How We Feel About Terrible, Non-existent Mafiosi[*]
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Watching the bottom of the ninth inning of game four of the 2004 American League Championship Series between the Boston Red Sox and the New York Yankees, we were anxious. The Yankees were up 4-3, and New York's renowned closer, Mariano Rivera, was on the mound. The announcers were starting to talk about the Red Sox's history of tragic postseason disappointment since 1918. But the game wasn't over yet! The Sox could score at any moment, and all would be well… Our hearts were racing, our palms were sweating, and we were experiencing a distinctive and uncomfortable fearful anticipation. Why did we have this affective response to the game?

We endorse a commonsense explanation: The origin of our anxiety had a cognitive component and a conative component. The cognitive component was our belief about what was about to happen: that the Sox were about to lose and have their World Series hopes dashed for the 86th straight year. The conative component was a desire that that not happen. Together the cognitive and conative states produced our affective response.

Watching the end of a performance of *Romeo and Juliet*, we were anxious. Romeo was mourning Juliet's apparent death, and starting to talk about suicide. But Juliet was only unconscious! She could wake up at any moment, and all would be well… Our hearts were racing, our palms were sweating, and we were experiencing a distinctive

and uncomfortable fearful anticipation. Why did we have this affective response to the play?

We propose that, again, the origin of our anxious affect had a cognitive and a conative component. But the cognitive component wasn't a *belief* – it was an *imagining*, a cognitive state analogous to belief. And the conative component wasn't a desire – it was a conative state that stands to desire as imagining stands to belief, an *i-desire*.[1]

In this paper we argue that some of our affective responses to fiction have this kind of origin: They are traceable to the interaction of cognitive and conative states, where the cognitive state is an imagining and the conative state is an i-desire. The most contentious bit of this story is the postulation of i-desires as the conative component. This is the bit that we mainly argue for here.

One part of the story we just assume – that the affective response is traceable to the interaction of a cognitive and a conative component. It seems pretty clear that this sort of explanation is correct in the Red Sox case and in some other cases of affective responses to actual events.[2] So we just assume that some account of this form is correct

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[1] Others—Gregory Currie, Ian Ravenscroft, David Velleman, Kendall Walton—go for this state, too, but not for our terminology. They go for i-desires, in some cases, for reasons like ours but also for different reasons. See Currie (2009), Currie and Ravenscroft (2002), Velleman (2000), Walton (1990), and Walton (1997). For criticisms of i-desires, see Funkhouser and Spaulding (2009), Kind (2009), Nichols and Stich (2003), and Weinberg and Meskin (2005).

[2] This is not to say that all emotions are produced by a cognitive and conative state. That seems unlikely for reasons spelled out in, among other places, Gendler (2008a), Gendler (2008b), Griffiths (1997), Prinz (2004), and Robinson (2005). Still less is it to say that emotions include cognitive and conative states as parts. But that cognitive and conative states can together produce some emotions is clear, we think, from the Red Sox case. The importance of the conative state is hinted at, too, in a case cited in Nichols and Stich (2003). Nichols and Stich write, "Not surprisingly, there is evidence that imagining erotic encounters can lead to real sexual arousal…David Buss found that when males imagined their partner having sex with someone else, they showed marked physiological changes, including a significant increase in heart rate (Buss et al. 1992)" (*op. cit.*: X). The Buss et al. paper focuses on jealousy and one of its studies, the one Nichols and Stich refer to, tests for autonomic response. Certain autonomic responses would be evidence of jealousy, but they could also be evidence of different emotions. Were other emotions felt? Our guess is that a subject's response will depend on the subject's desires. If he desires his partner not have sex with others, he'll feel one way. If he does want it, he'll feel another. If he is indifferent, he'll feel a third way.

for the Red Sox case and assume, too, that accounts of the Red Sox and *Romeo and Juliet* cases are unified to at least this extent – that they are traceable to the same sorts of psychological mechanisms of affect-generation based on belief-like cognitive states and desire-like conative states.

Within this framework, theories about the natures of the relevant cognitive and conative states face the tribunal of experience as a corporate body. We argue that a theory including i-desires does best.

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At the end of season five of *The Sopranos*, Tony Soprano, head of a New Jersey mafia family, is caught up in a police bust and flees on foot. Watching this scene, we were filled with anxiety that Tony would be arrested.[3] What produced this response?

Again, we think that this response, like our response to the Yankees/Red Sox game, can be traced to the interactions of a cognitive, belief-like state and a conative, desire-like state. In what follows we'll argue that in the *Romeo and Juliet* and *Sopranos* cases a theory that cites a genuine *desire* as the conative contributor to our affective responses is implausible, and that a theory that posits i-desires is to be preferred.

In our theory of mind, mental states are represented by boxes and boxes are individuated by functional role. Theories like ours postulate some cognitive mechanisms, and some representation types, and detail how the mechanisms interact with each other, and which representation types they are sensitive to. Shaun Nichols and Stephen Stich are the philosophers with the best worked out blueprint of our imaginative architecture

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[3] We discuss the same example in Doggett and Egan (2007). Some of the arguments in what follows will be familiar to readers of that paper, though we hope that we do a better job of presenting them here. Others will be new. So don't skip to the next section yet.

(Nichols and Stich (2003)). Theirs lacks a box for i-desires – that is, it lacks a category of representations that plays a functional role that stands to the role of desires as the functional role of imaginings stands to that of beliefs. By, like them, assuming that mental states are differentiated by functional role, we make the contrast between our view and theirs clearest. We do not need to assume that mental states are *solely* defined by functional roles. Whether they are solely so defined we leave open.

Back to *The Sopranos*. How is anxiety about Tony generated? It's clear from the Red Sox case that beliefs and desires can generate affective responses. The belief that something is going to happen can combine with the desire that it not happen to cause anxiety. So part of the right mental blueprint looks like this, where boxes represent mental states, arrows represent causation:
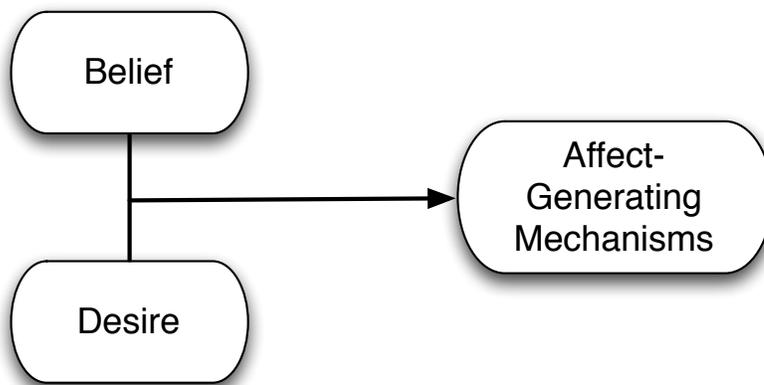
The idea is that when the right proposition tokens fill the belief and desire boxes, this causes some affect. That the Red Sox are going to lose pops into the belief box. That that not happen pops into desire box. Together these states cause anxiety. Can we explain our affective responses to fiction using just these resources, without adding boxes to the blueprint? We can think of two ways to do so, neither attractive.

One candidate belief/desire explanation of our affective response to *The Sopranos*: We genuinely *believe* the content of the fiction – we believe that a New Jersey mobster named "Tony Soprano" is in danger of being apprehended by the police – and this combines with a desire that the guy be safe to produce anxiety. On this explanation, the *Sopranos* case is not importantly different from one in which we believe a friend is about to be apprehended and desire he not be. Because of this, the explanation makes us out to be crazy, believing in a Jersey mobster we know full well doesn't exist. To some, this imputation of craziness is a selling point of the explanation—they think that affective responses to fiction are crazy—and we come back to the explanation in section three, but, rejecting its implications for our own sanity, we set it aside for now.

A better sort of belief/desire explanation appeals to beliefs and desires *about the fiction*. In the *Romeo and Juliet* case, we believe that in the fiction the star-crossed lovers are about to die, we desire that they don't die in the fiction, and that makes us anxious.

