

Reading Questions for October 9

These questions covers an article by Tamar Szabó Gendler and Karson Kovakovich called “Genuine Rational Fictional Emotions.” The answers do not have to be turned in. You will probably have to read more than once to get the answers.

*Background:*

For today’s reading, we’re going to look at a defense of the view that emotional responses to fiction can be rational; on Monday we’ll look at a response. Here’s a quick summary of today’s article. As noted, Gendler and Kovakovich defend the view that emotional responses to fiction can be rational. They defend their view by citing a study which seems to suggest that emotional responses to imagined situations are useful for helping figure out how to act.

*Questions:*

1. The first section of this paper is titled “The Paradox” (241-4). It does a number of things that are good to do in the introduction to a full-length philosophy paper. What examples can you find?
2. In the section titled “The Damasio results” (247-8), Gendler and Kovakovich explain an experiment that they think has important implications for the question of whether it can be rational to have emotional responses to fiction. Why do they think this experiment is helpful for them in establishing that emotional responses to fiction can be rational? Do you agree with them? Why?
3. In the section titled “Rationality” (251-2), Gendler and Kovakovich spell out three arguments against the rationality of having emotional responses to fiction and object to each. What are the three arguments and the three objections? (Hint: there are three paragraphs in a row starting with the paragraph starting “By employing” that each contain one argument and an objection to it.) Do you think what they have to say is plausible? Why?