

## Recovering Fictional Content and Emotional Engagements with Fiction

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### Introduction

While reading *Explaining Imagination*, I can't help but imagine that imagination is on trial. I see Peter Langland-Hassan as presenting a compelling case against those who regard imagination as a *sui generis* mental state. His strategy is to demonstrate the possibility of reducing imagination to basic folk psychological states, such as belief, judgment, decision, intention, and desire, much in the way that suspecting, being thankful, or regretting can be reduced. Through a meticulous analysis of various activities associated with imagination, such as daydreaming, conditional reasoning, pretense, consuming fiction, and creativity, he illustrates that these activities can be explained without invoking a primitive mental state of imagining. Instead, they can be attributed to other, more general, folk psychological notions.

Langland-Hassan's intention is not to do away with the concept of imagination altogether. On the contrary, he explicitly states that his reductive explanation does not seek to eliminate imagination or deny its existence. He emphasizes that, just like demonstrating the molecular composition of water, for instance, does not negate the existence of water itself, the reduction of imagination does not eradicate its existence. Langland-Hassan's objective is "to explain what we do when we imagine, not establish that there is no imagining" (2020, 11). As such, he does not argue that imagining *p* is nothing but believing *p* or desiring *p*. Instead, he claims that we should not expect content mirroring: in some contexts, imagining that *p* can be reduced to believing *q*, whereas in other contexts, it can be reduced to desiring *r* or some other uses of beliefs, desires, judgments, intentions, or decisions. Furthermore, a singular reduction does not apply across the board: imagining that *p* can be reduced to a different cluster of mental states depending on the context.

While I believe that Langland-Hassan successfully raises reasonable doubts about imagination being *sui generis* and I acknowledge substantial advantages of the reduction, I have reservations about his reductive approach, particularly in relation to our engagement with fiction. There are two ways of processing fiction: imagining *p* and believing, in the fiction, *p*. Langland-Hassan claims that imagining *p* should always have the "in the fiction" operator attached to it (206). So, when we imagine *p* while processing fiction, we always imagine that, in the fiction, *p*. He further suggests that imagining that, in the fiction, *p* can be reduced to believing that, in the fiction, *p* (211). From this reduction, Langland-Hassan derives two significant implications. Firstly, he asserts that all our imaginings during fiction consumption are governed by inference

rules. Secondly, he develops an alternative account of how and why we become emotionally involved in fictional works.

In the second section of this paper, after a brief foray into issues of terminology, I will examine some instances of imaginative resistance, namely cases where imaginers experience psychological difficulties when engaging in particular imaginative activities prompted by works of fiction. In doing so, I aim both to provide support for Langland-Hassan's claim that imaginings are guided by inference rules and to demonstrate that the influence of inference rules on our imaginings is limited. By introducing a distinction between two modes of imagining – panoramic and selective imagining –, I argue that, while inference rules play a significant role in guiding panoramic imaginings, their impact in episodes of selective imagining is minimal, if present at all. In the third section, I will assess Langland-Hassan's views on emotional engagement with fiction through an examination of additional cases of imaginative resistance. It will become evident that no single account fully captures the complexity of our emotional engagements and their origins. Langland-Hassan's dismissal of one of the existing accounts – the simple account – is premature, as a discussion of imaginative resistance will reveal that the simple account has explanatory power that his account lacks. This does not invalidate Langland-Hassan's view; rather, it emphasizes the need for a diverse range of theories to comprehensively explain our multifaceted emotional interactions with fiction.

## **I. A short terminological interlude**

*Explaining Imagination* is a rich book and one of its many contributions is its reappropriation of the distinction between propositional imagining and imagistic or sensory imagining. Langland-Hassan reframes this distinction as a distinction between what he calls imagistic imagining (I-imagining) and attitude imagining (A-imagining). Of particular relevance to this paper is the concept of A-imagining, which Langland-Hassan explores extensively in his book, particularly in relation to consuming fiction. He claims that “A-imagining aligns roughly with the idea, common in philosophy, that there is a propositional or cognitive attitude of imagining” (6). A-imagining is “rich, elaborated, epistemically safe thought about the possible, fantastical, unreal, and so on” (6). It is epistemically safe in the sense that engaging in A-imagining “does not call one's sanity, knowledge, or reasonableness into question” (61). For instance, I can A-imagine that Kandinsky created the painting, later used as *Explaining Imagination's* cover art, during war time. There is nothing unreasonable about me doing so, even though World War I started a year after the completion of the painting. I can A-imagine this content just to see how my interpretation of the painting would be different if I searched for expressions of war-related anxieties and fears in the work.