A story like this attracts in some cases: reading children's books with his son, one of us often wants the book to go a certain way (wants the Cat in the Hat to clean up and leave, wants Dingo Dog to be pulled over), believes it might well not go that way (the mother is right outside and the house is a sty, Dingo is so much faster than Officer Flossie), and frets. But you needn't have such a desire about the fiction *Romeo and Juliet* in order to feel the relevant anxiety; we didn't. The *last* thing that we wanted was for the play to have some sweet, happily-ever-after ending – that would be an aesthetic disaster! What we wanted was for the play to end tragically. Something similar is true in the *Sopranos* case. Here we just lacked the desire that the fiction be such that Tony escapes. (We have enough confidence in the writers of *The Sopranos* to trust that whatever they

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decide about whether Tony is safe or not is what is best for the fiction.) The *Sopranos* case is different from the *Romeo and Juliet* case, though, in that we didn't also have a desire that Tony *not* escape in the fiction.

We think the examples of our reactions to Tony's and Romeo and Juliet's predicaments show that if a desire is helping to produce anxiety, the desire is not in every case one concerning how the fiction – either *The Sopranos* or *Romeo and Juliet* – goes. Michael Smith and an audience member at the 2007 Eastern APA objected that we misdescribed ourselves above and, hence, that the examples don't show what we think they show. Instead, what goes on in us is that, in addition to the desires that the show go as the writers plan and that the play goes tragically, we *also* have desires that in the fiction Tony escape and that in the fiction Romeo and Juliet survive. What produces anxiety, then, is the desire that in the fiction Tony escape and the belief that he won't and the desire that in the fiction Romeo and Juliet survive and the belief they won't. What accounts for our misdescribing ourselves above is that we focus on the global desires we have—that the show go as the writers plan, that the play go tragically—while neglecting the local ones—that in the fiction Tony escape, that in the fiction Romeo and Juliet survive.[4]

Illustrating his point, Smith described a case in which you are listening to music, knowing full well that some nasty discordant bit is coming up, and feel tense about it. What explains that? Plausibly, that you don't want to hear the nasty bit and believe you are about to. That is perfectly consistent with your thinking the piece, as a whole, is

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[4] We will call the view put forward in this paragraph "the Smith/audience member view," which is unwieldy. Really, the name should be the much more unwieldy "Smith/audience member/Gaut/Nichols/Meskin/Weinberg view". Gaut (2003), Nichols (2004), and Weinberg and Meskin (2005) advance views somewhat similar to the view Smith and the audience member put to us.

better for having the nasty bit in it and, indeed, wanting the piece as a whole to have the nasty bit in it.

We agree with Smith's description of what is going on in the music case. We disagree that that account explains what went on with us as we watched *Romeo and Juliet*. The Smith/audience member view makes us out to be conflicted about the fiction[5]—wanting, because of a global desire, for the fiction to go one way and wanting, because of a local desire, for the fiction not to go that way—and you needn't be so conflicted—we weren't. Others, we think, weren't. If you were so conflicted, the fiction would disappoint you by not giving you everything you want. But *Romeo and Juliet* was not disappointing for us in this way.

To be clear, the objection is *not* that, if the desire-about-the-fiction view is right, you are somehow irrational for both wanting the show to go one way and wanting it not to. Rather, the objection is that you are of two minds about the fiction and, because of this, you are sure to be (in some respect) disappointed. Note, too, that the fiction being disappointing is consistent with our wanting to engage with it and consistent with our being pleased with the fiction. When you go to a good restaurant, you know full well that you'll leave not having had everything you want—you wish you could have had the McNuggets, too—and that is occasion for disappointment even in cases in which you are, all things considered, pleased with the restaurant. If you could arrange things so that you could go to that restaurant and have everything you want on the menu, you would. Hence the disappointment. Still, you want to go to that restaurant. In fact, you might well seek out restaurants you know will disappoint you in this way: having lots of good food on the

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[5] Nichols (2004) and Weinberg and Meskin (2005) see it as virtues of their views that they make you out to be conflicted. They think spectators are conflicted about, say, *The Sopranos* and, hence, the true view about emotional responses to the show will have to account for this.

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menu is a boon even if it means you can't eat each thing you want. Our objection is that our engaging with *Romeo and Juliet* involved no such disappointment. The deaths of Romeo and Juliet are not an occasion for any kind of disappointment with the course of the fiction. They are an occasion for a distinctive sort of saddened affect, but they are not an occasion for any kind of aesthetic disappointment – not even aesthetic disappointment that's more than compensated for by aesthetic benefits that couldn't otherwise be achieved.

Summing up, both theories we can think of that explain affective responses to fiction just in terms of beliefs and desires founder. The theory in terms of beliefs and desires about, say, Tony or Romeo or Juliet makes us out to be crazy, genuinely believing the content of something we know full well to be fiction. The theory in terms of beliefs and desires about the fiction directs our wants at the wrong thing—the course of the fiction—and, hence, makes certain fictions necessarily disappointing in cases where we have conflicting desires about them.[6] So we need to expand our mental architecture beyond beliefs and desires.
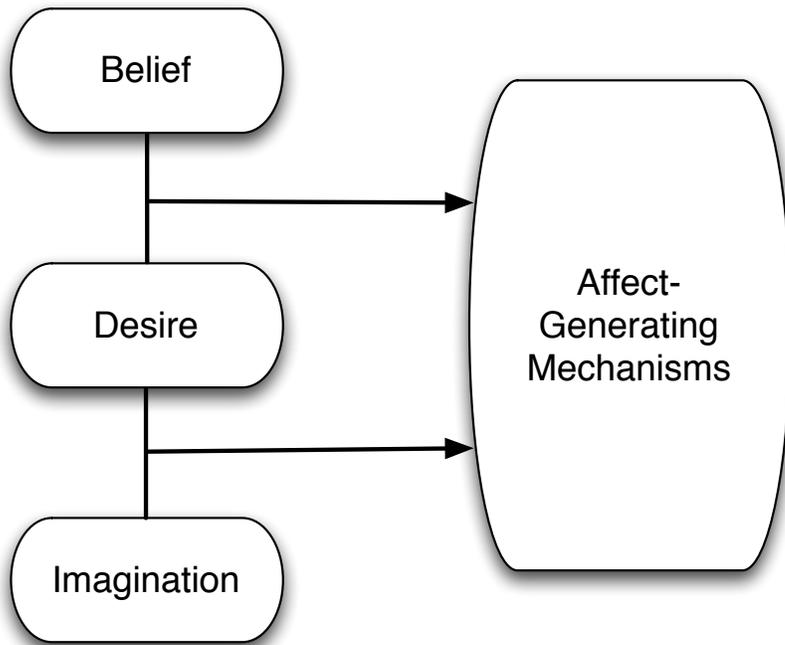
What if we just add an imagination box to the blueprint, where imagination, like belief, is a cognitive state but in various functional ways is unlike belief?[7] Doing so allows for this explanation of affect: Our *imagining* that Romeo and Juliet are about to kill themselves combines with some genuine desire to produce our anxious affect. Our imagining that Tony is in danger of being captured by the police combines with some

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[6] For recent criticism of this argument, see Currie (2009) and Kind (2009). Kind then offers a battery of attacks on i-desires. Currie responds to the attacks and offers a new argument for i-desires.

[7] We lay out how we think imagining and belief are analogous and disanalogous in Doggett and Egan (2007).

desire to produce our anxious affect.[8] If you subscribe to this kind of explanation, the boxology might look like this:

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┌──────────────┐
│    Belief    │
└──────────────┘
       │                          ┌──────────────┐
       ├──────────────────────▶   │   Affect-    │
┌──────────────┐                  │  Generating  │
│    Desire    │                  │  Mechanisms  │
└──────────────┘                  │              │
       │                          │              │
       ├──────────────────────▶   │              │
┌──────────────┐                  └──────────────┘
│ Imagination  │
└──────────────┘
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In one way, this clearly improves on the first belief/desire explanation we considered. This explanation, unlike that one, doesn't have us *believing* in people we know full well don't exist. But that was only part of the problem with the first belief/desire explanation of affective responses. Like the first belief/desire explanation, this imagination/desire explanation traces those responses to *desires* that, for reasons we will now explain, it is implausible to attribute to us.

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[8] There are cases, we think, where this kind of explanation is right – not so much that the architecture is designed so that imagination and desire will interact that way, but that you get 'leakage' – rogue imaginings that sometimes play a non-standard functional role, by slipping through and being treated like beliefs for some purposes in some circumstances. For examples, see Egan (2008) and Gendler (2006).

