Real objects in fictional situations: an argument for i-desires as indispensable states

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ABSTRACT
In order to account for our engagements with fiction, several philosophers have recently introduced a class of novel mental states which they have designated as 'i-desires' or 'desire-like imaginings'. Others argue against this claim by denying the existence of i-desire. In this article, I argue that genuine desires fail to make sense of our attitudes towards real objects in fictional situations, and that i-desire is psychologically indispensable in explaining our attitudes in such cases.

Introduction

Human imagination takes many forms. Some of our imaginings may be visual, such as when we imagine red apples, golden hills or a spaceship in outer space. Some of our imaginings may be auditory, such as when we imagine Beethoven's *5th Symphony* or The Beatles' *Yesterday*. And some of our imaginings may also be attitudinal, such as when we imagine that there is a red apple on a table or that we are hearing Beethoven's *5th Symphony*.

Attitudinal imagining, also termed 'propositional imagining', is often considered to be similar to beliefs in many ways. An important feature of belief is its inferential role: believing something leads to believing other things. If I believe that the protagonist of a novel is in London one day and also believe that she or he is in Chicago the next day, I will be inclined to believe that she or he flew there. Our imaginings can mirror the inferential role of beliefs: If I imagine that the protagonist is in London one day and in Chicago the next, I will be inclined to imagine that she ot he flew from London to Chicago, unless the work is a fantasy novel or there is some strong indication that she or he got there in other manners (Currie & Ravenscroft 2002, p.12-15). Moreover, attitudinal imagining also shares a 'mind-to-world' direction of fit with belief, although in the case of imagination, the 'world' is not our actual world but a fictional world (Walton 1990, p.41). In addition, imagining something can also generate emotions, just like the emotional consequences of believing something (Nichols & Stich 2003). So attitudinal imagining can take a belief-like form.

If human imagining can take a belief-like form, why should there not be an imaginative analogue of desire? Recently, several philosophers have argued that imaginings also can take a desire-like form. Gregory Currie and Ian Ravenscroft (2002) introduce the term 'desire-like imagining' for the imaginative analogue of desire, while Tyler Doggett and Andy Egan (2007) introduce the word 'i-desire' to refer to the mental state itself[1]. According to them, desire-like imaginings (hereafter, i-desire) can play the role of desires in our pretend actions and our emotional engagements with fiction. When a child pretends to be a

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[1] It seems that the term "i-desire" might be a special desire, but the suggestion is false. I-desire is not a kind of desire, but rather a kind of imagination.

dog and says "Woof woof", he is not only imagining a dog, but he also imaginatively desires to bark. Alternatively, considering our engagements with fiction, it can be said that when we see a monster on the screen, we have, on one hand, a belief-like imagination that the monster is dangerous, while on the other, we have an i-desire to avoid the monster.

The existence of i-desire is disputed. Proponents argue that such a state is indispensable in accounting for pretend actions and emotional engagements with fictions (Currie 2002, Currie & Ravenscroft 2002, Velleman 2000 and Doggett & Egan 2007). However, opponents claim that the concept of i-desire is problematic and that, without it, we can still offer a plausible explanation about pretend actions and emotional engagements with fictions (Kind 2011, Nichols & Stich 2003, Funkhouser & Spaulding 2009). In this paper, I argue that our attitudes about *real objects in fictional situations* indirectly imply the existence of i-desire. In the first section, I will examine traditional arguments in favor of the existence of i-desire and reveal its shortcomings. In the second section, I will subsequently propose another argument: in explaining our attitudes towards real objects in work of fiction, genuine desires may result in inconsistency. However, i-desire can avoid this inconsistency and therefore becomes indispensable in accounting for our emotional engagements with fiction. In Section 3, I will discuss this argument in more detail and attempt to reply to possible objections.

1. I-desire and our emotional engagements with fictions

While we are engaged in fiction, we often have strong emotional responses. When Regan is possessed by the demon Pazuzu in *The Exorcist*, we tremble and feel fear; when Anna Karenina commits suicide by throwing herself

under the carriage of a passing train, we feel sympathy and begin to pity her; when we watch Le Tenia raping Alex in *Irréversible,* we are disgusted. How can such emotional responses be explained? Why do we have emotional responses to events or objects that are fictional?