In this paper, I will primarily address cases of resistance related to propositional content. The philosophers whose views on imaginative resistance I reference typically use the term “propositional imagining.” Given that this concept closely aligns with Langland-Hassan's

definition of A-imagining, I have taken the liberty of using "A-imagining" and "propositional imagining" interchangeably throughout the paper.

## II. Inference Rules and Imaginative Resistance

The phenomenon of imaginative resistance refers to the inability or unwillingness to engage with the particular imaginative activities prompted by works of fiction. Normally, we embrace a fiction's premises without reservations. For instance, when we are reading or watching *Game of Thrones*, we accept that there are noble families fighting each other, conspiring, and engaging in vicious acts of violence to claim the right to the throne of Westeros. Imaginative engagement with works of fiction is partly constituted by such acceptance. There are also times when we are not able to play along so easily, for instance, when we are prompted to imagine that Khal Drogo deserves the loyalty and love of his wife, Daenerys Targaryen, whom he had initially raped multiple times. Imagining seems like an activity that we can engage in at will, so how is it that willing is not enough in this case (labeled "the imaginability puzzle")? Additionally, although we have no problem at all accepting authors' authority in telling us what is true in the rest of the story, we experience difficulties in accepting that it is fictionally true that Drogo deserves Daenerys' loyalty (called "the fictionality puzzle").<sup>1</sup>

Langland-Hassan briefly addresses the issue of imaginative resistance in his book. I will not comment on his arguments at length, as Hannah Kim thoroughly dissects them in her "Imagination and Judgment of Fictional Truth."<sup>2</sup> My aim is to explore the implications of imaginative resistances cases for our interaction with fiction and utilize them to challenge his account of fictional engagement in general. The first set of implications is about how strictly we follow rules of inference when we process fictional works. One of Langland-Hassan's aims in the three chapters that are devoted to consuming fiction is to show how we recover explicit and implicit fictional content without an appeal to any *sui generis* imaginative mental state. In his framework, initially, we absorb the explicit content of a fiction through language comprehension

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<sup>1</sup> There are other puzzles associated with the phenomenon of imaginative resistance. I am not mentioning them here because they are not pertinent to the discussion. See Tuna (2020) for descriptions of them.

<sup>2</sup> However, I want to make some quick comments. First, I believe Langland-Hassan's dismissal of the imaginability puzzle as not a "legitimate" or soluble puzzle is unfounded because it is based on a misinterpretation of two competing views on imaginative resistance, Tamar Szabó Gendler's and Brian Weatherson's views. Langland-Hassan claims that determining whether Gendler or Weatherson is right hinges on discerning whether we are supposing or imagining at a given time, a task Langland-Hassan believes we cannot achieve (186-7). However, I find this portrayal oversimplified. Gendler discusses the disparity between supposing and imagining, but her analysis extends beyond this differentiation. She posits that we can imagine deviant propositions by exploiting our capacity for selective attention, but in moral cases, we refrain because imagining them would mean bringing them into our world, which we resist. The issue of supposing or other similar states is not even broached in Weatherson's paper. Second, I find Langland-Hassan's endorsement of Kathleen Stock's 2005 solution to the fictionality puzzle perplexing, especially since it has been debunked by Weatherson (see Weatherson 2004, 20, and Tuna 2020).

or general perception. This understanding does not necessarily require involvement of primitive imaginative states. The retained content is stored as beliefs about what has occurred in the fictional world. These formed beliefs enable us to engage in conditional reasoning, allowing us to infer what else is likely true in the fiction based on its explicit content. In Chapters 5 and 6, Langland-Hassan shows how conditional reasoning in general can be reduced to patterns of inference involving more basic folk psychological states. Then, he reiterates these results in the fiction chapters. In addition to conditional reasoning, Langland-Hassan adds that our processing of fiction may involve other types of inferences, such as genre conventions and symbolism. In short, by reducing imagining that, in the fiction,  $p$  to believing/judging that, in the fiction,  $p$ , Langland-Hassan establishes that the inference rules governing beliefs inherently extend their influence to govern our imaginings when engaging with fiction. A-imaginings inferentially interact with each other just as beliefs with matching content interact inferentially with each other.