There are a few sorts of desires that an advocate of this sort of view might cite as the one that interacts with our imaginings to produce our affective response. The desire might be the *de dicto* desire that people who meet Tony's description, or that fictional characters meeting Tony's description, escape from the police. You say, "I want Tony to escape" but, on this view, the desire that's really doing the affect-generating work is a desire that people who meet Tony's description—charming, rich, occasionally loving, occasionally loyal, occasionally introspective, delusional, sociopathic, murdering, coercing men—escape. Put that explicitly, it is clear you needn't have such a desire in order to experience anxiety: watching the show, we didn't. We certainly don't desire that *actual* people who meet Tony's description escape from the police; we didn't desire it while watching *The Sopranos*. We want those actual mobsters caught. (Tweaking the details of how the description is filled out doesn't seem likely to help.)[9]

Maybe, instead, what you want is that *fictional characters* meeting Tony's description escape from police. That is, you want the fictions in which such characters appear to be such that, in the fictions, the characters escape. Again, though, the idea that you need to have a general desire that, in the fictions in which they feature, delusional, murdering sociopaths with great charm escape from the police is hard to believe. We don't have that general desire. And in the *Romeo and Juliet* case, we *certainly* don't have the relevant general desire. If we have a general desire about them at all, we desire that fictional characters fitting Romeo's and Juliet's descriptions meet memorably tragic ends. And anyway, if *this* is the desire about the fiction doing the work, it ought to be

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[9] Paul Bloom suggested to us that we do want actual people who meet Tony's description to escape. We don't have a particularly strong desire for it and we, additionally, want them caught, but, still, we want them to get away.

 Maybe so. Maybe in all cases of emotional response to mobster fiction? This isn't how we *think* we feel about actual mobsters when we are anxious about a fictional one.

interacting with our *beliefs* about the fiction to produce our affective responses, not with our imaginings, the content of which needn't be that the fiction go any way at all.

The other alternative is to say that the relevant desire is a *de re* desire about Tony, the New Jersey mafia boss. Say, a desire that Tony is safe from the police. That desire, together with an imagining that Tony is in danger, produces our anxiety. Compare: Tyler desires that Andy be safe from the police and imagines they endanger him. So Tyler is anxious.

There are two ways to understand this sort of proposal. Neither seems attractive. The desire could be a *de re* desire about Tony the fictional character, that he escape from the police. But, again, you needn't, and we didn't, have any such desire. Set aside issues about the ontology of fiction, and grant that there *is* a fictional character, Tony Soprano, to have *de re* desires about. The best way we can see to understand these sorts of desires about fictional characters is as desires about what the characters are like according to the fiction – that is, as desires about the content of the fiction. And, as discussed above, we don't need to have the relevant desires about the content of the fiction (i.e., that, according to the fiction, Tony escapes) in order to experience anxiety.

A bit more carefully: in a case in which you know you are engaging with fiction, having the desire about the fictional character (at least) *rationally requires* that one have the corresponding desire about the content of the fiction, since, as you well know, the only way for the fictional character to have the property that we desire him to have is for the content of the fiction to make it so. The fictional Tony Soprano can't escape from the police unless, according to the fiction of the *Sopranos*, Tony escapes from the police. More strongly, what it would be for the fictional character Tony Soprano to escape from

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the police would be for the content of the fiction to make it so. You know all this. Likewise, Romeo and Juliet can't survive unless, according to the fiction of *Romeo and Juliet*, they survive. What it is for those fictional characters to survive is just for the fiction to have them survive. You know all this, too. So to have the one desire without the other would be irrational like wanting some statue to be moved without wanting its matter to be moved or wanting the Packers to win the football game without wanting them to score more points than their opponents.

One needn't be a victim of any sort of irrationality in order to experience the relevant affect and we don't think we were. Hence, if the *de re* desire that Tony, the fictional character, escape from the police were producing our anxiety, then there would be the accompanying desire that the show go a certain way. And, as we have noted, we lacked such a desire.[10]

Alternatively, we could understand the proposal that you want Tony to be safe as saying that you have desires about Tony Soprano, the concrete, two-hundred fifty pound mafia boss who lives in our actual New Jersey and who you are currently imagining. But there is no such person, and you are well aware of this. Hence, you have no *de re* desires about any real-world mafia boss named "Tony Soprano". Compare: you are trying to get a relative to stop bothering you. Wanting to tell him to stop bothering you would make sense. Wanting to move out of the country without telling him would make sense. Wanting Tony Soprano to pay him a visit—not have it be true in a fiction that Tony visits, but have Tony visit—would not make sense. You know Tony doesn't exist.

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[10] A final, particularly implausible, possibility: the thing that you hope escapes arrest – not according to the fiction, but *actually* escapes arrest – is some abstract object, the fictional Tony Soprano. Maybe so, but it would be awfully strange if you desired that *an abstract object* escape arrest and no less strange that the police—other abstract objects?—were trying to arrest it.

Likewise, we think, it would be crazy, in our cases, to want Tony to escape. And we aren't crazy and needn't be in order to be anxious for Tony to escape.

There is an important difference between the desire that Tony be safe and the desire that Tony intimidate your relative. The desire that Tony be safe is a consequence of a desire that Tony be well. The desire that Tony intimidate your relative is an instrumental desire, the desire that Tony be well is an intrinsic desire. Timothy Schroeder pointed this out to us and argued that though it would be crazy to have instrumental desires about Tony, it would not be crazy to have intrinsic desires about him. He suggested that what produces anxiety in our case is desiring that Tony be well and imagining that he is in danger from the police.

This begs the question against Schroeder, but our desiring that Tony be well, we think, is just as irrational as our desiring that Tony intimidate your relative. In both the instrumental and intrinsic case, you know that your desire is directed at someone you know does not, maybe could not, exist. That is part of what makes the desire irrational. Compare: you're a Christian. You want God to spare your dog suffering. You want God to be well. You become an atheist. Wanting God to be well, at this point, seems as irrational as wanting God to spare your dog. The intrinsic/instrumental distinction seems to be neither here nor there with respect to the rationality of these divine desires.

Also, in both the instrumental and the intrinsic Tony Soprano case, you aren't going to get what you want (*can't* get what you want). It is unclear what it would take for you to get what you want. Focus on the intrinsic case. What, exactly, would it take to get what you want, if you want Tony to be well? That he be well on the show? If so, does wanting Tony to be well require that you also want it to be true in the fiction that

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Tony be well? If so, this proposal is subject to the same worry as the proposal that you have a desire about the fiction, *The Sopranos*. If the wanting doesn't require wanting things to go some way on the show, what would it take to satisfy your desire that Tony be well? Not that actual guys like Tony be well. Not that James Gandolfini, the actor who plays Tony, be well. There doesn't seem to be anything that could satisfy that desire. You know this. So, on pain of irrationality, you don't actually want it because you don't rationally want things you know you cannot have (as opposed to, say, fantasize about them or wish for them). (One of us endorses a stronger claim: if there is no way for things to be that could satisfy your desire that Tony be well, then there is no such desire to have.)

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First, we tried to limit our boxology to beliefs and desires. When we do so, the best explanation of affect appeals to beliefs and desires about the fiction. No good—it has our responses directed at the fiction rather than characters therein, and saddles us with desires about the course of the fiction that it's not plausible that we have. Next we tried to limit our boxology to beliefs, desires, and imaginings. When we do so, the best explanation of affect appeals to imaginngs and desires about characters. No good—it has us genuinely wanting things about folks we know do not, perhaps cannot exist, wanting things we know will not, perhaps cannot happen. But the nature of the cognitive state seems right and the *content* of the conative state seems right, too.

