responses to imagined kinds should always be taken as responses to actual kinds. Again, instances of fictional immorality are created as deviant, and so they require audience members to realize that the prescriptions that stand in the fictional world do not stand in the real world. As such, the objects of the responses do not include real events and entities, but only fictional events and characters.

Like Hazlett, Gaut could argue that while his argument for response moralism does not apply to all responses to fictional scenarios, it does work to show why responses to fiction can be legitimately ethically assessed *when* they include actual entities as their objects. The responses to actual immorality would seem legitimate candidates for an ethical assessment because the fictional prescriptions include claims about the actual world. But, again, we need to wonder whether this is enough to ground response moralism as the assessment of responses to *fictional narratives*. Because, as I said before, in instances of actual immorality we would only be evaluating responses to the views held by real people, the extrinsic argument can only claim that we can evaluate responses to actual immorality *through* the engagement with the fictional narrative. But this is different than to claim that we can evaluate the imaginative engagement itself.

An extrinsic argument for response moralism cannot account for the ethical assessment of our imaginative engagement with different types of counter-moral fictions. If our responses can only be ethically assessed in virtue of their objects, the imaginative engagement with fictional immorality is not a legitimate candidate for ethical assessment. As we said in previous chapters, fictional immorality refers to narratives that include counter-moral claims that are quarantined in the fictional world, that do not include claims about the actual world, and that are recognized

as deviant by both the author and the audience. As such, the objects of the responses do not include real events and entities, but only fictional events and entities.

Hazlett and Gaut are right in noting that not all our responses to fiction are quarantined in this sense. The responses to actual immorality would seem to be legitimate candidates for ethical assessment under this view precisely inasmuch as the fictional prescriptions include claims about the actual world. And yet I do not think this is enough to ground response moralism: the extrinsic argument would only allow us to evaluate responses to real events *through* the engagement with the fictional narrative, but not the imaginative engagement itself. That is, if the engagement with actual immorality can be assessed in virtue of its objects because these objects include actual claims about the actual world, then it would seem that what we are ethically assessing are the responses to real events that are simply mirrored in the fictional narrative. So it could be said that we are not evaluating the engagement with the fictional narrative, but we are evaluating the engagement with real events and people, and our responses to these real events and people. And we would have to wonder whether this is enough to claim that the responses *to fictional narratives* are bad to feel or wrong.

6.1.2 The intrinsic value of content-immoral imaginings

While the extrinsic argument in favour of response moralism focuses on objects that fall outside the scope of the fictional world to ground ethical assessment, an intrinsic argument for the ethical assessment of our responses to fiction focuses on the imaginings *themselves*. As we saw in the previous section, an extrinsic argument for response moralism can only ground the assessment of those imaginings that include real events and people; and even these cases emotions are not assessed *qua* emotions toward fiction. An intrinsic argument for response moralism, on the contrary, would be able to show that the imaginative engagement with counter-moral fictions can be ethically assessed even when the fictional prescriptions only include fictional entities as their object.

This section examines two different versions of the intrinsic argument. The Moorean version, advanced by Aaron Smuts, simply argues that our imaginative engagement with counter-moral fictions can be ethically assessed because it is intrinsically bad to pleasurably imagine evil. The Aristotelian version argues that our imaginative engagement with counter-moral fictions is subject to ethical assessment because content-immoral imaginings and the corresponding responses say something about appreciators' vicious characters. This section argues that the

Moorean version of the argument fails because it does not provide an argument for the intrinsic badness of imaginings, and that the Aristotelian version proves to be a more plausible candidate to defend response moralism.

The Moorean argument

To solve the difficulties faced by an extrinsic argument that focuses on the object of the affective responses, Aaron Smuts defends response moralism by advancing an intrinsic argument for the assessment of our responses to fiction. In trying to come up with a convincing intrinsic argument, Smuts turns to G. E. Moore. According to Moore, the pleasurable contemplation of an evil is intrinsically evil inasmuch as the positive emotion is directed at an inappropriate object (Moore, 1993, section 125, 257). Moore argues that neither a cognition nor an emotion can be good or bad *by itself.* However, the admiring contemplation of evil includes a positive emotion that does not fit the cognition it accompanies, precisely inasmuch as the pleasurable contemplation is unfitting for evil. But this would only show that the positive emotion is unfitting, not that it is intrinsically evil. To further illustrate his point, Moore presents a thought experiment. He asks us to imagine a universe which consisted only of minds occupied with an admiring contemplation of evil:

> If we then consider what judgement we should pass upon a universe which consisted *solely* of minds thus occupied, without the smallest hope that there would ever exist in it the smallest consciousness of any object other than those proper to these passions, or any feeling directed to any such object, I think we cannot avoid the conclusion that the existence of such a universe would be a far worse evil than the existence of none at all. (Moore, 1993, section 125, 257-258)

The problem with Smuts' account is that he doesn't so much present an argument for the intrinsic badness[46] of delighting in fictional suffering, as he presents intuition pumps. Following Moore, he advances four thought experiments that attempt to show that it is intrinsically bad to pleasurably imagine evil. In the first thought experiment he asks us to imagine being badly injured after falling at the super market, while the surrounding crowd

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[46] Smuts claims that the argument he advances for response moralism only wishes to address the evaluative question of whether our responses to fiction can be bad to feel, instead of the deontic question of whether they are wrong to feel (Smuts, 2016, 381- 382).

delights in our suffering (Smuts, 2013, 124) (Smuts, 2015, 26) (Smuts, 2016, 382). According to him, this illustrates the intrinsic badness of contemplating evil with pleasure because our intuitions would lead us to think that what the crowd is doing is bad, even when no one seems harmed by the pleasurable contemplation. Unfortunately, Smuts does not go any further, and he fails to present an actual argument to show that our intuitions are right. Moreover, even if he showed that our intuitions are right in this case, this clearly fails to show the intrinsic badness of pleasurably *imagining* suffering, since in this thought experiment an *imagined crowd* is taking pleasure in imagined *actual suffering*.

Smuts borrows his second thought experiment from Eugene Schlossberger. Here, he asks us to imagine a man, Charlie, who enjoys watching animals suffer: "Charlie derives great pleasure from the sight of animals in pain. Mind you, he never causes animals to suffer. But when he chances upon a wounded animal, the sight affords him much delight."[47] Smuts furthers the thought experiment by adding that Charlie enjoys touring slaughter houses and hearing about employees torturing the animals. According to Smuts, what is relevant is that, although Charlie does not actually enjoy harming animals, our intuitions lead us to think that it is bad for him to enjoy the thought of them suffering. However, he again fails to argue further, and he simply claims that "The implications are clear. Even though Charlie never causes an animal to suffer, his enjoyment is morally bad, but not because it is bad for the animals." (Smuts, 2016, 383) But, again, even if we admitted that this argument is enough to show that it is intrinsically bad to enjoy suffering, this thought experiment fails in showing that it is intrinsically bad to enjoy *imagined suffering*. This thought experiment fails because, again, we are imagining a man *actually* delighting in animal suffering. So, while it *could* be true that both the supermarket crowd and Charlie's pleasurable contemplation of suffering is intrinsically bad, it says nothing about pleasurably engaging in an *imaginative activity* that includes *fictional* suffering.

The third thought experiment presented by Smuts is Moore's universe of cruel minds. However, Smuts fails to examine in depth Moore's recursive principles of good and evil that ultimately ground the intrinsic value of admiringly contemplating evil. Instead, he simply claims that,

> Although it is difficult to imagine a universe composed only of minds occupied with cruel thoughts, it is even more difficult to imagine a good reason to think that such universe would be better than an empty one. Just as

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[47] Schlossberger 1986, 40 in (Smuts, 2015, 27) (Smuts, 2016, 283).