Normally, our emotional responses are generated by beliefs and desires. But while being engaged in fictions, people seldom believe that fictional situations or characters exist. In order to account for our emotion towards fiction, several philosophers such as Shaun Nichols (2004) et Kendall Walton (1990), claim that imaginations, as cognitive states, play the role of beliefs. For example, in reading *Anna Karenina,* people *imagine* that Anna commits suicide rather than *believe* it. But it is not sufficient to introduce cognitive states, for certain conative states, such as desires, are also needed[2]. However, it appears that genuine desires cannot account for our emotional responses to fictions. Two reasons support this claim: (1) desires are governed by normative constraints: one cannot desire something that is unattainable. David Velleman (2000, p.260) presents a similar notion: "I usually cannot desire things that are patently unattainable, any more than I can believe things that are patently false. If I think that it cannot come about at all, then the most I can do with respect to it is wish". As we never believe that fictional situations or characters are real, we do not have relevant desires about fictional objects. (2) Desires are intrinsically motivational: to desire p is to be disposed to act in ways

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[2] Walton (1978,1990) denies that we have real emotions in being engaged in fiction. He claims that our emotions towards fictions are quasi-emotions, because the belief states which generate emotions are absent. But Walton has not denied that quasi-emotions are generated by cognitive and conative states. Hence, it is plausible to claim that our affective responses to fictions are generated by the two states;

that will bring about *p*. However, in engaging with fictions, people are not always disposed to act (Currie 2002, p.211). For example, in watching *The Exorcist*, the desire to avoid danger does not motivate us to run away. Hence, several philosophers, such as Currie (2002), Velleman (2000), and Doggett & Egan (2007) propose that a novel mental state to which they refer as *i-desire* – an imaginative analogue of desire – is needed in order to offer an account of emotional responses to fiction.

Opponents of i-desire claim that both of the reasons described above are implausible. Reason (1) implies that we cannot desire things that are unattainable. However, in daily life, we often have a variety of desires towards things that are not actual. One often has desires about the past, the future, counterfactual events, and so forth. Supposing that my grandfather is no longer living, I may nevertheless desire that my children meet their great-grandfather. As there is a range of desires that are about non-actual events or objects, our desires about fictional objects do not violate the normative constraints of desires (see Kind, 2011). Reason (2) claims that desires are intrinsically motivational. However, we can find many cases in which desires are inert. Alfred Mele (1995, p.394) suggests that a person driving to the airport to pick up friends may desire that the plane took off on time. In this case, the person's desire is inert because her desire is about past events and she cannot change the past. Thus, our desires about unattainable objects are not peculiar.

Recently, Currie (2010), and Doggett & Egan (2012) have argued that i-desire is indispensable in a new way. According to them, while we engage with fiction, we often want the fiction to go a certain way, in virtue of its aesthetic values (for example, we wish for *Anna Karenina* to unfold in such a way that Anna commits suicide). In other words, we want a tragedy to end tragically in order to read an amazing story. Thus, the following proposition can be made:

1) We desire a fiction to be such that E occurs in it.

(E refers to the tragic events that occur in fiction).

Additionally, in being engaged in fiction, we feel sympathy, pity, anxiety, and so forth, which implies that we wish that tragic events should not occur in the fiction. In the case of *Anna Karenina*, we desire that Anna should not lose her life and therefore feel sad. Consequently, another proposition can be made:

2) We desire that E does not occur.

However, 1) and 2) are in conflict: we want the fiction to be such that E occurs and want it to be such that E does not occur, but it is impossible to have both. Hence, we are either irrational, or we must be disappointed (because if we have two conflicting desires about fiction, no matter which is satisfied, we are sure to be disappointed) (See Doggett & Egan (2012, p. 282). Thus, it is necessary to introduce an i-desire: we desire the fiction to be such that E occurs, but have an *i-desire* for it to be such that E does not occur.