To further emphasize the strict adherence to rules of inference in processing fiction within Langland-Hassan's framework, it is worth noting Langland-Hassan's response to a challenge posed by Stock. Stock claims that when we engage with fiction, our imaginings are governed by constraints that are different from those that govern beliefs. In such instances, we do not apply inference rules while recovering content (2017, 185). These constraints can be humor-preserving, or suspense-preserving, or emotional-impact-preserving (Langland-Hassan 2020, 203). Stock argues that the constraints cast doubt on the view that imagining is a species of belief as the author in creating the content is not trying to follow rules of inference. For instance, in choosing what additional material will preserve the most humorous effect, the artist is not following standard inference rules - such as modus ponens, or the statistical syllogism - but other types of norms. I cannot say I completely understand Langland-Hassan's response (see 204), but it appears he suggests that understanding the author's intentions, such as creating a humorous story, allows us to form judgments about likely events within that story. And he says that "these thought transitions will be constrained by normal *truth*-preserving inference rules" (204). All in all, for him, inference rules guide how we process fiction.

I only partially agree with Langland-Hassan that the imaginings we form while processing fiction are governed by inference rules. I argue that while we adhere to rules of inference during panoramic imagining, they have a less stringent influence on our selective imaginings. Hence, it will turn out that although panoramic imagining can be reduced to belief, it appears less likely that selective imagining can be similarly reduced.

The distinction between selective and panoramic imagining is not intended to assert a real or ontological separation, akin to the divide between I-imagining and A-imagining. It is a heuristic distinction, a practical tool for understanding the diverse capacities in which propositional imagining is employed. Selective and panoramic imagining are not different types

but rather modes of imagining. In examining some of the existing views on imaginative resistance, the nuances of these modes will come into sharper focus, as these views utilize this distinction implicitly. But for now, let's establish some foundational definitions to anchor our discussion. Different constraints apply to propositional imagining under each mode. During selective imagining of a work of fiction, our imaginings are not constrained by the inference rules that oversee our beliefs. We might attend to the local bits and pieces of consistency and coherence, while relinquishing concerns for global consistency and coherence within the fiction. Alternatively, we might also have a sense of the story's overarching framework, yet the details may elude us. Panoramicly imagining a text involves imagining all the propositions we apprehend and believe to be true in the fiction. Panoramic imagining mimics and functions like believing and hence is subject to the same epistemic standards. Standard rules of inference govern panoramic imaginings. When we are panoramically imagining a work of fiction, we reflect on what we read or watch, scrutinize it, analyze the causal connections between story elements, and ensure global consistency and coherence within the narrative.

To clarify the distinction between selective and panoramic imagining, I would like to draw a brief comparison to Michel-Antoine Xhignesse's distinction between occurrent and reflective reading, which has influenced my thinking (2021). First of all, occurrent reading, similar to Stock's F-imagining or what Langland-Hassan (citing Weinberg & Meskin (2003 and 2006)) calls streaming mode, involves a passive absorption of the material (see Stock 2017, 20-29 and Langland-Hassan, 188-190). Selective imagining is not merely a passive type of imagining even though it can be at times. More often than not, an imaginer might actively and voluntarily opt for selective imagining. Furthermore, the imaginer can filter out the material and only selectively attend to bits and pieces of it. Secondly, similar to Xhignesse, I do not claim that our imaginings can be exclusively panoramic or selective; instead, they exist on a continuum (see 3178). Lastly, while Xhignesse's aim is to demonstrate that occurrent reading cannot resolve the imaginative blockage experienced when engaging reflectively with fiction containing contradictions, my claim is that selective imagining can overcome such blockages. Selectively imagining is essential in our engagement with various forms of fiction.

The distinction between panoramic and selective imagining is not entirely novel, as philosophers have previously discussed or employed this distinction without explicitly labeling it as such. For instance, I believe this distinction offers a lens through which to view the contrasting perspectives of Cantianism and Wontianism on imaginative resistance (here I have Walton's, Weatherson's, and Gendler's accounts in mind). It is possible to interpret two supposedly rival interpretations of imaginative resistance, Cantianism and Wontianism, as providing explanations of different aspects of the phenomenon. When Cantians identify resistance as an inability to imagine and Wontians identify it as an unwillingness to imagine, they are not referring to the same mode of propositional imagining.<sup>3</sup> Cantians should be

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<sup>3</sup> Different versions of Cantian theories have resurfaced over the years (see Tuna 2020). Here, the

interpreted as tracing imaginative resistance to the inability to panoramically imagine deviations while Wontians should be read as defending the possibility of selectively imagining deviations (not the possibility of panoramically imagining them) and tracing resistance to our unwillingness to selectively imagine these deviations.