> it seems clear that a universe occupied only by a single suffering creature is worse than an empty universe, it likewise seems bad if the universe were occupied solely by someone thinking cruel thoughts. This suggests that enjoying the bad is intrinsically bad. (Smuts, 2015, 28)

Even if it was clear that an empty universe is better than a universe solely occupied by a suffering creature, this would be precisely because this universe would include the *actual suffering* of the one creature. But this differs from Moore's claim that the existence of a universe occupied by cruel minds would be a worse evil than the existence of none at all. And even then, as Brandon Cooke notes (2014, 319), to present this thought experiment as an argument is clearly to beg the question: why would it be self-evident that an empty universe is better than one occupied by cruel minds?

For the final thought experiment, Smuts asks us to imagine a world A solely inhabited by a woman who often imagines cats, and a world B solely inhabited by a man who spends his days imagining torturing children (Smuts, 2013, 124) (Smuts, 2015, 28) (Smuts, 2016, 384). The fact that, according to Smuts, world A would be preferable shows that pleasurably imagining suffering is intrinsically bad:

> We do not have to live in either world. We are merely being asked to decide which one is better. If we were given a choice to bring one or the other into existence, we should choose A. Most plausibly world B is worse – not because we worry that a child might be tortured or that we might be injured by this freak but because the child-torturing fantasist enjoys evil. That is bad enough. (Smuts, 2015, 28)

While this thought experiment does concern *imagined suffering*, Smuts fails again to present an argument for why merely pleasurably imagining suffering is bad, and why world B is worse. To merely say that it is self-evident that world A is preferable to world B is to beg the question. While the thought experiment *might* work as an intuition pump, it is clearly not enough to argue for the intrinsic badness of pleasurably imagining evil. Further, this argument only works if the person engaging in the imaginative activity takes a perverse pleasure in imagining suffering, which is not the case for the engagement with counter-moral fictions. [48]

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[48] I address this worry below when examining the problems of the Aristotelian version of the intrinsic argument.

Smuts' defence of response moralism fails to explore in depth Moore's arguments for the intrinsic value of imagining evil with feeling. Moreover, his account is unsuccessful because he continuously fails to present a convincing argument for why the intuitions advanced by his thought experiments are right. He never really presents an argument that would show that imagining evil is intrinsically bad, and that our responses to imagined scenarios can be ethically assessed.

The Aristotelian argument

A different argument in favour of the intrinsic badness of enjoying evil is an argument from virtue. According to Aristotle, one is virtuous not merely because of how one acts, but because of one's character. This means that a truly virtuous person experiences affective responses that follow reason. Aristotle argues that virtues of character are both behavioural and emotional, precisely inasmuch as they are displayed not only in actions but in emotional states (Price, 2012, 122-123). Moreover, the behavioural and the emotional aspects of the virtues of character go hand in hand, "For habituation is not purely the forming of habits of behaviour; rather, it influences behaviour through educating the subject 'both to delight in and to be pained by the things that we ought' (EN II.3 1104b12)" (Price, 2012, 123).

Affective responses are subject to ethical assessment regardless of their connection to concrete action because they reveal a person's character: a truly virtuous person would not experience deviant affective responses. Affective responses to fiction are subject to ethical assessment because, like responses to actual scenarios, they reveal something of one's character. And the reason for them being revealing of one's character is that for Aristotle, the imaginative experience of fiction is always self-referential: "what moves one in a play is not particular fiction but egocentric truth. That is, not what does happen to a character in a play, but what one knows might happen to oneself." (Price, 2010, 139) In his *Poetics,* Aristotle claims that tragedy arouses "fear by the misfortune of a man like ourselves" (1453a5-6). According to Aristotle, therefore, affective responses to fictional scenarios follow appreciators' actual moral character because the imaginative activity somehow includes them as part of the imagining, as it is always self-referential. In claiming that appreciators empathise with protagonists insofar as they are similar to them, Aristotle seems to imply that the perspective that drives appreciators to empathise with protagonists must fit the appreciator's perspective, so that they can relate to what is being narrated and respond accordingly.

An intrinsic argument from virtue seems more promising as an argument for response moralism. Affective responses can be ethically assessed because of their role in virtue, and the same can be said of affective responses to merely imagined scenarios, regardless of whether the responses are directed at fictional or actual immorality. Thus, the argument Smuts would need to put forward for the intrinsic badness of pleasurably imagining evil should follow Aristotle instead of Moore. Smuts would need to argue that the man's child-torturing fantasies are bad because they reveal something about his character. It is not that his enjoying evil is bad enough, but that his enjoying evil is bad *because* it is an expression of his evil character. When setting out the problem he claims that imagining "is problematic when it involves the enjoyment of evil, more particularly, the enjoyment of imaginatively doing evil. This is morally problematic because it is bad to take pleasure in imagined suffering. And it is even worse to take pleasure in thoughts of doing evil." (Smuts, 2013, 122) The emphasis on imaginatively *doing* evil would imply the self-referentiality at the centre of the Aristotelian argument.

Smuts analyses the case of the song "Mind of a lunatic" by Geto Boys, a Houston-based rap group (Smuts, 2013). The song describes radically violent actions, such as rape and murder, committed by a fictionalised version of one of the singers. He claims that the problem with the song is that,

> the song gives the listener the words to be as bad as the persona, to eloquently express anger and pronounce their own fierceness with style. The problem is that, unlike merely acting out a part on the stage, this kind of listening encourages a mode of engagement where audiences visualize the content they describe from the first person. (Smuts, 2013, 123)

He goes on to claim that,

> Listeners are not just hearing someone else's thoughts; rather, they assume the persona of the speaker. (…) When people engage with songs in this manner, they tend to visualize acting out the content as they talk themselves through the narrative. As a result, the song encourages listeners to imagine doing evil. Moreover, it provides an occasion for listeners to enjoy imaginatively doing evil. (Smuts, 2013, 123)

This would illustrate that the imaginative activity can be ethically assessed because empathising with the perspective would imply self-referential imaginings; and these self-

referential imaginings are intrinsically problematic precisely because of what they reveal about one's character.

Nevertheless, my proposal to read Smuts' claims under the Aristotelian light is problematic. Contrary to Aristotle, he explicitly denies that imagining fiction involves imagining of oneself (Smuts, 2016, 387). But, at the same time, the thought experiments and examples he uses to support his claim that delighting in *imagined* evil is intrinsically bad, seem to involve self-referential imaginings: "In world B, the survivor lives a similar life, but rather than imagine cats, he has the fantasy life of Bushwick Bill: he spends his afternoons imagining torturing children with a pair of pliers and a blowtorch." (Smuts, 2013, 125) In the end, I am not concerned with whether he would accept this version of the argument. What I want to show is that, given that Smuts' Moorean argument begs the question, the Aristotelian version provides a better candidate to argue for the intrinsic badness of pleasurably enjoying fictional immorality.

Gaut's argument for the affective-practical ethical assessment of our engagement with fiction is also better read as an Aristotelian argument. Like Aristotle, Gaut argues that an assessment of character involves an assessment of feelings, even if these feelings are detached from action (Gaut, 1998, 186). This assessment of character is what grounds the affective-practical ethical assessment. And the affective-practical ethical assessment includes the assessment of affective responses to fictional scenarios as well: "Such an affective-practical conception of ethical assessment allows the ethical assessment of the feelings that people have when they respond to fictions, even though they cannot act toward the fictional events described." (Gaut, 1998, 186-187) In fact, if we go back to Gaut's example of a man who fantasises about raping women we can see that what is problematic about his imaginative activity is not that he is imagining women as women, but that he is imagining *himself* raping women. His imaginative activity is thus ethically significant not because of the object of his imaginings, but because of the self-referential nature of the imaginings. As Gaut rightly claims, this fantasy reveals something about the man's attitudes toward real-life women. But he fails to see that this is not so because the women in the man's fantasy are women, but because the man imagines *himself* raping women. The man's imagining evil is intrinsically bad because it is an expression of his evil character. The affective responses are thus ethically significant when they reveal the subject's disposition to behave in certain ways, even if the imagining is detached from action.