Such an argument depends upon our understanding about the nature of fiction. Jonathan Gilmore (2013) argues that the nature of tragedy requires our having two conflicting desires, but that the two desires do not make us irrational. He proposes that conflicting desires depend on a rational second-order desire. There are three kinds of desires in our engagements with fiction: 1) a desire that E does not occur, 2) a desire that the fiction that includes E goes on, and 3) a desire to have both 1) and 2). A desire to have 1) and 2) is necessary for our engagements with fiction, because in virtue of the satisfaction of 2) and the frustration of 1), we can have an appropriately emotional response to tragedy. Thus, Gilmore claims that, *in an instrumental sense*, we have two rationality-conflicting desires.

Though an argument from our understanding about the

nature of fiction may be implausible, it brings to light the existence of i-desire. In the following section, I will offer a novel argument for conflicting desires.

2. Conflicting desires about real objects in fictions

The argument proposed by Currie, and Doggett and Egan may be implausible, but it opens the possibility of confirming the existence of i-desires by introducing inconsistent states. In what follows, I argue that our attitudes towards *real objects in fictional situations* result in the same conflict.

Kendall Walton (1990) argues that when we are moved by fictions, what we experience are only 'quasi-emotions' or 'imagined emotions'. 'Quasi-emotions' differ from genuine emotions in that the former are generated by our imaginings rather than existence beliefs. Stacie Friend (2000, 2003) defends Walton's quasi-emotion theory and argues that while we consider fictions about real persons and events, genuine emotions cannot resolve the conflict between our affective response to fictions, and our emotions towards real persons and events. Thus, quasi-emotions are indispensable in explaining our affective responses to fictions[3]. By analogy with Friend's argument, I argue that a similar conflict occurs between our desires about fictions and our attitudes towards real objects that are included in fiction. So i-desires are also indispensable in accounting for our attitudes about real objects in fiction.

Works of fiction include not only non-actual objects and events, but also real persons, objects and events. Napoleon in *War and Peace*, the city of London in *Holmes*,

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[3] Friend (2003) wants to justify Walton's quasi-emotion theory by introducing conflicting emotions. In this paper, I don't consider if Walton's quasi-emotion is plausible or not.

and World War I as the background to the novel *A Farewell to Arms* are all real and cannot be considered to be fictional situations or objects[4]. These real objects or events which are included in fiction present a great challenge to our theories about fictions.

Let us imagine that I am hypocritical, my relationships with others are very poor, and that many people hate me for no reason. In order to attack me and make people realize that I am a hypocritical person, someone invents a story about me. The story goes as follows:

You might think that he is a student but you are wrong: he is a spy serving aliens! The man comes to France to steal information about Earth. He has taken our DNA samples and conveyed them to *Sirius*.

He works very hard, helps others to be happy and participates in cultural activities. But none of these acts are honest: he does all of these things to conceal his identity.

Don't believe his smile! Get away from him!

This is an ironic story. Someone invents it to suggest that I am pretentious and hypocritical, and that I pretend to be a serious student for fraudulent reasons. But suppose that this ironic story is published in a literary magazine and that my friend Paul reads it. After understanding the story, Paul may hope that my plan fails entirely, that I am imprisoned by the FBI, that my plot becomes known to everyone or even that a superhero kills me. In short, Paul would want me to suffer all possible harmful scenarios. Thus, it appears that when Paul is engaged in my fiction, he has the following attitude:

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[4] Someone might think that real objects in fiction are not actual. In other words, all objects or events in fiction are fictional. I will reply to this objection in the third section.

Paul desires that lots of bad things, such as E, happen to me.

However, Paul knows that the story is only a fiction. As my best friend, he always encourages me, and tells me that I am the best and will succeed in the future. It appears that, in daily life, Paul has positive desires for my well-being and hopes that I prosper. It can therefore be claimed that Paul has the following attitude:

Paul does not desire that lots of bad things, such as E, happen to me.