According to Cantians, particularly Weatherson (2004) and Walton (1994, 2006), we are unable to imagine morally deviant propositions because we lack the necessary means to make sense of them. Neither the explicit nor implicit statements of the author, nor any facts we can draw from our real world or import into the fictional world, aid us in making sense of these deviant propositions. For instance, there is nothing we can import from our world to the world of *Games of Thrones* or within that fictional realm that justifies that Khal Drogo deserves the loyalty and love of his wife, Daenerys Targaryen, whom he had initially raped multiple times. The world of *Games of Thrones* is a violent world where not only women's but men's assault or abuse is commonplace. But, even within that world, the term "rape" is used and marked as morally bad. Even though the series presents numerous instances where Khal Drogo proves his love and loyalty to Daenerys Targaryen, none of these acts can be enough to erase the fact that he raped her. Even if these acts of love could be reasons for her to develop feelings of loyalty and love towards him, they cannot justify that he deserves such devotion. Drogo neither acknowledges the wrongfulness of his actions and repents, nor does he offer an apology. Indeed, he is oblivious to the fact that his behavior was wrong. Within this context, we lack the necessary means to imagine how a rapist could be deserving of their victim's love and loyalty. The missing elements are the lower-level facts. The work, attempting to justify that Drogo deserves Daenerys' love and loyalty, violates a dependency relation and fails to make it fictionally true. For Walton, this dependency relation is supervenience, i.e., no difference at a higher level without some corresponding difference at a lower level. For Weatherson, it is a principle he calls "virtue," which states that

If p is the kind of claim that, if true, must be true in virtue of lower-level facts, and if the story is about those lower-level facts, then it must be true in the story that there is some true proposition r which is about those lower-level facts such that p is true in virtue of r. (2004: 18)

There are no lower-level facts that support the proposition that Drogo deserves Daenerys' love and loyalty. In fact, the existing lower-level facts support its negation. This violation of supervenience or virtue is the reason behind the failure to establish the truth of the deviant proposition. Weatherson suggests that our inability to imagine it stems from our failed attempts to fill in all the necessary details to make it true (19-20). However, this does not imply that we are incapable of imagining it some other way, by doing something we so often do, namely "ignor[e]ing, either in fiction or imagination, what goes on at some levels of detail" (Weatherson 17).

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focus will be on the dependency violation theories, especially ones developed by Walton (1996, 2006) and Weatherson (2004). For the remainder of this paper, the term "Cantians" will refer to these proponents.

Difficulties in imagining deviant propositions arise only during the process of panoramic imagining when we seek global consistency and coherence within the fictional content. Since panoramic imagining  $p$  functions like or mimics believing, in the fiction,  $p$ , if the author fails to establish the truth of deviant propositions, we are unable to panoramically imagine those propositions. However, if we shift to a selective mode of imagining, the influence of fictional truth no longer holds the same sway over our imaginings. Consequently, concerns regarding global consistency and coherence can be set aside, allowing us to imagine specific fragments and elements of the story. For example, while consuming *Game of Thrones*, an imaginer can focus on scenes depicting Drogo expressing his love for Daenerys or his actions such as killing her overbearing brother to clear her path to the throne, and in doing so avoid noticing the violations of virtue or supervenience. This is exactly the recipe Gendler provides us with to imagine the story she concocts, *The Tower of Goldbach*, where a proposition involving a conceptual impossibility appears. In this story, “twelve turns out to both be and not be the sum of five and seven” (2000: 68) (I will refer to this proposition as  $p12$ ). She says that

When we imagine the things that, on reflection, we realize to be conceptually impossible, we imagine them in ways that disguise their conceptual impossibility. So when God gets angry and causes twelve no longer to be the sum of two primes, we are considering ‘Twelve is the sum of two primes’ primarily with regard to one of its features, namely, that it is a proposition of which human beings are categorically certain only as a consequence of their hubristic arrogance. When the mathematicians’ search concludes with their having found five righteous souls in one town and seven in another, we are willing to accept that this does not give us twelve righteous souls because we are thinking of it as: “number of righteous souls required for God to lift the decree.” It is as a result of lots of local bits of conceptual coherence that the global incoherence is able to get a foothold (2000: 69).