If Gaut's argument read as an intrinsic argument could not account for the assessment of responses directed at fictional events exclusively, the Aristotelian version can explain why the fictional/actual distinction is irrelevant for evaluating appreciators' responses. The fact that the responses toward fictional narratives are instances of genuine emotions means that "If we actually enjoy or are amused by some exhibition of sadistic cruelty in a novel, that shows us in a bad light, reflects ill on our character, and we can properly be criticized for responding in this fashion." (Gaut, 1998, 194)

Contrary to the extrinsic argument, this version of an intrinsic argument for response moralism could account for the assessment of the responses to the different types of counter-moral fictions. Regardless of whether the narrative includes claims about the actual world or not, and whether the prescribed imaginings include real objects as their content or not, engaging with a deviant perspective in fiction could be ethically assessed because of the self-referential nature of the imaginative activity. That is, it would seem that to be able to engage with a deviant perspective, to respond in the ways the deviant perspective requires, appreciators would need to imagine themselves inhabiting such a perspective; they would need to imagine themselves as the kinds of persons that would hold such a deviant perspective. Without this identification with the perspective, it seems that appreciators would be unable to respond in the ways prescribed. But if this is true, being able to respond in the ways prescribed, identifying with the deviant perspective, would necessarily say something about the kinds of persons appreciators are. And this would allow us to make an evaluation of their character through their engagement with fiction. Responses to fictional narratives can be assessed as bad to feel or wrong precisely because of their link to appreciators' virtue of character.

6.1.3 Against a self-referential notion of content-immoral imaginings
Although the argument from virtue seems like a plausible argument for why our responses to fictional scenarios could be subject to ethical assessment, it is important to note that the assessment of the responses depends on the self-referential nature of imaginings. That is, if the argument for the intrinsic value of responses to imaginings depends on the assessment of the subject's character, these responses will need to truly reflect the subject's character. Some fantasies might be clear candidates for ethical assessment precisely because of their egocentric nature. As I said in the introduction, however, I want to argue that our affective responses *to*

fiction cannot be morally evaluated. And so, to argue for the ethical assessment of our responses to fiction, the moralist would need to show that imagining fiction is similar to egocentric fantasies at least in the relevant cases.

The virtue argument only works under the assumption that the imaginings say something about our moral character. So while it could be argued that our egocentric fantasies can be ethically assessed even when they are dissociated from action because they are revealing of our character, it is less clear that the guided imaginative engagement with fiction will be revealing of our character in the same way as fantasies are. According to the virtue argument, the assessment of our responses to fiction would require that the imaginative activity is self-referential. And so, this would mean that the imaginative activity would need to include *de se* imaginings for it to be subject of a character assessment.

It is contested whether the engagement with fiction necessarily involves *de se* imaginings. So the easiest way to argue against the claim that responses toward fictional scenarios are subject to ethical assessment is to establish a difference between fantasies, that involve egocentric imaginings, and fictive imaginings[49], that do not. Noël Carroll, for example, argues that when imagining fiction we respond emotionally from the outside. In Carroll's view, appreciators are not participants in the fictional scenario, but merely observers (Carroll, 2001, 311). Our responses consist in "*assimilating* our conception of the character's mental state into our overall response as a sort of onlooker with respect to the situation in which the character finds himself" (Carroll, 2001, 312). Peter Alward also denies that *de se* imaginings are necessarily involved in our experience of fiction. He argues that appreciators do not need to engage in *de se* imaginings to respond affectively as the work requires because they respond as one responds when hearing someone's testimony. Appreciators simply need to take the fiction as the product of a meticulous informant and "use the information gleaned from the informant's reports as input into his or her affective mechanisms" (Alward, 2006, 456).

If this is right and the imaginative activity does not involve *de se* imaginings, it is difficult to see how an assessment of the responses can be defended as an affective-practical assessment of appreciators' characters. What appreciators are doing is attuning to the characters' affective responses, in Carroll's view, or attuning to the informants' responses to the reported events, in Alward's view. Unlike fantasies, that are spontaneous, our engagement with fiction consists in

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[49] I borrow the term from Brandon Cooke (2014). Fictive imagining refers to a subcategory of imagining that is characterised by its detachment from alethic commitments.

a guided imaginative project. We do not simply respond as we would respond in an actual scenario, but we respond according to what the fiction asks of us as appreciators. And this involves not just attuning to characters' responses, but to the prescribed perspective that guides the narration, and to the aesthetic qualities of the work. As such, it cannot be said that the responses are the result of one's vice or virtue. And so it seems difficult to argue that our responses to fiction can be assessed according to the affective-practical conception of ethical assessment that derives from the virtue argument.

However, even if the imaginative engagement with fiction indeed involved *de se* imaginings, it is difficult to argue that these *de se* imaginings are expressive of appreciators' character. It is important to note that even for those authors who defend *de se* imaginings as part of the imaginative engagement with fiction, such as Greg Currie, imagining *de se* does not imply imagining of ourselves *as ourselves*. That is, not even *de se* imaginings can ground the self-referential nature of imaginative engagement with fiction required for the virtue argument.

According to Currie, the imaginative activity involves *de se* imaginings because appreciators simulate a hypothetical reader who learns about the events narrated in the work of fiction. The imaginative engagement thus consists in this role-playing in which appreciators form off-line versions of the states (or I states) of this hypothetical reader. These I states are the input necessary for emotional responses (Currie, 1997, 67-68). Imaginings *de se* are necessary for appreciators to take part in this role-playing; that is, appreciators imagine of themselves that they are this hypothetical reader. But the key thing is that imagining *of themselves* that they are the hypothetical reader does not imply that they are imagining *themselves being* the hypothetical reader. Significantly, Currie characterizes *de se* imaginings as role-playing, and this role-playing "involves a substantial departure from my normal, real-life mental set; I imagine myself not merely reading fact, but to be someone with an outlook different from my own one" (Currie, 1997, 73). Indeed this is how Currie explains what he calls "The problem of personality", namely the problem that we "like and take the part of people in fiction whom we would not like or take part of in real life" (Currie, 1997, 65). So, even if imaginative engagement with fiction involves imaginings *de se*, these are imaginings of a fictionalized version of oneself.

If Currie is right, imagining fiction, unlike fantasizing, is not egocentric, as the argument from virtue requires. And so the assessment of the emotional responses to fiction cannot be grounded on an assessment of our character. The distinction between fictional and actual immorality is

relevant after all. Fictional immorality involves the recognition by the author and audience members of the deviant nature of the prescriptions. If appreciators recognise the deviant nature of the prescriptions it is precisely because they contrast with their real attitudes, with their character. Emotional responses to fictional immorality cannot be legitimately assessed because the responses are not expressive of appreciators' character. Deviant emotional responses to actual immorality in fiction, on the other hand, would reveal something about appreciators' character because they would be responding to real immoral views held by real people. In these cases, however, it seems that what is revealing problematic aspects about their character is not the fact that they are responding to fiction, but the fact that they are responding to these real views. And, again, we have to wonder whether this is enough to say that emotional responses *to fiction* are bad to feel or wrong, as claimed by response moralism. At best, response moralism would be stating the obvious: that engaging with immoral people who hold immoral views reveals the immoral nature of our character.

Of course it could be argued that *in some cases some appreciators* imagine themselves while engaging with fictional narratives. But in these cases, the engagement with works of fiction should be regarded as an egocentric fantasy instead. Egocentric fantasies are revealing of our actual attitudes. What is important to note is that in these cases, the imaginative engagement with fiction would not be assessed *qua engagement with fiction*, but rather it would be assessed *qua fantasy*. Thus, the Aristotelian version of the intrinsic argument for response moralism cannot ground the ethical assessment of our responses to fictional immorality either.