Supposing that 'E' refers to 'being imprisoned by the police,' it follows that Paul has two conflicting desires: he wishes that I am imprisoned, but also do not wants that I am prisoned. How is it possible for someone to hold an attitude but simultaneously not hold the attitude ? A problem of inconsistent attitudes thus threatens our folk psychology.

To be clear, my argument is not that having two conflicting desires makes one irrational, but rather that one cannot make sense of cases in which conflicting desires about fiction coexist. How is it possible that one can desire that I be imprisoned, but simultaneously desire that I not be imprisoned? In addition, the two conflicting desires imply that Paul must always be disappointed, regardless of which desire is satisfied (the argument si similar to Doggett & Egan (2012, p. 282)). Normally, the frustration of desires makes people feel disappointed. If I desire to have dinner but must catch the train, I am disappointed because my desire cannot be satisfied. If Paul knows that I am having a good day, he is disappointed because his desire that bad things happen to me cannot be satisfied, while if I am jailed, Paul is equally disappointed because he also has the desire that harmful things do not happen to me.

Introducing i-desire can help to avoid this difficulty. It

can be claimed that Paul has two kinds of attitude: desire and i-desire. In reading the story, Paul has an *i-desire* that bad things happen to me because his emotional attitudes are directed at fictional situations. Beyond the fiction, in daily life, Paul desires that bad things do not happen to me. By not introducing conflicting states, one can better explain the difference between our attitudes towards fiction and those in daily life.

Often authors put some real individuals in novels or films in order to influence or even determine our judgments or our attitudes about these individuals. It is quite possible for readers or spectators to form some judgments which are contrary to their attitudes towards the real individuals. If we attribute genuine desires, the readers or spectators will have two conflicting attitudes towards the same person. For example, in the French comics *The Adventures of Asterix*, Julius Caesar is described as a pompous, arrogant and stupid person. Readers have some negative desires about him when they read the comics, but at the same time, they have also some positive attitudes about Julius Caesar because of historical documents. I-desire can avoid the problem of inconsistent attitudes..

In conclusion, works of fiction often include certain real persons, objects and events. While we are engaged in fiction, we naturally have affective attitudes towards it. In explaining our conative attitudes, it is implausible to appeal to genuine desires because they are inconsistent with our desires in real life and we cannot make sense of having inconsistent desires. Thus, i-desire is needed to account for our conative attitudes. I indirectly argue that i-desires are indispensable for understanding our engagements with fiction.

3. Objections and responses

3.1 Conflicting desires are not impossible, or there are no conflicting desires

One proposal against my thesis is that conflicting desires are entirely possible. Self-sabotage is often the result of conflicting desires, where an individual usually has some incompatible desires. One can have a desire for a short-term goal that is contrary to a long term. For example, one person can desire to smoke while desiring to remain healthy. In addition, our desires can also be directed to one object by virtue of its different aspects, for example, somebody can desire to drink beer by virtue of its taste, but not desire to drink it by virtue of its consequences to his health. In such cases, our desires are conflicting but entirely possible because they are generated by different reasons, from which it follows that conflicting desires are not peculiar. One can claim that Paul has a desire that bad things happen to me because I am an alien, while he has an inconsistent desire that bad things do not happen to me by virtue of our friendship.

Nevertheless, conflicting desires in daily life cannot be applied to cases of fiction. When we have conflicting desires in daily life, we often feel lost, disappointed or hesitant, or exhibit slow decision-making processes. One can want and not want to drink beer. In such a case, one always hesitates to make a decision, or even does not know how to choose. With respect to our desires about fiction, there is no such decision-making process, as in the example of my friend Paul, who feels neither hesitant nor lost. Without a slow decision-making process, Paul directly wants that bad things happen to me in reading the story, or wants that I have a good day in daily life. Another reason in favor of my thesis is that conflicting desires cannot be satisfied simultaneously. If someone drinks beer, his desire to drink it was satisfied, while if someone did not drink

beer, his desire about the health of his body may be satisfied, but both of these desires cannot be satisfied simultaneously. However, it seems that both our desires about real objects and our desires about fictions can be satisfied simultaneously. Let us imagine that at the end of my story, I am jailed. In this case, Paul's desire that bad things happen to me is satisfied. But suppose that I won the lottery in real life and tell Paul about it at the same moment. Paul's desire that I have a good day is then also satisfied, which entails that both of Paul's conative states are satisfied simultaneously: a feature that desires in daily life cannot have. I therefore conclude that conflicting desires in daily life cannot be applied to cases of fiction.