Gendler’s description of the type of imagining employed in imagining *The Tower of Goldbach* roughly jives with selective imagining.<sup>4</sup> The core idea is that by constructing a fragmented version of the story in our minds and directing our attention to different aspects, we can avoid panoramically imagining  $p12$  and instead selectively imagine it. One correction I want to make to Gendler’s account is that she did not notice that, when opting for selective imagining to overcome imaginative resistance, the two mental states, imagining  $p$  and believing, in the fiction,  $p$ , come apart. Although she recognizes the distinction between the two, she thinks that they are so intertwined that we can lump them together as one, under the term “make-believing” (See Gendler 2000: 58 and Van Leeuwen 2021: 650).

Here the issue is that when we are selectively imagining, we construct a variant of fictional truth. We work with a filtered and at times manipulated rendition of what we can refer to as “fictional truth *simpliciter*.” As explained above, in Langland-Hassan’s account, fictional truth *simpliciter* is recovered through explicit statements and inferences we can make from these statements following various conventions depending on the context. It remains independent of

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<sup>4</sup> In fact, she contrasts this type of imagining with ideal rational reflection, which she interprets Cartians as equating with imagining (see 69). I use the term “panoramic imagining” to refer to what Gendler calls “ideal rational reflection.”

the imaginers. Fictional truth *simpliciter* serves as a guide for our panoramic imaginings, and it is what these imaginings can be reduced to. For Langland-Hassan, it is the truth we recover by following rules of inference. While his framework effectively explains the retrieval of fictional truth *simpliciter*, I believe it cannot be seamlessly applied to the construction of the diverse, subjective, and manipulated versions that occur during selective imagining. During selective imagining, fictional truth is fashioned on the basis of what imaginers choose to imagine and recognize as fictional truth. Fictional truth can be fashioned in this manner because prescriptions to imagine are necessary but not sufficient for fictionality (cf. Walton 2013). For instance, a reader, while reading Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Paper", might imagine that there is a woman creeping behind the wallpaper, echoing the protagonist's hallucination. However, the reader would not identify this proposition as fictional since it is not true in "The Yellow Paper" that there is a woman trapped behind the wallpaper. Similarly, a selective imaginer can choose which imagined propositions they will accept as fictional truth and which they will not. While I have no objections to Langland-Hassan's reduction of panoramic imagining to belief, I find that the reduction of selective imagining to belief or any other state is not as straightforward, primarily because we are not operating with a concept of fictional truth *simpliciter*.

One could argue that imaginative resistance cases are exceptional and that, in general, our engagement with fiction aligns with Langland-Hassan's depiction. However, there are many instances where selective imagining is our only viable option to properly engage with a work of fiction. A fictional work, such as one in magical realism, absurdism, or surrealism, might be inconsistent in a strict sense, involving logical inconsistencies or contradictions, yet still make sense. In such cases, selective imagining becomes necessary, as attempting to panoramically imagine these works, apply rules of inference, and seek global consistency and coherence would make us miss out on these works. Additionally, it seems quite unlikely that we follow rules of inference while recovering fictional content from these works. Recall Langland-Hassan's response to Stock's counter-examples, wherein authors employ norms that deviate from rules of inference, such as those aimed at preserving humor or suspense. Langland-Hassan maintains that once the author's intention is understood, rules of inference still hold. I am not sure if this response can be used in cases where the author's deliberate constraint is to preserve absurdity or embrace nonsense. For instance, nonsensical literature like Lewis Carroll's "The Hunting of the Snark" can only be imagined selectively. We engage with fragments of the story, such as a crew hunting for a mysterious snark that may turn out to be a dangerous Boojum. We do not dwell on the parts where the crew pursued the snark with forks and hope, and charmed it with smiles and soap. We do not try to fill in the details that would make sense of these statements of the author because those details do not exist. Readers construct their own versions of fictional truth, which gives rise to various interpretations of *the Snark*, including "an allegory for tuberculosis, a mockery of the Tichborne case, a satire of the controversies between religion and science, the repression of Carroll's sexuality, and a piece against vivisection, among others" (Wikipedia contributors 2023). These interpretations are made possible by different versions of fictional



truth. In the case of *the Snark*, there is no fictional truth *simpliciter* that can serve as an arbiter for determining the correct interpretation. So, it does not seem like in these cases, imagining can be reduced to belief as our imaginings are not guided by inference rules.