It could still be objected that an argument from virtue for response moralism does not in fact need self-referential imaginings. Presumably *getting pleasure* from immorality in fiction is expressive of one's character, even when it does not involve self-referential imaginings. However, I want to note that it is important to distinguish between getting pleasure from *imaginings that involve* immorality, and getting pleasure *from imagined immorality*. Think again of *Lady Vengeance*: appreciators take pleasure in a tale of revenge that includes the torturing of the villain, but the torture scenes are still intended to them appreciators shriek. The perspective emphasizes the families' pain from losing their children so that appreciators overlook Mr. Baek's suffering. Getting pleasure from imagined immorality involves a *perverse* pleasure in imagined immorality because appreciators derive pleasure directly from immorality. Getting pleasure from imaginings that involve immorality does not involve a perverse pleasure because appreciators derive pleasure from the imaginative activity as a whole, which happens to include immorality. In the case of fictional immorality, appreciators

get pleasure from imaginings that involve immorality, and not from imagined immorality itself. Appreciators get second order pleasure from the displeasure generated by the imagined immorality, which is why I have emphasised that appreciators acknowledge the deviant character of fictional immorality when engaging with the fictional narratives. This is not expressive of a vicious character precisely inasmuch as participants acknowledge (and are disturbed by) the immoral character of the imagined scenario. But they enjoy the narrative engagement because it is dissociated from moral concerns.

If appreciators did not experience first order displeasure from the counter-moral nature of the perspective, it would be because the attitudes prescribed by the deviant fictional perspective actually fit their own attitudes. In this case the responses would be expressive of their character even if the imaginative activity did not involve self-referential imaginings. But if this was the case, the assessment of the responses would not be an assessment of responses to fiction, but an assessment of appreciators' actual immoral perspective that was revealed through their engagement with fiction. Again, at best, response moralism only states the obvious: that when our responses during the imaginative engagement with fiction reveal our immoral attitudes, these attitudes are subject to ethical assessment. But there is a difference between assessing actual attitudes, and the corresponding emotional responses, that are revealed and expressed *during* the imaginative engagement with fiction, and assessing fictional attitudes and emotional responses *toward* counter-moral fictional scenarios.

What does this mean for response moralism? The responses during our engagement with fiction are not directed at real entities or real events. Deviant responses to fiction do not express anything about our moral character. The imaginative engagement with fiction is in this sense dissociated from reality. And if this is the case, it seems mistaken to turn to extra-fictional criteria to assess them. Rather, it seems like the only valid evaluative criterion of affective responses to fiction is whether they fit the perspective presented by the work, as I defended on the chapter on emotional realism and the discontinuity thesis.

6.2 The motivational force of fictional emotions

So far neither the extrinsic nor the intrinsic approach have been able to ground an argument for response moralism. Emotional responses to fiction are not directed at real events and people, except in instances of actual immorality. And emotional responses to fiction do not seem to say

anything about our actual moral character, except in those cases of actual immorality that should be understood as fantasising instead. However, in chapter four I argued for emotional realism. That is, I argued that emotional responses to fiction are instances of genuine emotions. Emotional responses are connected to action. So it could still be argued that the ethical assessment of our imaginative engagement with counter-moral fictions is grounded on the fact that these responses are instances of real emotions and are thus connected to action.

As we saw in previous chapters, some authors, like Walton and Friend, defend the view that emotional responses to fiction are instances of quasi-emotions, not genuine emotions. As quasi-emotions, they are phenomenologically similar to emotional responses but they lack the motivational force of genuine emotions because they lack behavioural manifestations. I noted that one of the problems with irrealist theories is that they understand the motivational force of emotions in a very narrow sense. They seem to argue that emotional responses to fiction do not have a motivational force because they fail to lead directly to observable behaviour, and thus they cannot count as instances of genuine emotions. However, I argued that, given that we have many instances of genuine emotions that do not cause immediate behavioural consequences, we should understand the motivational force of emotions as a disposition to behave in certain ways. Emotional responses to fiction, therefore, need to be understood as instances of genuine emotions with the relevant motivational force, but that fail to lead to action due to cognitive monitoring.

If emotional responses to fiction are connected to action inasmuch as they have a motivational force, it would seem possible to defend response moralism by advancing a consequence-based argument. The ethical assessment of emotional responses to fiction could be grounded on their motivational force precisely because of the consequences they *could* have on appreciators' behaviour. This would not mean that emotional responses to fiction can be ethically assessed depending on their *actual* consequences on behaviour, since we would need empirical data that showed how they impact behaviour. However, it seems that we could assess their role in motivation even if they don't culminate in action.

This section explores the motivational force of emotions to see whether it is possible to assess emotional responses to fiction based on their motivational force. In what follows I examine the desire model, that argues that the motivational force of emotions comes from desires, and the emotion model, that argues that it is a feature of emotions themselves to be connected directed

to motivation. I argue that none of these approaches to the motivational force of emotions can ground a defence of response moralism.

6.2.1 The desire model

According to the desire model, emotions have a motivational force insofar as they can explain action: they provide the agent with reasons to act. However, emotions cannot be said to cause action as such. It is desire, instead, that ultimately moves agents to act. The desire model thus assumes a distinction between motives and motivations. Motives give reasons to act, motivations move to action. The motivational force of emotions should be understood, therefore, as emotions being motives, not motivations.

Jesse Prinz argues that motivations make agents cease or continue acting, they impel them to act. Emotions, however, are not motivations insofar as they are not simply action tendencies that directly result in action,

> Being angry provides a reason, ceteris paribus, to flee. But emotions are not always motivations. They do not always succeed in impelling us. One can be angry, it seems, without being disposed to revenge, and one can be afraid without being disposed to flee. (…) The link between emotion and action tendencies is weaker than the link between motivations and action (Prinz, 2004, 193).

Prinz acknowledges that the physiological aspect of emotions *disposes* agents for action. However the bodily disposition to behave in certain ways that is set in motion by emotions does not imply that the agent has selected a course of action. Even when the emotional response disposes the agent to act in certain ways, it is up to her not only to decide the course of action, but to decide whether she will act at all. According to Prinze, acting on an emotion, therefore, is a *choice* made by the agent after feeding the emotion into the rest of her mental system (Prinz, 2004, 193-194).

The emotional response thus gives an agent a motive to search for an appropriate course of action. But it is not the emotional response that moves her to act. In Prinz's account, motivations are action commands that impel actions. And these motivations can indeed be affected by affective states. But, according to Prinz, "when emotions cause motivations, those motivations never count as constitutive parts of emotions. The two constructs are thus closely entwined but

independent" (Prinz, 2004, 196). To move to action, the agent requires a motivational desire[50], an action command.

Peter Goldie seems to assume the same difference between motives and motivations. Emotions act as motives for action because they provide reasons for acting, but they are not really motivating in the sense that they don't directly move to action. It is up to desire to move the agent to act. Goldie acknowledges that emotions are not just some added-on ingredient that helps explain some actions; he agrees that the motivational force of emotions causes the experience of action to be different (Goldie, 2000, 40). But this is not so because the emotions blindly move agents to act, but because emotions qualify certain desires. Some desires are what Goldie calls primitively intelligible if they "cannot be better explained in virtue of anything else other than the emotion of which it is a part" (Goldie, 2000, 128). Emotions carry a motivational force only inasmuch as the desires that actually move to action are primitively intelligible; that is, emotions are motives to act inasmuch as the desires that motivate to action can only be explained by the emotions. Actions, nevertheless, still depend on means-ends beliefs and desires. Moreover, even the desires that can only be explained by emotions are integrated into the agent's overall desire system. As such, emotions should not be understood as something disruptive. For an emotion to lead to a desire that moves action, the primitively intelligible desire must be consistent with the agent's actual long-term planned actions (Goldie, 2000, 49).

