

## **Titel: Are Fictional Emotions Quasi-Emotions?**

Philosophers such as Meinong, Ryle, Kenny, Budd and Walton have claimed that the affective states that we feel when engaging with fictional entities and situations cannot be considered outright emotions. Instead, they present a special kind of affective phenomena that from a phenomenological point of view are similar to real emotions, but lack some of the essential features of real emotions. Especially Alexius von Meinong in his work *On Assumptions* and almost a century later Kendall Walton in *Mimesis as Make-Believe* developed a sophisticated account of fictional emotions, calling them “quasi-emotions.” “Quasi-emotions” share with real emotions most phenomenal qualities, but lack some features that are essential to real emotions.

According to Meinong’s thesis in *On Assumptions*, emotions towards fictions are quasi-emotions because they ground on suppositions. Meinong thought that every psychic act can present itself in two forms: as serious or as non serious. Serious acts are perceptions, judgements and emotions. Their non serious counterparts are fantasies, assumptions and quasi-emotions. Since Meinong thought that emotions ground on cognitive acts, he defined quasi-emotions as those emotions grounded on non serious cognitive acts like fantasies and assumptions. Fictional emotions or emotions based on fictional objects are then, in this picture, a special kind of quasi-emotions based only on assumptions. The fact that fictional emotions do not ground on serious cognitive states thus confines these fictional emotions to the realm of the quasi-emotions, they are therefore considered by Meinong as non serious mental acts. To support this thesis, Saxinger, one of Meinong’s pupils, claimed that fictional emotions, in contrast to real ones, cannot take on the same role as real emotions, specifically: They cannot lay the ground for psychic dispositions. The emotions that I feel for a fictional character have therefore by Saxingers understanding no kind of lasting repercussion in my entire psychic life.

In a similar way, Walton in *Mimesis as Make-believe* claims that fictional emotions are based on second-order judgements or make-believe, while real emotions are based on judgements. According to Walton, fictional emotions furthermore have no motivational force.

In my talk I shall examine the Meinong’s and Walton’s arguments for the thesis of quasi-emotions.

Even though I am sympathetic with the main thesis of these authors who claim that fictional emotions are not based on judgements but on suppositions and make-believe, I will argue against the thesis of quasi-emotions. Against Meinong, I will argue that fictional emotions are able to take the place and role of real emotions and that they can furthermore ground psychic dispositions. And against Walton, I will bring forward the argument that the link between fictional emotions and motivation it is really not different from the link between real emotions and action.

I will conclude that fictional emotions are full-fledged emotional experiences.