We propose another candidate explanation: imagination and i-desire. Our imagining that Romeo and Juliet are about to die combines with our i-desire that they not

die, and our imagining that Tony is in danger of being captured combines with our i-desire that Tony stay out of police custody, to produce our anxious affect.
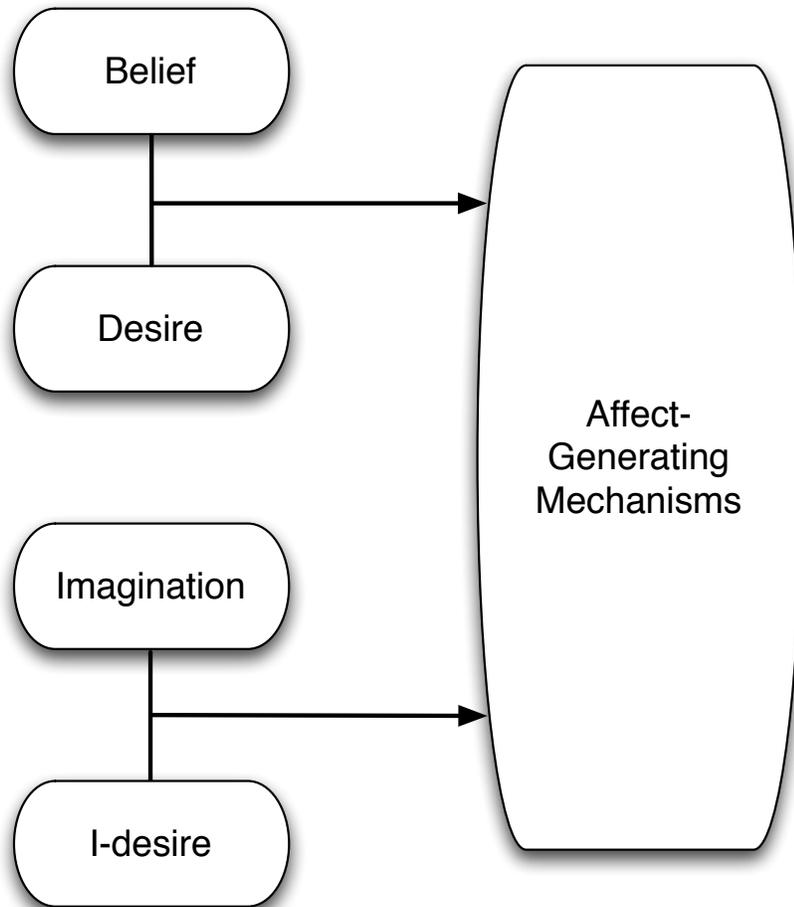
I-desire? To get a feel for it, consider imagination. Imagining, we think, is a state that is functionally different from belief. But, we think, it is in some ways functionally quite similar to belief. When watching someone being chased, you come to believe they are being chased. When watching a TV show in which someone is being chased, you come to imagine that they are being chased. When you are imagining along with a TV show,

your imaginings aim to fit the fictional world just as your beliefs aim to fit the actual world.

Also, imagining can combine with a desire-like state to produce motivation just as (at least, very much as) belief combines with desire to produce motivation. Merely believing that there is chocolate in front of you won't motivate you to do anything. Believing that there is chocolate in front of you and wanting to eat some chocolate might move you to eat what is in front of you. Now say you are pretending: combine imagining that there is a chocolate in front of you with some belief-like state that you have some chocolate. This won't incline you to pretend that you eat the chocolate. By contrast, imagining that there is chocolate in front of you and having a desire-like attitude toward eating some chocolate might motivate you to… What it motivates you to do is complicated.[11] Our point is that you are motivated to do something when you combine imagination with a desire-like state. Imagining is importantly like believing in its role in producing action.

I-desire is the imaginative analogue of desire, in important respects like desire in its ability to motivate and produce affect, and in important respects like desire in the sort of content that it takes. But it's only an analogue. The states aren't the same.

Engagedly watching *The Sopranos*, you imagine is what's happening on-screen. If Tony is eating on screen, you imagine that Tony is eating. What you i-desire needn't match what is on the screen. Concerned about Tony's weight, you might well i-desire that he stop eating. Compare: when you watch your brother eat, you believe he's eating but when you watch your brother eat, you needn't desire he eat. You might well desire

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[11] We lay out how we think the complications go in Doggett and Egan (2007).

he stop. (He's about to eat the last of the chocolate fudge brownie ice cream, and you want it.) When you i-desire along with a TV show, what you i-desire needn't aim to fit what is happening on the screen, just as what you desire needn't aim to fit what is going on in your life.

In another way, i-desire is unlike desire with respect to content. The content of i-desires is less restricted than the content of desires. You can (rationally) have i-desires towards things you know you can't have: impossible things, things that have already happened, things that don't exist. Such i-desires wouldn't be irrational but desires with such contents would be.

I-desire and imagination together produce both affect and motivation. Imagining that a monster is on the loose and i-desiring that it be caught can produce anxiety. The states can produce action, too, like yelps or averting your eyes. As a rule, the affect and motivation produced by i-desire and imagining differs from the affect and motivation produced by beliefs and desires with the same content. The affect is often (though not always) less intense—the anxiety you feel when you *believe* a monster is on the loose can be much more overpowering than what you feel in a movie theater.[12] It can also be less durable—when the scene you are imagining along with shifts from the monster to a party, your anxiety about the monster tends to diminish. When you believe a monster is on the loose, going to a party wouldn't so tend. (The real party would have to be *really* absorbing. The fictional party less so.) Finally, the affect can be different in kind: imagining that there is a monster on the loose and i-desiring it be caught might produce

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[12] Sometimes more intense affect comes from imagining something is the case than would come from believing it is the case. Imagining you are spelunking can produce more intense panic than actual spelunking (and believing you're spelunking). It did for one of us. See section four for a bit more discussion.

not anxiety but, rather, excitement. For us, at least, believing there is a monster on the loose and wanting it to be caught wouldn't be *exciting* at all.[13] Likewise, the motivation produced by i-desire/imagining pairs can be less intense than, and quite different from, that produced by belief/desire pairs. Believing there is a monster on the loose and wanting it to be caught wouldn't just move us to yelp or avert our eyes. We would run or call the ASPCA or… And if we did yelp, we'd yelp much louder than we do in a theater.[14]

So we think when it comes to engaging with fictions, we make use of analogues of beliefs and desires: imagination and i-desire. The imagination-belief-desire theorist, by contrast, offers only an analogue of belief. To be clear, when you i-desire that you eat something, this is not the same thing as imagining that you desire that you eat

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[13] The last two sentences describe a variant of what Gregory Currie calls "the problem of personality." In his (1997), Currie writes, "We frequently like and take the part of people in fiction whom we would not like or take the part of in real life. The desires we seem to have concerning fictional things can be very unlike the desires we have concerning real life…" (*Ibid*.: 65) Likewise, the emotions we have in response to imagining certain propositions can be quite different from the emotions we have in response to believing those propositions. When imagining, we can be excited by things that wouldn't excite us in real life, attracted by things that would repulse us in real life, thrilled by things that would disappoint us in real life. In an interview about *The Sopranos*, David Chase, the show's creator, expressed surprise that so many people wanted Tony to be killed in the final episode since so many of those people rooted for him to prosper throughout the show (the interview is in HBO (2007)). The claim provides two instances of what we are talking about: in real life, we don't want people we root for to be killed and, in real life, we don't root for sociopathic mobsters to flourish. The problem of personality is to explain these divergences.

Whether there is a problem here at all is controversial since it is controversial whether there are such divergences. In his comments on this paper at the 2007 Eastern APA, Tim Schroeder denied there were. In discussion, Paul Bloom did, too.

For a unified solution to the problem of personality and the paradox of fiction (discussed in section four below) see Camp (2009).

[14] Note that someone who insists there are no i-desires can explain why you have the affect and motivation you have using a complicated story about beliefs, desires, and imaginings. In his comments on this paper, Tim Schroeder produced such a story. The truth of Schroeder's story wouldn't show that there is no distinctive functional role played by i-desires. It would just show there is nothing playing that role. Because we prefer our explanation of what's going on in affective responses to fiction to any just in terms of beliefs, desires, and imaginings, we think there is something playing that role.

something.[15] That makes i-desiring out to be a state with the functional role of imagining plus a certain sort of content. If so, i-desiring would be a state that we and the imagination-belief-desire theorist agree exists. It isn't. It's a *sui generis* conative state. Its role in motivating or producing affect differs from the role of imagining. The sort of content it rationally takes is different.