If the desire model is right, the motivational force of fictional emotions needs to be understood as providing reasons to act. These reasons to act, however, interact with the rest of the agent's mental system. When imaginatively engaging with fictional scenarios, appreciators lack the relevant desires that could ultimately motivate them to act. Moreover, fictional emotions are subject to cognitive monitoring inasmuch as they are always being contextualised by the lack of the relevant existential beliefs. The reasons to act that might be presented by our emotional responses to fiction are revised precisely in light of our awareness of the fictional nature of the scenario, and, in the case of fictional immorality, the deviant character of the prescriptions.

The desire model of the motivational force of emotions thus cannot help ground response moralism. Deviant emotional responses to fiction would lose all relevance as reasons to act inasmuch as these reasons would need to be integrated, as Goldie argues, into appreciators'

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[50] Prinz argues that the term 'desire' can be used both as an action command and as a description of an attitude towards something. When it is the latter it has to be understood as an emotional desire that doesn't drive to action; only the former, desire as motivation, drives agents to act.

long-term action plans. If appreciators are aware of the deviant nature of the prescriptions, the rest of their mental system will override the deviant emotional responses, and they will cease to provide reasons to act. If, however, deviant emotional responses to fiction continued to be regarded by appreciators as reasons to act it would be because they fit with other desires that can ultimately move to action. And if this was the case, it seems clear to me that what should be ethically assessed are not the emotions toward fictional scenarios, but appreciators' actual beliefs and desires that support the deviant emotions as reasons to act. The differences between particular desire accounts are irrelevant for my purposes because they accept that emotions function as motives for action that interact with other beliefs and desires. Since during the engagement with merely fictional immorality audiences lack the relevant beliefs and desires, we cannot say that the imaginative engagement is subject to ethical assessment in virtue of genuine emotional responses and their role in action.

If, on the other hand, audiences *had* the relevant deviant beliefs and desires that support deviant emotional responses as reasons to act, it would be necessary to say that what should be assessed are appreciators' underlying immoral desires that act as motivations to act, but not the emotional responses to fiction themselves.

6.2.2 The emotion model

The emotion model claims, on the other hand, that emotions have a motivational force that is independent from desire. Sabine Döring disagrees that desires can motivate action because they cannot count as normative practical reasons[51]. She argues that normative practical reasons are motivating reasons in that they explain both why an action is right and why it is done. But desires have a world-to-mind direction of fit. As such, they do not include evaluations, and so they cannot count as normative reasons. Döring claims that if the desire involved a normative judgement, then we would have to say that it is the judgement that moves to action, not the desire (Döring, 2007, 367-369). Döring argues, on the other hand, that emotions are affective perceptions of value. This means that they are perceptions of value whose intentionality cannot be separated from their phenomenology: "what an emotion is about – its intentional content – is part of its conscious, subjective character, i.e. of what it is like to experience the emotion" (Döring, 2007, 375). As perceptions of value, emotions are representational, and thus they are subject to a correctness condition (Döring, 2007, 384). More importantly, the fact that they

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[51] Döring assumes internalism is right, and so only normative practical reasons can explain action.

entail evaluations means that they are normative reasons: emotions involve an "ought to be" (Döring, 2007, 386-387). And if they are normative reasons, they are also motivating reasons.

However, Döring recognizes that emotions don't move to action without some sort of cognitive monitoring: if the emotion will count as a normative practical reason, its content must be endorsed by the subject, so that she must "make a corresponding judgement, before the emotion can make it rational to act in a certain way" (Döring, 2007, 383). Emotions, therefore, have a motivational force insofar as there is a justifying relation holding between an agent's judgements and her emotions (Döring, 2007, 386). This doesn't mean that emotions are under the rational control of the agent, or that agents make inferences from emotions, but only that emotions count as normative practical reasons insofar as agents endorse them.

Bennett Helm also disagrees that we need to turn to desire to explain the motivational force of emotion, but, like Döring, Goldie and Prinz, he agrees that emotions count as motives, not as impulses for action. Emotions as motives, nevertheless, have a motivational force that does not depend on desire. Helm argues that desire is not merely goal-directedness; desire presupposes import inasmuch as the agent finds the object of desire worth pursuing. Import is in turn conceptually connected to emotions. And since import is what moves to action, emotions have a motivational force that does not need to presuppose desires: "to have an emotion is to evaluate something as having import of some sort, and this just is, at least in many cases, to be moved to action by that import" (Helm, 2001, 193).

But, again, Helm notes that isolated emotions do not move to action. Import is constituted by evaluative patterns that include not only emotions, but desires and judgements. Particular evaluations, such as those involved in emotional responses, are subject to further evaluation in light of their fit in the agent's overall evaluative patterns. The evaluations involved in emotions can thus be either appropriate or inappropriate (Helm, 2001, 205). In this sense, even though emotions provide motives for acting because they represent import, only complete evaluations motivate inevitably. An evaluation is complete "insofar as it fits into a projectible, rational pattern providing one with an unfragmented perspective on, and thus constituting, import" (Helm, 2001, 205). Therefore, even if the motivational force of emotions does not need a reference to desire, it is important to note that emotions are integrated in the agent's whole cognitive system.

So even if the emotion model was right, and the motivational force of emotions did not depend on the relevant desires, we cannot say that the motivational force of deviant emotions to fiction

would be enough to ground response moralism. The motives presented by emotions as a result of the engagement with deviant perspectives in fictions would still be subject to cognitive monitoring. They can only constitute isolated evaluations that would fail to motivate to action inasmuch as they are not integrated with the agent's actual cognitive system and are not endorsed by her. If, on the other hand, deviant fictional emotions moved to action *because they fit with the agent's actual evaluative framework*, it would seem mistaken to think that it is the emotions toward fiction that are subject to ethical assessment instead of the actual beliefs and desires that support the deviant responses as reasons to act.

6.2.3 Expressive actions

So far it seems that even if fictional emotions have a motivational force, they fail to present themselves as reasons to act because they lack the relevant support from appreciators' cognitive system. However, we might find some instances of actions that can be explained simply by saying that we were in the grip of our emotions, such as punching a wall in anger. So what would it mean for response moralism if fictional emotions elicited such expressive actions?

According to Goldie, these actions can also be explained by a primitively intelligible desire. And as such, they can also be accounted for in light of the agent's overall evaluative framework. This means that even in these cases, if the emotion leads to action it is only because it is supported by the agent's whole cognitive system. Expressive actions are explained by a primitively intelligible desire, a desire that can only be explained in terms of an emotion that is impossible to satisfy. In this cases, it is not that we have an emotion with such a raw motivational force that cannot be restrained, but rather we acknowledge that the primitively intelligible desire must not be satisfied:

> The civilizing restraints on what an angry, hating person can do – ethical restraints perhaps, or knowledge of the force of the law – are just what makes Jane perfectly aware that she ought not to do bodily harm to Joan, thus leading her, on this occasion, to resort to an expressive action. The symbolic nature of the expression takes place as it does partly because the *literal* action, as it were, is not a realistic option (Goldie, 2000, 130).

So, expressive actions should be understood as symbolic actions that aim at easing the actual deviant desire.

This means that even if deviant affective responses to fiction elicited expressive actions, this would not be enough to ground response moralism. That is, if the reason why we need an expressive action to symbolically carry out a desire is because *we know we ought not* to carry it out, then it seems weird to claim that these cathartic responses can be ethically assessed. On the contrary, in these cases we could say that the expressive actions are the result of the agents' awareness of the quarantining nature of the deviant prescriptions.

