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Emotion, Darstellung, Fiktion. Literaturtheoretische Überlegungen zum Verhältnis zwischen Fiktionsparadox und Mimesisparadox

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The discussions around the paradox of fiction that began 40 years ago have slowed down considerably during the last decade. The main reason for this decrease of interest can be seen in the fact that many theories have tried to show that the paradox can be solved or never existed. Nevertheless, there is hardly any major work on the theory of fiction that does not deal with the paradox in some way or other. Nowadays, however, the interest in the discussion has moved away from attempting to solve the paradox. Contemporary theory of fiction is rather interested in the question whether and how the long-lasting and extensive discussions around the paradox have led to a better understanding of the nature and variety of our emotional responses to fiction. This paper, however, sets out to investigate the discussions around the paradox from a different perspective. It undertakes to identify the blind spots in the discussions around the paradox, i. e. it aims at examining which aspects of our emotional response to fictional works did not come into view and, thus, have been neglected by the way in which the paradox has usually been dealt with.

One of the most popular strategies for dealing with the paradox consists in comparing our emotional response towards fictional works with our emotional response towards objects that are before our eyes (or that we experience via other senses) and towards events that are actually going on around us. This strategy has led to unsatisfactory results because it highlights the representational content of art works and neglects the particular ways in which this content is depicted. It thereby fails to take into account one of the most crucial aspects of fictional works, i. e. the fact that they are representations. Few theorists have questioned this popular strategy. Among them are R. Moran, who claims that emotional reactions to objects in the actual here and now should not be considered as the paradigms of our emotional involvements when we deal with fictional texts, P. Goldie, who maintains that most of our emotional reactions regard non-actual states of affairs, and D. Matravers who distinguishes between emotional reactions in confrontation situations and those towards representations. And these doubts about the way the paradox is dealt with have hardly had any impact on the discussion. It can be shown, however, that due to the fundamental differences between emotional reactions regarding objects we are confronted with and objects we learn about via representations, some of the answers given to the questions that have been treated in the discussion around the paradox implicitly dealt with the representational aspect of fictional works but not specifically with their fictionality. Moreover, by analysing the theories by R. Moran, P. Goldie and D. Matravers it is argued that widely neglected, but helpful questions can be raised if we compare the emotional response to fictional representations with the emotional response to factual representations instead of comparing it to our emotions in real life situations. Especially Matravers' theory has several advantages: it respects the representational aspects of our emotional response to texts and other art works, it provides us with an account that is based on semiotic features of these art works and the way we process them, and it can be productively linked to other relevant concepts like R. Gerrig's *willing construction of disbelief* or H. Rott's *doxastic voluntarism*. Moreover, by comparing Matravers' theory of emotional response to (fictional) representations with the corresponding theory in G. Currie's early works it is possible to raise further arguments

in favour of the thesis that an explicit exploration of the representational aspects of fictional works is of vital importance for a discriminating theory regarding our emotional response to fiction.

However, Matravers' theory is not entirely satisfactory because it postulates that there are no differences between emotional responses towards fictional representations and those towards factual ones. It is argued that taking into account the representational aspects of factual and fictional works might be a promising way to look for such differences. Investigations into our various emotional responses to fictional works would then be led against the backdrop of our responses to factual representations. Moreover, insight might be gained if we compare fictional representations not only to truthful factual representations but also to deceitful ones. Such an approach that looks beyond the problems that have been debated in the discussions around the paradox of fiction would be able to fill the gaps regarding our response to fictional artworks caused by these discussions. This would lead us to learn to distinguish between the kinds of emotional responses that are specific for representations in general and those that are specific for fictional representations. Moreover, it would enable our investigations into the emotional responses to fictional works to take into account two aspects that have also often been neglected in the discussions around the paradox of fiction: the differences between the various semiotic systems on which works of the differing artforms are based and the specific representational features that are linked to the fictionality of every specific work.

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