I-desires help explain what is going on with you in the *Sopranos* case in the following way. You are imagining Tony is in danger and feeling anxious about this. We think some desire-like state must help to produce this anxiety. No desire needs to play such a role. In our own cases, none did. What generated the anxiety was our imagining that Tony is in danger along with our i-desire that he be safe. On our view, the *Sopranos* case is like a case in which you believe a friend is in danger and feel anxious about it. We think a desire-like state is needed to produce the anxiety. That desire, plausibly, has the content that your friend be safe.[16]

Our view is not subject to the objection we had to the proposal that the anxiety is produced, in part, by a desire that Tony the flesh-and-blood gangster be safe. The objection to your desiring that Tony be safe depended on the claims that you know Tony doesn't exist and don't desire the safety of things you know don't exist. By contrast, it isn't objectionable that you have i-desires about things you know don't exist. Compare: it isn't plausible that you believe that someone you know does not exist – Santa Claus, for example – is standing in front of you. It isn't objectionable that you *imagine* that

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[15] Kendall Walton's view can be misinterpreted in just this way. His talk of 'imagining desiring' leaves it open whether he is an i-desire theorist or not. We think he is and that this is clearer in his (1997) than his (1990).

[16] A somewhat related story: a belief combines with i-desire to produce affect. This is totally unmotivated and largely crazy as a story of what is generally going on in affective response to fiction or make-believe, but it might be what is going on in some cases. See Egan (2008) and Gendler (2006).

someone you know does not exist – for example, Santa Claus – is standing in front of you. The same goes for desires and i-desires.[17]

Our view is not subject to the objection we had to the proposals according to which the anxiety is produced by a desire that the fiction be such that Tony is safe. This can be seen more clearly if we switch to the *Romeo and Juliet* example. On the best interpretation of the desire-about-the-fiction view, the Smith/audience member proposal that we have incompatible desires about how fictions go is correct. Our objection to that proposal was that, if the view is true, you can't get everything you want from the fiction – any way that the fiction goes is destined to be in some respect disappointing. With *Romeo and Juliet*, according to the Smith/audience member view, you want the fiction to be such that Romeo and Juliet survive and want it to be such that they don't. You can't have both. Hence, the fiction is bound to disappoint. We rejected this.

It is, however, true on our view that you can't get everything that you something-like-want. You i-desire that Romeo and Juliet be safe. They die, so your i-desire is frustrated. You genuinely desire that the fiction go badly for them. They die, so your desire is satisfied. So on our view, unlike the Smith/audience member view, there is no cause for disappointment *about the fiction*. The fiction gave you what you wanted. Your

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[17] Note that the view that we're advocating here is *not* the crazy view that there are some things that don't exist (Santa Claus, Tony Soprano), and that singular propositions about those things have the special feature that it's irrational or impossible to stand in the *belief* or *desire* relations to them, but totally unproblematic to stand in the *imagining* or *i-desiring* relations to them. If there is no Tony Soprano, then when you i-desire that Tony is safe, you are not bearing that attitude towards a singular proposition about Tony – there isn't any such proposition to bear attitudes toward. It's an interesting question just what the proposition is that you stand in the i-desiring relation to. Perhaps the proposition is just descriptive. It's one you don't desire to be true but do i-desire to be true. This issue about the apparent unavailability of the relevant singular propositions isn't a special issue about i-desire. Exactly the same issues arise for imagination. The point we have just been making is this: Whatever it is that you bear the *imagining* attitude toward when you're properly described as "imagining that Tony Soprano is safe from the police," it is not something that you plausibly need to *desire* in order to feel anxious while watching the chase play out on TV. It *is* plausibly something you need to i-desire in order to feel the relevant sort of anxiety. We happen to think that a descriptive proposition is a good candidate, but nothing much hangs on this.

other desire-like state was not directed at the fiction, it was directed at some people that you know don't exist. Phenomenologically, this fits our experience: our anxiety was directed at Romeo and Juliet, not at *Romeo and Juliet*. We were saddened by the tragic deaths, of course (or at least, we were something-like-saddened by them), but that was a crucial part of our being pleased with the fiction, not a cause for regret about it.

On the competing belief/desire or imagining/desire views, by contrast, all your wants are directed, ultimately, at the fiction. So what you are really anxious about is that the fiction go one way rather than another. As we mentioned, in some cases, this is very plausible. The apparent anxiety of one of us about the fate of Dingo Dog was well explained by a desire that in the fiction Dingo be caught. One of us really was anxious about how *Cars and Trucks and Things That Go* would turn out and not, in addition, anxious about particular characters he was imagining to be fleeing the police or chasing criminals. And the reason he had this anxiety was because he wanted to have (and wanted his son to have) a certain experience while reading the book. Spelled out like this, it seems clear that this isn't, or needn't be, what is going on in the *Romeo and Juliet* case. Anxiety about a fictional character needn't be anxiety about how the fiction treats the character. In a case where the Smith/audience member view looks plausible, the *Cars and Trucks and Things That Go* case, there is a nice story to be told about *why* our anxiety is directed at the fiction rather than the characters. That story doesn't carry over to the *Romeo and Juliet* or *The Sopranos* cases.

Summing up, we claimed that a desire-like state is needed to produce anxiety in the Yankees/Red Sox case. We inferred that a desire-like state is needed to produce anxiety in the *Romeo and Juliet* and *Sopranos* cases. We then argued that that state need

not be a desire. We inferred that the state needed was, at least in our own cases, an i-desire. So there are i-desires.

It is no part of our argument that all affective responses to what we imagine are produced by i-desires and no part of our argument that they are all produced by a desire-like state. We can grant that in some cases no desire-like state is needed and can grant that in some cases where a desire-like state is needed, a desire will do (see Griffiths (1997) for an argument for the first concession and Nichols (2004) for arguments for both concessions). We can grant something even stronger: some emotional responses to fiction cannot be produced by i-desires but, rather, only by real desires. The *Cars and Trucks and Things that Go* case is an example.

The fact that we can, and indeed should, account for some of our emotional responses to imagination in terms of real desires is no problem for us. Our argument uses the premises that *some* emotional responses require a desire-like state, and that in *some* of those cases the state is not a desire; our argument concludes that for *some* emotional responses this state is an i-desire.

We believe, then, that emotional responses to fiction can't just be explained by appealing to desires rather than i-desires. We also believe that they can't just be explained by appealing to i-desires rather than desires. Some of the mixed reactions we have to some fictions speak in favor of having both i-desires and desires in the picture. Watching *The Sopranos* and *Romeo and Juliet*, we have, on the one hand, what we might call an *imaginatively engaged* response, involving a something-like-wanting that Romeo and Juliet live happily ever after, and, on the other hand, an *aesthetic* response, involving a something-like-wanting that the fiction is such that that Romeo and Juliet die tragically.

On our view, the imaginatively engaged response is traceable to an i-desire, while the aesthetic response is traceable to a genuine desire about the course of the fiction.[18] We can explain these sorts of mixed reactions without having to say that there is a respect in which even the very best tragedy must always fall short of satisfying all of our desires about how the fiction goes.

So we believe in i-desires. They are needed to explain some affective responses to what we imagine. There is more to recommend them.

3

There you are, watching *Romeo and Juliet*, feeling awful as the two young lovers lie dead. According to some, most notably, Colin Radford, this response is irrational.[19] Radford argues that either you believe there are two young lovers lying dead on the stage, in which case you are irrational since you know full well that there aren't, or else you don't believe there are two young lovers lying dead on the stage, in which case you are irrational since only such a belief could make our sorrow rational.

The reasoning is supposed to carry over a wide range of responses to what you are imagining: being afraid, being harrowed, pitying, being moved, being sad, being hopeful.[20] So Radford can avail himself of the first explanation of affective responses we considered, the one in terms of beliefs and desires about characters. That all those

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[18] Cf. Walton (1990), Lamarque (1996), and Currie and Ravenscroft (2002), all of which advocate for something like the ideas of this paragraph.

[19] That affective responses to art are irrational is most famously and vigorously defended by Radford in Radford (1975) and many succeeding papers, but the view dates back at least to *Ion*. See Cooper (1997): 942-943. Robinson (2005) is sympathetic. See Robinson (2005): 146.

[20] Radford does not believe that all emotional responses to what you imagine are irrational. Being amused, if that is an emotion, is an emotion you can rationally have about what you are imagining (Radford (1975): 79, fn. 5).

affective responses are irrational is, however, a massively counterintuitive view. Affective responses to fiction are normal, widespread, deeply cherished, and repeatedly sought out by rational people, people who otherwise don't strive for irrationality. Now, it might be that these people simply don't know they are being irrational. But, if Radford is right, what is irrational about having affective responses to what you imagine is straightforward and, really, it would be surprising if you did not at some point notice it. He compares such responses to the responses of children to scary stuffed animals. But, as he notes, even a child can—and often does—see that such a response is irrational.[21] So, on his view, rational people are seeking out states of mind that they know to be irrational or are too dense or inattentive to see that these states of mind are irrational. Neither result is happy; it would be best to avoid them.