6.3 In favour of response *amoralism*

Ultimately, it seems that the motivational force of emotions toward fictional scenarios is not enough to ground an ethical assessment of our responses either. As we saw, no matter which model of motivation we favour, the motivational force of emotions depends on appreciators' whole cognitive system. If appreciators are aware of the counter-moral nature of the prescriptions and the corresponding responses they will not regard the emotions as reasons to act, and they will not act on them. If, on the other hand, appreciators are not aware of the counter-moral nature of the prescriptions and the responses, they might regard deviant emotional responses to fiction as reasons to act, and act on them. But what is important is that in these cases the ethical assessment should not be directed at the emotional responses during the imaginative engagement, but rather at appreciators' actual beliefs and desires that provide the ultimate support to deviant emotions as reasons.

Arguments in favour of the moral value of responses directed at counter-moral fictions were not able to ground a legitimate ethical assessment either. The extrinsic argument only shows that we can evaluate our engagement with instances of actual immorality. But, as I said, in these cases we are not evaluating the engagement with the fictional narrative, but we're evaluating the engagement with real events and people, and our responses to these real events and people during the imaginative engagement. This is not, however, enough to conclude that the responses *to fictional narratives* are bad to feel or wrong. Response moralism is making a trivial claim: that we can be ethically assessed for deviant responses toward actual immoral views held by real people. The intrinsic argument, on the other hand, did not prove to be better. The intrinsic argument only shows that we can ethically evaluate appreciators' character during the imaginative engagement with fiction when it reveals something about their actual immoral attitudes. But, again, at best, response moralism only states the obvious: that when our responses during the imaginative engagement with fiction reveal our immoral attitudes, these

attitudes are subject to ethical assessment. In the end, both of these strategies fail to account for the difference between evaluating actual emotional responses during the imaginative engagement with fiction, and evaluating emotional responses toward fiction.

So how can response moralism be defended? Only instances of actual immorality could be assessed by taking into consideration either the extrinsic or intrinsic arguments for the moral value of imagining, and the motivational force of the responses. But even in these cases it seems that the object of the ethical assessment are not emotional responses toward counter-moral fictions, but actually deviant responses that occur during the imaginative engagement with fiction, and appreciators' actual evaluative framework that legitimises the deviant responses.

On the contrary, responses to fictional immorality are completely dissociated from reality: they are not directed at real events or entities, they do not reflect appreciators' actual attitudes, and they don't impact action inasmuch as their motivational force is rendered irrelevant without actual attitudes that support them. If this is so, it seems that responses to fictional immorality are completely dissociated from moral concerns. We thus have reason to defend response *amoralism* for instances of fictional immorality. Responses to fictional immorality should only be regarded as content-immoral because they cannot be ethically assessed. Without a link to the actual world via the object of the responses, appreciators' actual character, or practical reasoning, it is not clear why we should evaluate emotional responses to fiction according to the same criteria used when evaluating emotional responses to actual scenarios. And among the evaluative criteria, it is not clear why moral considerations should be taken into account when evaluating the appropriateness of emotional responses to fictional immorality. It is true that moral considerations *would* apply if the fictional prescriptions included claims about the actual world, or if the immoral responses fitted the responses appreciators would have in real circumstances. But emotional responses to *fictional* immorality are so dissociated from real-life that it is not clear why they should be subject to moral criteria at all.

Conclusion

Throughout the thesis I have defended a contextual account of our engagement with and assessment of counter-moral fictions. I have argued that to understand the complex relation between immorality in fiction and our actual moral attitudes we must recognize a distinction between fictional and actual immorality. In turn, this distinction is possible thanks to the distinction between fictional and extra-fictional perspectives.

Fictional immorality endorses a counter-moral perspective, but this endorsement is quarantined in the fictional world. That is, fictional immorality only includes a counter-moral fictional perspective. Fictional immorality prescribes content-immoral imaginings and responses because the prescriptions concern only a make-believe moral outlook. Fictional immorality's prescriptions are also quarantined in the fictional world. On the contrary, actual immorality endorses an immoral perspective that is *not* quarantined in the fictional world. In instances of actual immorality, the fictional perspective is coupled with an extra-fictional perspective. Narratives that include actual immorality prescribe appreciators to adopt an immoral real-world outlook as a result of this extra-fictional perspective. The distinction between fictional and actual immorality only becomes clear if and when appreciators reconstruct a narrative's fictional context. Through the analysis of authorial intentions, socio-historical context, fictional prescriptions, modes of representation, and genre, appreciators determine whether a narrative counts as an instance of fictional or actual immorality.

The account I proposed can be labelled as a contextual account because whether a narrative's features are morally significant depends on contextual considerations, namely, the reconstruction of the extra-fictional perspective. This extra-fictional perspective only becomes apparent when the narrative is examined in a specific context.

In the thesis I examined the case of *The Clansman* as a clear instance of actual immorality whose fictional prescriptions carry extra-fictional pretensions. *The Clansman* is very different from *Blood Meridian* on account of the immoral extra-fictional perspective that accompanies the former but not the latter. The importance of the context of creation (and reception) of the work becomes clear if we consider the following scenario. Let's imagine a world, $Earth_1$, where there has never been and never will be racial inequality, where people have never been and never will be oppressed because of the colour of their skin. In $Earth_1$ oppressing a group of people in virtue of their skin is as absurd as it would be absurd in Earth to oppress a group of people in virtue of the size of their feet. In $Earth_1$ something like the KKK has never existed

and will never exist. Now imagine that someone in Earth₁ finds *The Clansman*, someone for whom racial oppression is as absurd as feet-size oppression. As I said in the discussion of the work's fictional context, authorial intentions are decisive in our interpretation of the work; but authorial intentions do not refer to the actual intentions of the actual author, but to the best reconstruction given all the available evidence. This evidence depends on contextual considerations; and this means that a work's interpretation, which will in turn ground our engagement with the narrative and its assessment, depends on contextual factors as well. *The Clansman* in Earth₁ would certainly be read as a horrible dystopia, much like we read McCarthy's novels in Earth. Without *The Clansman's* extra-fictional perspective, the novel is nothing but a horrible vision, a vision whose moral significance disappears. The way people in Earth₁ would read and assess *The Clansman* is completely different to the way we read and assess *The Clansman.* And these differences depend on contextual considerations that couple the fictional perspective with an extra-fictional perspective that has extra-fictional pretensions.

The contextual account that I put forward allows us to solve what originally seemed like puzzling cases where appreciators encounter difficulties engaging with morally deviant scenarios. I advanced an account of imaginative resistance based on the distinction between fictional and actual immorality in counter-moral fictions. I argued that appreciators encounter imaginative difficulties when engaging with instances of actual immorality because the fictional perspective is coupled with an extra-fictional perspective that includes what Gendler calls a 'clamour for exportation'. That is, actual immorality is coupled with an extra-fictional perspective that includes claims about the actual world. Gendler is right in pointing out that appreciators resist participating in certain fictional scenarios that include moral deviance because the fictional prescriptions include a 'clamour for exportation', but she is wrong in thinking this is due to the moral nature of the scenarios; rather, the 'clamour for exportation' found in some fictional scenarios comes from the extra-fictional perspective. The 'clamour for exportation' can also be explained in terms of what Giovannelli calls a work's fittingness commitments: instances of actual immorality include a commitment to fit extra-fictional reality. Appreciators encounter difficulties because the fictional perspective is coupled with an immoral extra-fictional perspective; and so appreciators find that assenting to the fictional perspective would entail participating in an immoral perspective that concerns the actual state of the world.