### III. Emotions and Imaginative Resistance

One of the advantages of Langland-Hassan's reductive strategy is that it supports a neat explanation of how we become emotionally involved in the fictions we consume. It explains, for instance, how we experience feelings of anxiety and distress when witnessing a scene in which Wallace, a character from the HBO mini-series *The Wire*, is murdered by his peers due to the possibility of him becoming a police informant. Furthermore, Langland-Hassan's account, the Change of Content View, solves various puzzles surrounding our emotional engagements with fiction. In Chapter 10, he contrasts his account with what he refers to as the Simple View and the Change of Attitude View, highlighting the strengths of his own perspective. An analysis of another puzzling case, a case of imaginative resistance, will reveal that Langland-Hassan may have been too hasty in giving up on the Simple View, which is defended by Kind (2011) and Spaulding (2015).

Langland-Hassan compares these three views on the basis of the responses they give to two questions. Firstly, what specific cognitive and conative attitudes are involved in generating the emotional response? Are they imaginings, beliefs, desires, or something else? Secondly, what are the contents of these states? Do they include 'in the fiction' operators? The Simple View, argues that the cognitive state is an imagining and the conative state is a desire, and neither of these states involves an 'in the fiction' operator. For example, in the case of Wallace's death in *The Wire*, imagining that Wallace is dying combined with a desire for him to survive results in imager to experience anxiety and distress. On the Change of Content View, 'in the fiction' operator is attached to our belief and desire. So, it is my belief that, in the fiction, Wallace is dying combined with a desire, in the fiction, Wallace survives, that generates the negative emotional responses. I think the Change of Content View presents a more reasonable and clear explanation of the anxiety and distress we feel in the case of *The Wire* but I am not sure if it is the right explanation when it comes to *Game of Thrones*.

As we have seen, Gendler shows that we can selectively imagine all sorts of contradictions. She also claims that when it comes to moral deviations, we do not want to do so. Perhaps it does not make sense that Drogo deserves Daenerys's love and loyalty, but we can focus on different aspects of the story without aligning everything happening in the story, and imagine it selectively. Gendler claims that imaginative resistance arises because, even though we can, we do not want to imagine deviant propositions because we fear that would lead to exporting these views to our world (77). We do not want to add to our conceptual repertoire that rapists can redeem themselves without even repenting. I think what happens in these cases is

that we feel disgust. Our resistance reaction is grounded in disgust-infused moral disapprobation or moral disgust itself.

Our moral disapprobation of Drogo and his act and our moral disapprobation of the author who is prescribing this imagining are transposed. The objects of our despise are Drogo and the author. The prescription of Drogo's worthiness of loyalty and love is interpreted by us as an invitation to adopt the author's views as our own. Adopting such a view feels like it involves a violation of what we care about, our morality, our views about rape, our views about forgiveness and so on. We are very likely thinking (consciously or unconsciously) that once we look at the world from that perspective, that perspective can become our own. For instance, once we imagine that Drogo deserves Daenerys's loyalty and love, it feels as if we would know what it is like to be a misogynist, what it is like to see the fictional world as a misogynist. The problem of contamination is that even if we believe that we are not a misogynist, we feel anxious and fearful that we are going to become a misogynist and see the actual world from a misogynist perspective just by adopting a misogynist perspective in the fictional world. Perhaps we are not going to transform into a misogynist or a bigot all of a sudden, yet entertaining that might be a possibility can scare us. Such imaginings threaten who we are. Out of self-preservation, we do not only meet these imaginings with moral disapprobation but further strengthen our reactions with the emotion of disgust so that we can push away these imagining as forcefully as possible – when needed.

Here, the Change of Content View does not seem to be able to capture how the work can arouse disgust. The main idea behind this view is that we can separate our world and the fictional world, our desires and beliefs about them neatly by using “in the fiction” operator. The whole point about imaginative resistance cases is that these two worlds sometimes come very close to each other. That's why Simple View has an upper hand in explaining our emotional reactions in these cases. In the *Game of Thrones* case, our desires and beliefs do not have in the fiction operators. We are being prescribed to imagine that rapists can redeem themselves without even repenting or that rape is justified and this prescription arouses disgust in us. We feel disgust towards the character as well as towards the author. So it seems like we should not be forced to choose one view of emotional engagement with fiction over another because they can explain different emotional responses fiction can generate. As mentioned before, my intention in bringing up this case is not to question the merits of Langland-Hassan's approach, but rather to emphasize the necessity of being more flexible and utilizing various theories to fully navigate the intricacies of our engagement with fiction.

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