One thing that makes us, at least, uncomfortable about saying that affective responses to fiction are systematically irrational is the centrality of these sorts of affective responses to proper aesthetic engagement. The sorts of affective responses that we had to *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Sopranos* are, in fact, the sorts of responses that one *needs* to have in order to properly engage with (these kinds of) works of fiction. Probably they're partially constitutive of proper engagement with works of fiction. At any rate, something has gone wrong with your engagement with *Romeo and Juliet* if you don't have any affective response to the plight of the young lovers and their tragic deaths. It doesn't seem plausible to say that proper engagement with fiction requires irrationality, that

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[21] Jenefer Robinson compares our reactions to fiction not to kids' reactions to stuffed animals but, rather, to Rozin and Fallon's experiments wherein people would not eat what they knew was fudge shaped like dog feces or drink juice a cockroach they knew to be sterilized was dunked in. She softens the blow of saying that our emotional responses to what we imagine are often irrational by introducing a notion of "emotional rationality" and claiming that many of the "strictly irrational" responses are nevertheless emotionally rational (*Op. cit.*: 146-148).

perfectly rational agents would be walled off from these important sorts of aesthetic experiences. While there *are* some sorts of art that exploit imperfections in our cognitive or perceptual faculties – the work of M.C. Escher and Bridget Riley are good examples – it seems a bit much to put more or less *all* literature that aims to emotionally engage into this category.

It is a strike against an account of affective responses to fiction that it makes us out to be irrational. That's why we rejected the first belief/desire explanation—the one according to which we believe Tony is in danger and desire he be safe—out of hand. And that's why we rejected one of the explanations according to which imagination combines with desires about characters: it's irrational to believe someone you (ought to) know full well doesn't exist is fleeing, irrational to want someone you (ought to) know full well doesn't exist to be safe.

We see the desire-about-fiction view as the main rival to our own. We objected that it makes us out to be conflicted about how we want the fictions to go and, hence, disappointed in them even in cases when we need not be. There is a further problem with it. It, too, leads to the claim that at least *many* affective responses to art are irrational. You watch *Romeo and Juliet* or *The Sopranos* a second time, responding sadly or anxiously again. If the desire-about-fiction view is true, you respond this way because you desire that the fiction go a certain way. But you know the fiction doesn't go that way. Desiring it go that way is in that case irrational, like genuinely wanting that yesterday go differently. If you lack that desire, though, what produces your affective response to the play? Watching a show, seeing a play, etc. a second time—or just watching these things when you already know how they turn out—can produce affective

responses just as well as seeing them the first time. There needn't be anything irrational about these responses. The desires-about-fiction view, however, seems to commit us to saying that proper engagement with many kinds of fiction requires that we be irrational. Advocates of an i-desire view have a ready explanation for why it's *not* irrational. You continue, even on repeated viewings of *Romeo and Juliet*, to i-desire Romeo's and Juliet's well-being and, again, there's nothing irrational about i-desiring something you know you can't have.

It is possible that the preceding paragraph is in one way wrong and that at least *sad* affect can be explained in terms of genuine desires about the fiction, or anyway in terms of *preferences* about the fiction. Even if, as we presuppose above, there's a sense of "desire" on which it doesn't make sense to desire things that you know aren't the case, it *does* make sense to talk about having genuine preferences that things be otherwise than one knows that they are. One might, for example, prefer that some period of one's country's political history had gone some way that one knows it did not in fact go, that one had refrained from making that witty but hurtful remark at the party, or that one had said something before it was too late. You might feel sadness on account of such preferences. But what that would show, we think, is that we picked the wrong example to make our point. Think, instead, of the *Sopranos* case where we are anxious about Tony, or about the earlier stage in the play at which we were anxious, rather than sad, about Romeo and Juliet's fate. It doesn't seem plausible to trace *anxiety* to these sorts of preferences about how things go. Even if – as seems plausible – it makes sense to desire (or anyway, prefer) that things go some way one knows that they don't go, and these sorts of preferences are enough to give rise to sadness, regret, etc., these sorts of preferences

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for the known-to-be-unattainable aren't the right sorts of things to give rise to rational anxiety. It doesn't make sense to, in virtue of those kinds of preferences, be *anxious* about whether P when one knows that P, or when one knows that not P.[22]

4

We have expanded our picture of human beings' mental architecture to include i-desires in order to explain how we have affective responses to fiction and why those responses are rational. Like expansion can explain even more.

You're at a monster movie. You know you are at a monster movie, know there is no monster, no danger to you, but your heart races, you sweat a bit, you clench the armrest, and so on. Afterwards, you say, "I've never been so scared before." The case raises an instance of the paradox of fiction. It is very plausible that

> (1) If you know there is no monster, then either you do not fear the monster or you are irrational.

And very plausible that

> (2) You do fear the monster and you are not irrational.

Together, (1) and (2) imply that

> (3) You know there is no monster,

obviously true, is false. So one of (1) and (2) is false.[24] It's (2): you i-fear the monster but you don't fear it. Besides analogues of beliefs and desires, there are imaginative analogues of at least some emotions.

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[22] As Louis deRosset, Matthew Noah Smith, and Dustin Stokes stressed to us, the paper relies heavily on some rational constraints on desire while leaving open a full characterization of those constraints, and leaving open a characterization of the rational constraints on i-desire. Those characterizations are for future work.

[24] Compare this set-up of the paradox with Levinson's set-up of a general paradox of fiction:

Our argument for this remains neutral on what emotions are. Our argument leaves open what, exactly, fear is. We make some assumptions about fear, but certainly not enough to characterize it thoroughly, still less to characterize emotions thoroughly. Whatever it is, we argue, it *isn't* what you feel at the movies. We take no stand on whether fear need have a belief or imagining as a part or as a cause, or on whether it needs as a cause or part a judgment that something is dangerous, or whether it necessarily includes or produces sensations. The argument just involves attention to what happens to you when you appear to be scared of a monster at the movies. We believe what is happening to you at the movies is this:

There is a monster on screen. You imagine it is bearing down on you and i-desire to avoid it. The imagining and i-desire feed into the affect-generator to produce sensations and autonomic responses that, typically, are like the sensations associated with fear but are (in many cases, at least) less intense and less lasting. At the same time, the imagining and i-desire feed into the action-generator, producing some action—typically, yelping, fist clenching, chatting about how scared you are, etc. Note that these actions aren't much like the actions you'd go in for if you believed a monster were threatening you. They are more like symbols than replicas.

In this monster movie case, the state you are in, we think, has a different functional role than the functional role of fear. Just as i-desires differ in functional role from desires, i-fears differ in functional role from fear. What produces it differs from

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The much-discussed paradox of fiction can be formulated as a set of three propositions, to each of which we have strong allegiance, but which are jointly inconsistent…The propositions are these: (a) We often have emotions for fictional characters and situations known to be purely fictional; (b) Emotions for objections logically presupposed beliefs in the existence of features of these objects; (c) We do not harbor beliefs in the existence and features of objects known to be fictional. (Levinson (1997): 22-23)

The main differences are that we focus on a particular response, we add a qualifier about rationality, and we have no belief requirement.

what produces fear. Whereas fear typically is produced by beliefs alone or by beliefs plus desires, i-fear typically is produced by imaginings, or imaginings plus i-desires.