This account of resistance phenomena of course assumes that appreciators have available to them the resources to reconstruct the narrative's fictional context, which would allow them to

determine whether a narrative is an instance of fictional or actual immorality. In this sense, the contextual account that the thesis has put forward depends not only on an interpretive effort from appreciators, but on them having the resources available to carry out such an interpretive task. For this reason, the contextual account here defended has attempted to emphasize the importance of the context of reception of fictional narratives as well. The context of reception, that is, appreciators' context, definitely determines how an appreciator will reconstruct the fictional context to decide whether the narrative constitutes an instance of fictional or actual immorality. For example, in chapter three I examined intra-generic variations in resistance phenomena: appreciators resist some narratives, but not others belonging to the same genre. And I suggested that these variations can be explained by the context of reception of the works. In particular, I used the example of rough heroines to show how gender expectations and the prevailing attitudes toward women condition how appreciators receive moral deviance in fiction, even among instances of fictional immorality.

To further stress the importance of the context of reception on the reconstruction of a work's extra-fictional commitments, and on resistance phenomena, I would like to go back one last time to Walton's Giselda example, "In killing her baby, Giselda did the right thing; after all it was a girl". What I want to suggest is that this example was so convincing in showing that appreciators experience imaginative difficulties when facing moral deviance because what readers resist are the possible extra-fictional commitments of such an example. The context we inhabit is one in which female infanticide and sex-selective abortion are still somewhat common practices. The context of gender oppression makes us fear the possible extra-fictional commitments of Giselda's story. It is interesting to wonder whether Walton's example would have been as successful to illustrate resistance phenomena if the baby's gender was changed. A contextual account of our engagement with counter-moral fictions, and their assessment, claims that certain features of narratives become morally significant only in certain contexts. The fact that Giselda kills her baby daughter because of her gender is morally significant for us because of the context we inhabit and because of the context the author inhabits.

These contextual considerations impact how we receive and engage with fictional scenarios. But the contextual moral significance also impacts our assessment of the works. Ethical critics have focused on a work's intrinsic moral flaws. But I have argued that a work's *fictional* perspective can only be assessed as content-immoral. A merely fictional perspective cannot be properly ethically assessed in virtue of its being fictional. In this sense, we do not ethically assess counter-factual reasoning. We might describe it as morally inaccurate, that is, we might

say that it is content-immoral. For an imaginative project to be properly ethically assessed it needs to include what Giovannelli calls fittingness commitments. And I have argued that these fittingness commitments can only be found in instances of actual immorality. Further, I have argued that these fittingness commitments are found in a narrative's extra-fictional perspective. Certain features of the work's fictional perspective become morally significant in light of the extra-fictional perspective. But while it is true that the fictional perspective becomes morally significant in virtue of the extra-fictional perspective, it is also important to note that what is properly ethically assessed is the extra-fictional perspective, which is what includes fittingness commitments, not the fictional perspective itself. What we ethically assess are the author's moral attitudes or the immoral social practices of the context that informs the extra-fictional perspective. For this reason, I have argued that the work's ethical assessment is an extrinsic assessment, an assessment of the author and her context via the extra-fictional perspective; and this supports a contextual ethical criticism because some of the work's features become morally and aesthetically significant only in a specific context.

Further, the fact that ethical critics overlook the role of the extra-fictional perspective in the ethical assessment of works means that they have overlooked perhaps the most interesting cases: narratives with an actual immoral context whose moral flaws are *not* endorsed by the narrative's fictional perspective. Because ethical critics have focused on a work's intrinsic moral flaws, they have focused on elements of a narrative that are clearly endorsed by its fictional perspective; everything that is not endorsed by a narrative's fictional perspective cannot be regarded as an intrinsic moral flaw. But they have failed to see that a fictional perspective is not morally significant without an extra-fictional perspective, and they have completely ignored the role of the extra-fictional perspective. This means that they have also ignored important moral flaws that are endorsed by a work's extra-fictional perspective, even when they are not even addressed by the fictional perspective. These moral flaws endorsed by a work's extra-fictional perspective should be taken into account when ethically criticising a fictional narrative; but they cannot be properly considered by focusing simply on intrinsic features. On the contrary, a contextual ethical assessment of fiction such as the one that I have defended does take into consideration the relevance of the extra-fictional perspective when ethically criticising works, and can thus focus on features that cannot be said to be intrinsic moral flaws.

To see what I mean, let us go back to the difference between *The Wire* and *Gone with the Wind*. Both of these works present what I called an actual immoral context: these are cases where

certain immoral attitudes are so deeply ingrained in the context of production of the work that they are imported to the narrative. This means that in both of these cases we find an extra-fictional perspective that endorses immoral attitudes. The difference between the two is that in the case of *Gone with the Wind*, the immoral attitudes are endorsed by the narrative's fictional perspective as well: *Gone with the Wind* fictionally endorses racism because the entire story is built around a nostalgic representation of slavery and a condescending treatment of black American characters. On the contrary, *The Wire*'s fictional perspective aims at evidencing inequality in America by exploring the interaction of issues of race and class; but, at the same time, this fictional perspective fails to acknowledge the issues faced by black American women of the same background. While the narrative's extra-fictional perspective clearly endorses the condemnation of racism and inequality, it implicitly endorses the erasure of black American women from public narratives. But this important moral flaw is incidental to the fictional narrative: it is part of the background, but it is not necessary to understand the work.

If we were to focus only on the fictional perspective, on intrinsic moral flaws, to assess works of fiction we would say that while *Gone with the Wind* is morally defective, *The Wire* is not. *The Wire*'s fictional perspective does not endorse the oppression of black women, *Gone with the Wind*'s does. The ethical critic would thus claim that *The Wire* is not suitable to be ethically criticised because the narrative does not have intrinsic moral flaws that could impact its aesthetic value.

The contextual account that I have defended throughout the thesis, however, helps us in understanding the moral significance of a narrative like *The Wire,* even in the absence of clear intrinsic moral flaws. The moral failings of a narrative that, while explicitly condemning racial oppression, does not address the stories of black women become evident when we examine the work's context. In 2015, the African American Policy Forum and the Center for Intersectionality and Social Policy Studies at Columbia Law School released the brief "Say Her Name: Resisting Police Brutality Against Black Women". The brief addresses "the urgent need for a gender-inclusive movement to end state violence":

> The resurgent racial justice movement in the United States has developed a clear frame to understand the police killings of Black men and boys, theorizing the ways in which they are systematically criminalized and feared across disparate class backgrounds and irrespective of circumstance. Yet Black women who are profiled, beaten, sexually assaulted, and killed by law

enforcement officials are conspicuously absent from this frame even when their experiences are identical. When their experiences with police violence are distinct – uniquely informed by race, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation – Black women remain invisible.

The erasure of black American women from public narratives of racial oppression makes *The Wire*'s lack of gender diversity morally significant. And this should not be seen as a 'vulgar' ethical criticism: the work's aim is to evidence patterns of oppression and inequality; and not only does it ignore an important part of these patterns, but it further contributes to the pattern of oppression of black American women that stems from their invisibility. The fact that the narrative ignores the issues faced by black women should impact how we engage with the work and how we assess its ethical value given the socio-historical conditions. And if the ethical critic wants to argue that a work's ethical value impacts its aesthetic value, we would have to say that *The Wire*'s lack of diversity renders it aesthetically defective as well.

But it is important to emphasize that the work's lack of gender diversity only becomes morally significant in a specific context, namely, a context where the erasure of minority women from public narratives is the norm. Compare the ethical significance of *The Wire*'s lack of gender diversity with Netflix's *Orange is the New Black.* The show follows the life of several women in a minimum-security prison, and it explores the reasons behind their imprisonment. *Orange is the New Black* focuses on women exclusively; the issues men face in America's prison system are not addressed by the show. And yet the show's lack of gender diversity is not morally significant. *Orange is the New Black* does not contribute to the erasure of men from public narratives simply because men are not absent from public narratives. While *The Wire*'s nearly all-men line-up should impact our assessment of the work, *Orange is the New Black*'s nearly all-female line-up should not. Again, the morally relevant features are not found in the works' fictional perspectives, but in the extra-fictional perspectives that permeate the works, and in the socio-historical context in which the works are produced and consumed. The works' extra-fictional perspectives can only be assessed in certain contexts because only in certain contexts are some elements of the fictional perspectives morally significant.