Others may argue that Paul's desire about real persons is suspended when he reads my story and that there is no conflict between different desires because they do not occur simultaneously. I am inclined to think that this explanation does not capture the nature of Paul's mental states. One can imagine a different scenario, as when Paul is asked if he hates me and replies, "No! Yuchen is my best friend, I know that is a story". It appears that Paul's attitude towards me has not changed.

Gilmore claims that the nature of tragedy requires a second-order desire that involves such conflicting first-order desires. According to him, we have three desires in our engagements with fiction: i) a desire that E does not occur, ii) a desire that the fiction that includes E goes on; iii) a desire to have both i) and ii). i) and ii) depend on iii) and our high-order desires make conflicting desires possible. Gilmore's theory cannot be applied to my example. It is highly suspicious that we want to have inconsistent attitudes towards the same objects. In my example, when Paul reads my story, he hates me; but in real life, Paul likes me. It is anti-intuitive to claim that Paul both hates and likes me. In being engaged in fiction, high-order desires play a role in developing an appropriately emotional response to tragedy. Yet in my example, a high-order desire

seems to be useless and we do not need such a desire in order to maintain certain conflicting mental states.

3.2 The change-of-content solution

A possible reply to the above is that a person who is engaged in fiction may have a desire about fiction rather than about fictional characters. Paul's desire is therefore incorrectly described in the statement that 1) Paul desires that lots of bad things happen to me, and should better be described as 1') Paul desires that *in the fiction* lots of bad things happen to me. The latter concerns the fiction, while the former concerns a real person, which entails that there is no conflict in Paul's mental states.

Certain philosophers argue that the above proposal confuses our attitudes towards fictional characters with attitudes towards fictions (Currie & Ravenscroft 2002, pp.21-22; Doggett & Egan 2007, pp.13-14). For example, in reading *Anna Karenina*, we have no desire that Anna is safe in the fiction. In order to read an amazing story, it is better to follow Leo Tolstoy's intentions and desire that *in the fiction, Anna kills herself*. Deggett and Egan offer a clearer expression of this idea: "we have enough confidence in the writers of [a work of fiction] to trust that whatever they decide about whether [the protagonist] is safe or not is what would be best for the fiction" (Doggett & Egan 2007, p.13). In other words, in order to read an amazing story, Paul does not hope that the story ends quickly and might hope that in the fiction no one learns about my identity and I continue to act malevolently. Therefore, Paul may be inclined to desire *my fiction not to be such that* many harmful things occur to me. Thus, 1') is not the content of Paul's desires.

This suggestion cannot account for the inferential patterns of desire-like states : when I desire something, I can desire the means to it. For example, see the following inference:

a) I desire that Anna does not commit suicide;

b) I believe that if Vronsky could come back home, Anna would not die;

c) So, I desire that Vronsky comes back home.

Although, in the strict sense, this is not a logical inference, it exhibits that to desire one thing can lead to desiring other things. According to the above proposal, sentences a) b) and c) should be accompanied by an operator like "in the fiction." Thus, we have the following inference:

a') I desire that Anna does not commit suicide in the fiction;

b') I believe that if Vronsky can come back home, Anna would not die in the fiction;

c') So, I desire that Vronsky comes back home in the fiction.

