

PHIL 4403: Philosophy of Art  
Prof. Funkhouser  
4/1/05  
Paper Assignment #3

Write an approximately 4 to 6 page paper on the topic below. (Again, those page numbers are just a rough guide.) Your paper is to be typed, double-spaced, stapled, with numbered pages. Do not use a cover page or bother with a lengthy introduction. Get directly to the topic below. Make sure it is written in proper English! Points will be taken off if there are too many basic writing errors.

**Topic:** I want you to defend some position that resolves the paradox of fiction. By ‘the paradox of fiction’, I mean the inconsistency that emerges from accepting each of the following 3, individually plausible, claims:

- 1) There is a behavioral and/or belief component that is required to possess “genuine emotions”. For example in order to be genuinely afraid, you must be inclined to avoid the object of your fear and/or believe that you are in danger. Or, in order to genuinely pity someone you must believe that they have actually been wronged, say.
- 2) In fictional situations, this behavioral and/or belief component is lacking. (E.g., Charles is not inclined to avoid the slime, nor does he believe that he is in danger.)
- 3) We have genuine emotions towards fictional characters and scenes.

The inconsistency can be resolved by showing that one of these 3 claims is mistaken. This is what Walton attempts by arguing that we should reject 3).

Your specific assignment is as follows: *Describe* an apparent emotional reaction to a film character or scene (though *not* one of fear). *Explain* how the paradox of fiction arises for this particular case (i.e., apply the above 3 claims to your particular case). *Attempt to resolve* the paradox by arguing that at least 1 of these 3 claims should be rejected, or otherwise try to defuse the paradox. (This step is the most important, so defend your position here in some detail. Also, go beyond merely repeating the claims of one of our authors, even if you do agree with them.) Lastly, explain whether your resolution generalizes to handle all other emotions, as well as our emotional reactions to literature.

**ASSIGNMENT DUE: Monday, April 18<sup>th</sup>**