What i-fear produces differs from what fear produces. Whereas fear of a monster would, in us at least, produce very rapid heart rate, a bayou of sweat, weak legs, and a deficit of breath, i-fear of that same monster might produce much milder sensations: a less rapid heart rate, less sweat, less weak legs, and maybe some tightness in the chest. (But note fn. 13. It sometimes happens that emotional responses to imagining something are more intense than those produced by believing it.) Whereas a change of focus wouldn't much mitigate fear of a monster, a change of focus in what you are imagining often does mitigate i-fear. (Fear, but not i-fear, typically makes this change of focus hard.) Whereas 90 minutes of exposure to a particularly nasty monster wouldn't lessen fear, 90 minutes of exposure in the movies often does reduce i-fear—suspenseful movies take this into account. And whereas what you feel when you believe a monster confronts you motivates you to fight it, flee it, or freeze, what you feel in a monster movie doesn't. Generally, fear motivates you to fight, flee, or freeze. And, generally, what you feel in a movie theater doesn't. Watching a movie in which a slime is moving towards him, Charles feels something like fear but without being motivated in any of these ways. Walton writes,

> Fear is *motivating* in distinctive ways… It puts pressure on one's behavior (even if one resists). (If skydivers and mountain climbers *enjoy* fear—not just danger—they nevertheless have *inclinations* to avoid the danger.) To deny this, to insist on considering Charles's nonmotivating state to be one of fear of the slime, would be to radically reconceive the notion of fear. Fear emasculated by subtracting its distinctive motivational force is not fear at all. ((1990): 201-202)

We agree with this last line. But if Walton thinks Charles isn't motivated to do anything when he imagines the slime is moving towards him, we disagree. Charles is motivated to—and in fact does—recoil, yelp, gasp, seize armrests, tell his companion how scared he is. He just isn't motivated to run screaming from the movie theater, to attack the slime, or to sit stock still, hoping that the slime doesn't notice that he's there. If he were afraid of the slime, he would be. So he isn't afraid. What i-fear typically motivates you to do is to make a show of being afraid. Charles does so.

Besides differing in how they typically are produced and in what they typically produce, i-fear and fear differ in that i-fear is not rationally limited by what you know about what there is. The content of fear is. Neither is limited by what there is. A small kid can rationally fear the wicked witch of the West. As that kid grows up, she learns that there is no such thing. The result is that it would be irrational to keep on with her fear. We think this irrationality doesn't change just because she goes to *The Wizard of Oz* and imagines there is such a witch. It is still irrational to fear the witch—she knows there is none, what is she worried it—it?—will do to her? Rationally i-fearing the witch, by contrast, is no problem. Compare: it would be irrational for the woman to believe there is a witch in front of her. It would not be irrational for the woman to imagine there is a witch in front of her. The same goes for fear and its imaginative analogue.

If the only differences between what you feel when you believe you are in the presence of a monster and what you feel at the movies were that one is typically produced by beliefs, one by imagining, and that one is more intense and less easily removed than the other, we could do without i-fear. The presence of the other differences—the

motivational differences and difference in which attitudes you can rationally have—are what really push us towards thinking there are two states.

In response to our claim that fear and i-fear differ in motivational role, one might argue that we mischaracterized fear's motivational role. Berys Gaut notes in Gaut (2003) that you might fear you will lose your job without being motivated to fight (who?) or flee (where?) or freeze (why?). Fair enough. But fear of monsters, like fear of snakes or fear of bullies, seems a clear case where fear would motivate fight, flight, or freezing. If you believed you were actually confronted by a monster, you would be motivated to do one or another. (For simplicity, we drop talk of freezing from now.)

Gaut has another way of explaining the putative motional difference between fear of a monster and what you feel at the movies: In the theater, there is the motivation to fight or flee, you just don't act on it. He gives three reasons to think you don't act on it. First, there is no way to fly or freeze. Likewise, Derek Matravers writes,

> There is nothing I can do for the astronauts on the Space Shuttle traveling miles above the surface of the earth. Hence, the 'fear' I feel for them has no motivational role. ((2005): 69-70; 'fear' is in scare quotes because Matravers doesn't want to beg the question against someone who believes he feels i-fear not fear; by "no motivational role," we think Matravers means isn't *moving* you to do anything)

There are cases like this: you are watching a live video of a daredevil in some far away place, you are afraid *for* him, but also do not do anything, knowing there is nothing you can do. You are confronted by a monster but know full well that you are bound in chains. But the Charles case isn't quite like either one. Charles is afraid for himself and he does something: he yelps, grasps the armrests, talks to a companion, etc. If Charles is afraid, why does he do *those* things?

Perhaps, though he is motivated to fight or flee, he does not because he knows there is no monster and this suffices to quash fight or flight (Gaut (2003): 21). But this makes it totally opaque why he is afraid—he knows there is no monster, no threat—and why he does anything at all. Charles does something. And what he does, we think, isn't what he would do if actually afraid.

Finally, perhaps Charles is motivated to fight or flee, but countervailing beliefs and desires stop him from doing so. For example, Charles is motivated to flee, but is more strongly motivated to stay to see what happens in the movie. This possibility makes Charles out to be at war with himself, like someone who can barely resist stuffing his face full of candy or someone willing to sit out a disgusting part of a movie to get to the funny part. Phenomenologically, that isn't how our response to the monster seems. But even if we are at war with ourselves in the movies, it is surprising the forces motivating flight and fear get as far as they do and only so far. The reactions we have to scary things at the movies are predictable; that is why we were able to evoke these reactions just by listing a few. Why, if this final possibility is correct, don't we ever get closer to the door as we are motivated to flee? Why do we always get so far as clutching the armrest? Or saying how scared we are? And, anyways, are we clutching the armrest and chatting en route to fleeing? There are more direct ways to leave than that.

So we stand by our claim that the motivational role of the state you are in at the movie theater differs from fear. What of the claim that that state, rationally, takes more contents than fear? We think that if you know there is nothing to flee or fight and if, as we think, fear motivates fight or flight, it is irrational to be so motivated. It is because of this we do not think you fear the monster and do think

(1) If you know there is no monster, then you do not fear the monster or you are irrational.

In accepting (1), we do not assume that if you know something does not exist, you do not, rationally, feel emotions about it. On the contrary, our view is that you do feel an emotion about the monster. The question we are interested in is: is it fear?[25]

In accepting (1), we don't assume that fear of something without believing it exists is irrational. For example, we leave open that there could be cases where you have an automatic, not irrational fear response to something though its presence is too fleeting for you to believe it exists. Paul Griffiths writes,

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[25] To be more cautious about it, we could say: we do not assume that if you know something does not exist, you do not, rationally, *feel something or other* about it. We have been a bit incautious about this throughout this paper, but whether this feeling counts as an emotion depends on what an emotion is, something we haven't sorted out. If, for example, to have an emotion about X requires a belief that X exists, then you don't, rationally, have emotions towards things like the monster. For compelling rejections of this requirement, see Gendler (2008a), Gendler (2008b), Prinz (2004), Robinson (2005), and the books and paper to be cited in the main text shortly. However, we take no stand on the issue in this paper. We have no well worked out view of the emotions, so maybe we shouldn't say you feel an emotion about the monster. But we insist you feel something. The question we are interested in is: is it fear?

Compare with Walton: "It goes without saying that we *are* genuinely moved by novels and films and plays, that we respond to works of fiction with real emotion….In fact, our responses to works of fiction are, not uncommonly, more highly charged emotionally than our reactions to actual situations and people of the kinds the work portrays. My…theory was designed to help explain our emotional responses to fiction, not to call their very existence into question. My negative claim is *only* that our genuine emotional responses to works of fiction do not involve, literally, fearing, grieving for, admiring fictional characters." (Walton (1997): 38) In Walton (1990), Walton is neutral on whether i-fear or i-grief are emotions; what he is not neutral on is whether they are importantly like emotions—they are—and whether they are to be counted as fear of this and that or grief for this and that—they aren't. He writes, "It should be emphasized that my denial that Charles fears the slime has by no means led to a conception of appreciation of representational works of art as an unemotional experience. The experience of fictionally fearing a slime or grieving for Anna Karenina *may* itself be counted as an emotional one, although one's emotion is not fear of a slime or grief for Anna." ((1990): 255; emphasis added) Walton's neutrality here, we think, just reflects his neutrality on what emotions are and, in particular, on whether emotional responses to X require certain beliefs, whether, for example, fear of X requires beliefs that there is an X and that X is dangerous. For his neutrality on that last question, see his (1990): 197, 200-202, 245, 249.

There's a not-very-interesting fight to have here about the word "fear". We don't have any substantive quarrel with someone who wants to say that, while there are two importantly different sorts of mental states – the one that we get into when actually confronted with monsters, and the one that we get into at the movies – with the different functional roles that we attribute to *fear* and *i-fear*, they're really both best thought of as species of fear (perhaps they're best thought of, in simulationist terms, as *on-line* fear and *off-line* fear). Such a person would agree with us about the mental architecture, and disagree about which bits of the architecture to attach which labels to. The architectural questions strike us as being clearly interesting, and worth arguing about. The labeling questions less so. For more on this, see section five.