But conclusion c') is false. I know *Anna Karenina* does not and cannot include a plot where Vronsky comes back home. Suppose that it is the second time that I have read *Anna Karenina*, and I know the end of the story. In this case, I do not desire that the book includes the plot description that Leo Tolstoy had never written. In addition, as a reader of tragedies, I know that if *Anne Karenina* includes a plot where Vronsky comes back home, the book will lose its literary values. Thus, I do not desire that Vronsky comes back home *in the fiction*. Proposition c') cannot be accompanied by the operator "in the fiction." But if the premises a') and b') are bound by the operator "in the fiction", but conclusion c) is not bound by the same operator, the inferential pattern will be logically invalid. How is it possible to infer a proposition which is not accompanied by an operator from other propositions which are bound by the same operator? The best way to avoid the problem is to claim that desires about fictional characters cannot be reduced into desires about fictional narratives.

Others can suggest that in my story, bad things are only

i-things because Paul knows that nothing will really happen to me. Paul's desire is that *fictional* things happen to me. But, the only way to understand fictional things is to describe them as *things in fiction*. In other words, the content of Paul's desire is that *bad things happen to me in the fiction*. I have argued that desires about objects cannot be reduced into desires about fictions, so the suggestion is implausible. In addition, I am inclined to claim that a real individual does not really have fictional properties, but for understanding a fiction, we must attribute them to the real individual. In other words, these properties are falsely attributed for understanding fiction.

Finally, someone may propose that Paul has a desire about *me the fictional character* and not about *me the real person*. Paul's desires are directed at different objects. In reading my story, Paul has no desire that I am in trouble, but rather that *a fictional person is in trouble*.[5] Paul has the following attitude:

1") Paul desires that lots of badthings, such as E, happen to *me the fictional character*.

Because one desire is directed at *me, the fictional character*, while another is directed at *me, the real person*, Paul has no conflicting state and no novel state is needed to resolve a conflict. This constitutes a challenge to my argument.

The *change-of-content* proposal may be supported by certain theories about fictional names in philosophy of

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[5] Perhaps the only way to understand the expression "*me the fictional character*" is as "me in the fiction" or "me according to the fiction." Paul thus desires that *in the fiction* or *according to the fiction,* harmful things happen to me. As discussed above, the relevant desire confuses the distinction between our attitudes towards fictions and our attitudes towards fictional characters. However, opponents can claim that "me the fictional character" refers to inexistent objects or possible objects by appealing to the metaphysics of fictional objects. I object to this argument later in this paper.

language and metaphysics. Several philosophers claim that fictional names refer to real objects *in other possible worlds* or to *inexistent objects* in our world.[6] Thus, if one states that Holmes lives in London, the name 'Holmes' refers to either the real person 'Holmes' *in another possible world*, or to *an inexistent person* named 'Holmes' in the actual world. In short, fictional names cannot refer to both existent and actual objects, and must refer to particular objects that are either inexistent or possible. Thus, as in metaphysics and philosophy of language, one may be inclined to claim that, in being engaged in fiction, our psychological attitudes are also directed at peculiar objects. While we engage with a real person in the fiction, our desires are not directed at the real person in the actual world.

This proposal implies that though real objects can appear in fictions, we consider them to be fictional objects, from which it follows that there is no real object in fiction and that all things in fiction must be fictional.[7] Thus, while reading the novel *A Farewell to Arms*, we do not desire that

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[6] In metaphysics, one way to account for fictional objects is through the *possibilism* of fictional entities, which holds that fictional entities do not exist in the *actual* world but only in some other possible worlds. Another way is Meinongianism, which claims that there are fictional objects in the actual world, but that they are inexistent. These two theories imply that fictional objects cannot be both existent and actual. For possibilism, see Priest (2005); for Meinongisnism, see Parsons (1980). In addition, creationism is an another view that treats fictional objects, according to which fictional objects are existent and actual artifacts. For creationism, see Thomasson (1999).

[7] Friend (2003) demonstrates why it is false to claim that emotions about real objects in fictional situations are directed at fictional characters. However, as our emotions are different from our desires, her argument cannot be directly applied to a claim about i-desires. I hence offer an independent argument for the existence of i-desires.