The distinction between fictional and extra-fictional perspectives found at the core of the distinction between fictional and actual immorality also has important consequences for the assessment of appreciators' imaginative and emotional engagement with counter-moral fictions. As said before, fictional perspectives cannot be ethically assessed because they lack

the relevant extra-fictional pretensions. Thus, these fictional perspectives can only be regarded as content-immoral. The thesis argued that, in the same way, appreciators' responses cannot be ethically assessed *qua responses to fiction*. And this is so because responses to fictional perspectives lack fittingness commitments: if the fictional perspective is not committed to the extra-fictional application of the deviant views, it seems that the responses to fictional perspectives are not committed to the extra-fictional application either. Extra-fictional perspectives, on the other hand, include fittingness commitments; and so responses to extra-fictional perspectives can be said to include a commitment to the extra-fictional application of the deviant views, and can thus be ethically assessed. To determine whether responses to counter-moral fictions can be ethically assessed we thus have to examine whether they consist in responses to fictional or extra-fictional perspectives.

As we have seen, instances of fictional immorality do not include a deviant extra-fictional perspective with the corresponding fittingness commitments. The lack of a commitment with the extra-fictional application of the deviant perspective removes ethical considerations from our engagement with the work. This means that assessing responses to fictional immorality does not include assessing them under criteria of ethical appropriateness. Responses to fictional immorality cannot, therefore, be legitimately ethically assessed.

Instances of actual immorality, on the other hand, include an extra-fictional perspective that is committed to the extra-fictional application of the deviant moral claims. But, again, it is very important to emphasise that the fittingness commitments are not found in the fictional perspective, but in the extra-fictional perspective that accompanies the work in certain contexts. When appreciators respond to moral deviance in instances of actual immorality they are partly responding to the fittingness commitments found in the extra-fictional perspective. The responses can be assessed not qua responses to a fictional perspective, but qua responses to the extra-fictional perspective. That is, appreciators' responses to actual immorality in fiction are not really assessed qua responses to fiction, but qua responses to actual immoral views held by real people. Further, taking into account the deviant extra-fictional perspective found in instances of actual immorality, we could say that the responses to the extra-fictional perspective also become committed to an extra-fictional application. And this necessarily means that assessing the responses under criteria of ethical appropriateness is necessary.

Responses to deviant extra-fictional perspectives are legitimate candidates to be ethically assessed. But it is very important to emphasise that in assessing these responses qua responses

to actual views, we are assessing appreciators' actual moral attitudes, which are committed to extra-fictional application. And if this is so we have to say that we are not evaluating appreciators' engagement with fiction, but we are evaluating their actual moral commitments. If response moralism is understood as the assessment of responses to fiction it cannot be defended. At best, response moralism can only argue for the obvious: that appreciators' moral character can be ethically assessed.

Given this picture, what should we make of the impact of counter-moral fictions in appreciators' moral lives? After all, this is what drove Plato's concerns over the role of poetry in the city. We can say that we should not be worried about instances of fictional immorality, which only include fictional perspectives; but that we should look at instances of actual immorality more critically because they include extra-fictional pretensions. And if what is problematic about these instances is the extra-fictional application, we should be concerned about appreciators exporting immoral attitudes. So while it might be true that during the imaginative engagement with fiction these deviant attitudes are only content-immoral, we should focus on whether appreciators can export deviant attitudes from their imaginative engagement. This is where I think the thesis opens the door to further research. While I do not think it is possible to speak of the intrinsic moral value of counter-moral fictions, I do think it is important to examine a consequence-based argument on the value of counter-moral fictions in our moral lives.

In the thesis I have not addressed the possibility of appreciators exporting beliefs from their engagement with counter-moral fictions. And I have not done so because I think exporting moral beliefs when engaging with deviant perspectives in fiction is not a real problem. I think when appreciators export beliefs from fiction it is likely because they regard the author as an authority in the subject. When it comes to factual matters, appreciators acknowledge that they are not competent in all the practices that might be explored in works of fiction. So they might believe that an author writing on a specific practice did plenty of research, and they trust her to be well informed. For example, we are not all competent in chemistry, so when watching *Breaking Bad* we might trust the writers of the show to have done research on how methamphetamines are produced, and we might export the according beliefs as a result. Or, because we are not all competent on North American history, we might trust Margaret Mitchell to have done some research on the American Civil War when writing *Gone with the Wind*, and we might give ourselves license to export the corresponding beliefs.

But while we are not responsible for being knowledgeable about chemistry or North American history, we are responsible for being morally competent insofar as we are moral agents. Moreover, the identities of the people whom we come to regard as moral authorities already says something about our moral competence. The imaginative engagement with counter-moral fictions could go either one of two ways: (1) appreciators could acknowledge the deviant character of the perspective, or (2) they could fail to recognise that the perspective explored in the work of fiction is morally inaccurate. If appreciators acknowledge the deviant character of the moral perspective explored by the work of fiction, they will not regard the narrative as a reliable moral source, and thus they will not export beliefs.

But if appreciators fail, on the other hand, to recognise the deviant character of the perspective, and they regard the counter-moral fiction as a reliable moral authority, we have to wonder whether what is really happening in these cases is that appreciators *export* beliefs. The fact that appreciators in this case regard the deviant work of fiction as a reliable source, and the fact that they fail to recognise the deviant nature of the perspective, already says something about their moral beliefs. That is, it seems that in these cases appreciators are not so much *exporting* beliefs as reinforcing previously held deviant attitudes. And this could be either because there is something wrong with individual appreciators' moral attitudes, or because the context they inhabit obscures the deviant nature of the perspective and normalizes immoral attitudes. If this is right, it is important to question how fiction might reinforce previously held immoral attitudes. But in any case, it does not seem that what is happening in these cases is that appreciators export deviant moral beliefs from their imaginative engagement. I believe an important future project should focus on examining how the engagement with fiction might contribute to moral knowledge if it is not simply a matter of exporting beliefs.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, even when I have argued that counter-moral fictions cannot be said to possess intrinsic moral value, it is important to acknowledge the role fiction might play in consolidating patterns of oppression and injustice. While it might be true that appreciators do not export deviant moral beliefs, works of fiction might be responsible of reinforcing immoral attitudes that are prevalent in certain social contexts. For example, Patricia Hill Collins has emphasised the role of what she calls 'controlling images' in systems of oppression. Cultural products disseminate and consolidate controlling images. According to Hill Collins, controlling images "are designed to make racism, sexism, and poverty appear to be natural, normal, and an inevitable part of everyday life" (Hill Collins, 2002, 69). Moreover, controlling images do not simply aim at normalising oppressive structures, but they are aimed

at providing "effective ideological justifications for racial oppression, the politics of gender subordination, and the economic exploitation inherent in capitalist economies" (Hill Collins, 2002, 84). More work needs to be done in how art, and fiction in particular, might contribute to systems of oppression. The distinction employed in this thesis between actual and fictional immorality will be important here.

The account I have put forward aims at addressing the moral complexity of works of fiction without falling in the trap of moralism, while acknowledging the cultural impact and social responsibility of any work of art. In his defence of immoralism, Daniel Jacobson dismissively refers to the "vulgar ethical criticism often practiced by socially committed critics" (Jacobson, 1997, 160). On the contrary, this thesis aimed at showing that both moralism and autonomism risk oversimplifying how audiences interact with works of fiction, and how fictional narratives impact cultural practices. And so, while it is not necessary to ban anyone from our city, it is important that we reflect critically on our artistic practices and our engagement with works of fiction.

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