> Emotional responses can also occur in response to stimuli that have not been detected by [beliefs]. Zajonc…lists a range of experiments tending to show that emotional responses can be triggered when the information that triggered the responses is unavailable [as the content of beliefs]. (Griffiths (1997): 92; we have replaced 'higher cognitive processes' with 'beliefs' since Griffiths is clear that belief is a higher cognitive process)

Griffiths's idea is that you can have emotions as reflexes, without relevant beliefs. And fear seems a decent candidate for such an emotion. Though he does not take this up in the quoted passage, fear as a reflex does not seem particularly irrational, any more than other reflexes. This echoes John Morreall who writes,

> [F]ear protects us and other animals in potentially dangerous situations, it does not require us or them to recognize danger, or even to recognize objects. Like the automatic reflex that makes our hand snap away from the hot frying pan milliseconds after we touch it, or the blinking reflex that protects our eyes, some fear does not involve mental representations or intentional objects. To be frightened by a loud noise, for example, lower animals and humans need not recognize the sound as made by a certain kind of thing, nor need they associate the noise with sounds they have heard before. Infants fear loud noises long before they have mental representations, associations, or concepts like danger…(Morreall (1993): 361)

Morreall thinks you could fear something without believing it exists because your fear is a reflex. Again, this would not be irrational. He think you could fear something without believing it exists because you are incapable of having the belief the thing exists and this would not be irrational. We leave open that he is right.[26] Likewise, we leave open that Noel Carroll is right in this passage:

> Imagine a psychological experiment where what is being tested is our emotional responses to the description of certain kinds of situations. We

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[26] Griffiths's and Morreall's arguments bring out that fear-ish responses to fiction might not be the best cases for i-emotion theorists. This is because there is a plausible evolutionary story to be told about why we would be afraid of something even when we know we are in no danger: the cost of a false positive—fearing without being in danger—is much lower than the cost of a false negative—being in danger without fearing. By contrast, the conventional wisdom on i-emotions, we think, is that fear-ish responses are one of the best cases for an i-emotion.

> are told stories and asked how we feel about them. We aren't told whether the stories are true or false. We don't have any existence beliefs one way or another. It seems perfectly plausible that we might respond to one of the stories by saying that it struck us as being very [scary], and then go on to ask the psychologist whether it was true or made-up. (Carroll (1990): 77; we replaced 'sad' with 'scary'. Chapter two of his (1990), especially pp. 78-79, makes clear Carroll would accept the substitution.)

Carroll thinks you could fear the monster in a case where you are unsure whether the monster exists and, hence, don't believe one way or the other that it exists. There is no hint he believes this fear would be irrational. If Carroll, Morreall, or Griffiths is right, fear of a monster without believing that the monster exists needn't be irrational. (1) is consistent with their being right. (1) is consistent with us feeling emotions about something though we know it—it?—doesn't exist. (1) is inconsistent with the possibility of someone rationally *fearing* something *and* lacking a belief the thing exists *because* he knows it does not exist.[27]

Our argument against

> (2) You do fear the monster and you are not irrational

and our argument for

> (1) If you know there is no monster, then you do not fear the monster or you are irrational

are based on judgments about what fear is like in cases where you aren't an infant or a lower animal or having a reflex.[28] They are not based on a theory of what emotions are like, even a theory about what fear is like. They are not based on a theory about relations between beliefs and emotion. They are not based on a theory about relations between desires and emotions.

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[27] A strong case against (1) and for (2) plus reasonably up-to-date bibliography on the paradox of fiction is in Gendler and Kovakovich (2005).

[28] Cf. Greenspan (1988) on phobic fear.

Our arguments against (2) are nothing like a solution to the paradox of fiction. In rejecting (2), we have solved an instance of it, one having to do with fear of monsters at the movies. One argument we used against (2) crucially depended on fear of monsters having a certain motivational force, a force that our reaction to the monster we are imagining lacks. It might be that for other emotions, motivational force is no part of them. Arguments like one we used will not, in such cases, yield i-emotions. Another argument we used against (2) crucially depended on fear of monsters being rationally limited by your knowledge of what exists. It might be that for other emotions, there is no such limit. If so, arguments like one we used will not, in such cases, yield i-emotions.[29] Generally, it might be that there is no need to posit i-analogues in some cases. This suggests—but just suggests—that there might be no general response to the paradox of fiction. Which thesis in the paradox to reject will depend on which emotion we are dealing with.

5

These last few paragraphs might raise some worries. Ordinary people would not describe their reactions to movie monsters as "i-fear." If anything, they would call it "fear." The worry is that what we call "i-fear" is just plain old fear produced by the imagination and producing different reactions than fear produced by belief. Our monster movie example does not show the need to posit some extra mental state. Rather, it shows the need to

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[29] If admiration is an emotion, it is a good candidate for an emotion you can bear towards things you know don't exist. Scott Soames admires Socrates and knows he doesn't exist (Soames (2008)); Gaut thinks there is nothing odd about admiring Superman (Gaut (2003)). If pity is an emotion, it is a good candidate for an emotion you can have without being moved. Derek Matravers pities destitute refugees he knows he cannot help without being moved to do anything for them (Matravers (1998)). Gaut and Matravers try to resist the motivation argument for i-fear by pointing out that when you feel pity, you needn't be motivated to do anything, and, hence, it isn't true that all emotions include or necessitate motivation. We can accept this.

posit that discomfort can be produced by the imagination and can have all sorts of behavioral and emotional consequences.

Likewise with desires. What we call "i-desires," the objection goes, are desires. Our *Sopranos* and *Romeo and Juliet* examples show not the need to posit some extra mental state. Rather, they show a need to posit a more flexible account of desire.[30]

We are happy to accept this much: we have no substantive disagreement if someone accepts our boxology, but insists on categorizing the states that we call "desire" and "i-desire" both as (importantly different) types of desire, or insists on labeling emotional responses, whether produced by imagination or i-desire, whether resulting in flinching and gasping or flights and yells, 'fear'. We think this is a bit of a strange choice of terms. More seriously, we think it leads quickly to Alan Leslie's position wherein the imagination and belief boxes are both labeled 'belief' (Leslie (1987), (1994)). But there is not much of an issue between us and the re-labeller.

What the issue comes down to is that we, but not the re-labeller, think it odd to rationally be afraid of something you know isn't happening. We, but not the re-labeller, think that if you aren't moved to freeze or to fight or flee a monster, you aren't afraid of it. We, but not the re-labeller, think you don't genuinely want Tony Soprano to be well. And so on.[31]

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[30] A detailed, interesting account is in Schroeder (2004). For an overview of theories of desire, see Schroeder (2009).

[31] Deena Skolnick Weisberg had a nice way of thinking about this. In conversation, she told us we are *splitters*. People who insist that what we call 'i-desires' are desires, what we call 'i-fear' is fear are *lumpers*.

But it is important to stress that the difference between us and, say, Nichols and Stich is not simply the number of boxes and the labels affixed to them. Because we think there are more boxes, we think the contents of what goes into those boxes differs from what Nichols and Stich do. If there were only a desire box, putting the content that Tony be well into it would be implausible. Hence, Nichols and Stich's view that the content in the desire box, as you watch Tony flee, is that the fiction be such that Tony is well.

A different, related worry comes up. As we said, ordinary people would not describe their reactions to movie monsters as "i-fear." If anything, they would call it "fear." They don't call how they feel about Tony Soprano as "i-wanting" him to be well. If anything, they'd call it "wanting." Why is there no folk psychological notion of i-fear or i-desire? We have a folk psychological notion of the imagination. Why not other imaginative analogs? These are interesting questions to which we have no answer.

6

We have argued that besides beliefs, desires, and imaginings, there are i-desires, close enough to be analogous to desires, different enough to be merely analogous. I-desires are needed to explain why we have certain emotional responses to things we imagine, but do not believe, to be the case. Further, i-desires are needed to make some such reactions rational.

We have argued, too, that similar considerations show that there is at least one imaginative analogue of an emotion. This helps to solve an instance of the paradox of fiction and shows the way to solving others.

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