World War I ends, but rather that a fictional war ends. Likewise, while reading *Schindler's List*, we have no desire that the Nazi regime collapses, but rather that the fictional Nazi regime collapses. It seems that the proposal misinterprets our understanding of fiction. Fictional situations often influence our judgments about real objects: *Schindler's List* makes us hate the war and the Nazis; due to *Anna Karenina*, we are eager to attain true love; thanks to Plato's dialogues, we understand what justice is. It is ridiculous to claim that we hate the fictional war and fictional Nazis, wish to attain fictional love or understand fictional justice. Additionally, in my example, someone invents a story to make others hate me and realize that I am hypocritical. If one claims that the inventor of the story aims to make others hate a fictional character and show that *I the fictional character* is hypocritical, one misinterprets this ironic story.

Two phenomena more strongly support my proposal that our attitudes towards a real person in fiction are directed at the same real person.

a) From fiction to reality. People often insert a real person into a fiction in order to influence or even determine our judgments of or attitudes towards the real person. It is highly possible that people who do not know me generate certain negative attitudes towards me after reading the ironic story described above. If the person in fiction is not *me the real person*, why can the description about the person in fiction determine people's attitudes towards *me the real person?* It seems that if one insists that the person in fiction is not *me the real person,* one cannot explain why their attitudes about fiction can be directly applied to *me the real person.* Similar examples abound in everyday life. In the comic series *Asterix*, Gaius Julius Caesar is often depicted as a pompous, arrogant and stupid person. Readers who do not know much about Roman

history might think that the real Caesar always behaved like this and generate negative attitudes towards Caesar[8]. If the Caesar in the comics is not the real Caesar, how can they form judgments about Caesar on the basis of their judgments about a different person? Les personnes réelles sont souvent insérées dans la fiction pour influencer ou déterminer nos jugements ou nos attitudes envers eux. *La liste de Schindler* a pour but de montrer que l'Allemagne nazie est brutal et inhumain. Si l'on pense que le spectateur doit croire que l'Allemagne fictionnel est brutal et inhumain, on interprète incorrectement le film.

b) From reality to fiction. When I do something in real life, those actions can directly be added to my story without additional assumptions or commitments. Suppose someone sees that I always drive alone to the countryside at night. It is possible for that person to claim that, in the story, I travel there to exchange information about Earth. Or suppose that I wrote an excellent paper. Someone might claim that, in the story, I did so to understand people's intellectual levels. If the fictional character is not *me the real person*, why can the actions that define me be attributed to a different person? It is easy to discover similar examples in daily life. As a historical person, Julius Caesar appeared in the 1963

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[8] There is a discrepancy between our understanding about a real person and our understanding about the same person which is inserted into fiction. For example, normally, we think that Caesar is intelligent, but he can be stupid in fiction. However, the discrepany does not deny that Caesar in the fiction is not Caesar. Comparison: I am a radical leftist and hate Margaret Thatcher. I say: Margaret Thatcher is a "great" politician (irony). You don't know that I hate her. So you might think that I believe that Thatcher is great. That is a discrepancy between the meaning as conceived by the speaker and the meaning as understood by the hearer. But it's still Thatcher that we talked about.

American film *Cleopatra*. Although the film does not show that Caesar was born into a patrician family and that his father was a Roman senator, or that on his journey across the Aegean Sea he was kidnapped by pirates, we still believe that this is true of Caesar in the film. Suppose the film tells that Caesar was the son of former slaves and that he was a pirate. Unless there is a strong indication in the film that the director concealed Caesar's identity, we will display a reluctance to accept these statements. This implies that in being engaged in a fiction about real people, we often recognize that we are expected to imagine a real person rather than that person's fictional counterpart.

One might propose that our judgments about real individuals are rather generated by our attitudes towards fictional individuals. In other words, we form certain judgments about real individuals' fictional counterparts and then apply those judgments to the real individuals. Paul hopes that harmful things happen to me because he hates *me the fictional character*, *or* we think that Caesar is stupid and pompous because we think the fictional Caesar is stupid and pompous. But the proposal is incomplete. It must yet account for why we develop judgments about a real person from our judgments about a fictional person. The principle of generation from fiction to reality cannot be applied to many cases. For example, in the comic series *Asterix*, Caesar has conquered nearly all of Gaul for the Roman Republic, except for a village in Brittany. In reading the comics, we should accept the proposition, but we resist *believing* that the village in Brittany has held out because we know that all of Gaul was actually conquered in the year 50 BC. If one proposes that our judgments of real individuals are generated by our attitudes towards fictional individuals, one must explain why the principle of generation is sometimes plausible and sometimes implausible. However, if we claim that our attitudes towards a real person in fiction are directed at the actual real person, we do not need to explain the principle of generation from fiction to reality. Hence,

my proposal takes a more parsimonious position than others.

4. Conclusion

Desires play an important role in our lives. On one hand, they motivate us to perform relevant actions, while on the other they constitute our emotions. Yet desires are not the only conative attitudes and i-desires, as the imaginative analogue of desire is indispensable in understanding our engagements with fictions. Though opponents deny the existence of i-desires, the conflict regarding our attitudes towards real persons in fiction indirectly implies the existence of i-desires: If we only account for genuine desires, a conflict arises between the desires we develop in response to fictions and our desires towards real objects in the actual world. The only way to avoid this conflict is to introduce i-desires.

Opponents may question whether it is possible to have genuine desires about fictional characters that do not motivate the conflict. In fact, this question is so complicated that no clear response must be formulated before fully understanding the nature of i-desires and desires. Thus, I attempt to make some suggestions. Suppose that I have a genuine desire that Holmes finds the clues necessary to resolve a difficult case. This desire can be described as a desire about *a fictional narrative*. In other words, my desire is that the *fictional narrative includes the scenario* in which Holmes resolves a case. It is therefore directed at a fictional narrative rather than a fictional character. However, I have argued that an i-desire is not directed at fiction but at fictional characters. Thus, having genuine desires about fiction cannot fully explain our attitudes towards fictional characters. Suppose then that I desire to actually meet Holmes. If my desire is genuine, I cannot distinguish my imagination from reality. A normal

and rational person cannot want to truly see a fictional and inexistent person. In many situations such as those of being immersed in fiction or schizophrenia, desires play a similar role. Thus, this type of desire might be the product of a certain form of error.

Although our attitudes about fiction are complicated, admitting the existence of i-desire can help in developing a profound understanding of the affective responses to fictions. In the example of *Anna Karenina*, we do not want Anna to kill herself and therefore pity her. But how is it possible for a person to want something that he believes to be inaccessible? I-desires can be a reply to the question: i-desires fall into the category of imaginations, and they can be directed at inaccessible things. So one can want things one doesn't want. The most distinguishing characteristic of i-desires is its functional roles. Desires evoke emotions and lead to actions when interacting with beliefs, but i-desires evoke emotions and actions when *interacting with imaginations*. The functional distinction implies that the contents of i-desires are less constrained than desires.

We may assume that Dual Process Theory can better account for our i-desires. According to the this theory, there are two systems in the brain: The first is automatic, affective and quick, while the second is controlled, deliberated and slow. Our habitual behavior and automatic reactions are determined by system 1, while our conscious reasoning and rational thinking are determined by system 2. Both systems produce our affective responses, decision-making and deliberation action[9]. It is perhaps so that, while we engage with fictions and become immersed in our imaginings, system 1 is triggered and causes us to

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[9] A classical statement of the two system theory can be found in Sloman (1996), which have offered some empirical evidences. For the dual process architecture in the cognitive system, see Kahneman (2003) ; Sun et al.(2005) ; Barrett et al. (2004).

automatically follow our imaginings and generate i-desires about fictions, which explains why we are often unconsciously moved by fictions. Nearly simultaneously, system 2 is also gradually triggered, and causes us to rationally consider our emotions and behavior, thereby leading us to judge that fictional characters and situations are not real and go out of our imaginings. Hence, system 2 accounts for why i-desires about fiction cannot offer reasons for action, and for why we have stronger feelings and emotions towards real persons or situations than towards fictional ones. Understanding i-desires in this way makes it possible to recognize that they are no longer mysterious or peculiar, but rather one of the mental states that are produced by the human psychological mechanism.

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