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► **To cite this version:**

Yuchen Guo. 'Becoming' Romeo. Philosophical Papers, 2020, pp.1-32.
10.1080/05568641.2020.1773306 . hal-03016013

HAL Id: hal-03016013

<https://hal.sorbonne-universite.fr/hal-03016013>

Submitted on 20 Nov 2020

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'Becoming' Romeo

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Abstract. People have a capacity to imaginatively recreate mental states that they themselves do not have. These recreative states are referred to as ‘I-states’. Several philosophers, such as Gregory Currie, Tyler Doggett, and Andy Egan, propose that the combination of *i-desire* and *i-belief*—two typical I-states—can motivate agents. The goal of this paper is to defend this *i-desire* + *i-belief* account. Here I consider a kind of dramatic acting—method acting—in which an actor aspires to sincere performances by experientially inhabiting the role of the character, as involving I-states and that it implies that i-desires and i-beliefs can motivate agents. First, I analyze the features of method acting; second, I argue that those accounts which do not include the concept of i-desire cannot explain these features; third, I argue that the *i-desire* + *i-belief* account can do that and it therefore is the best explanation of how a method actor is motivated on stage.

Keywords: I-desire; Desire-like imagining; Imagination and Action; Experience-taking; Method acting.

‘Becoming’ Romeo

Introduction

Consider the following case:

Paul, a method actor, has been playing the role of Romeo on stage for a long time. Each time he takes the stage in front of spectators, he tries to ‘live’, ‘inhabit’ or ‘become’ the role of Romeo. Like Romeo, Paul feels himself loving Juliet; when learning of Juliet’s death, Paul feels distraught and even really wants to accompany Juliet to the crypt. As a result, Paul acts as if he were Romeo and succeeds in capturing his spectators’ attentions.¹

This is a typical example of method acting. As a method actor, Paul feels himself becoming Romeo and adopts Romeo’s thoughts, emotions and feelings. How are we to understand his behavior and thoughts? Why does Paul act like a fictional character? What states motivate Paul to behave in such a manner? It seems that in order to fully understand this case, we must consider the motivations for Paul’s behavior.²

Nichols and Stich (2000) provide an influential cognitive model (hereafter, ‘N&S model’) in order to explain some cases of imaginative pretense such as child’s role playing. Given that dramatic acting resembles imaginative pretense, there is now a tendency to consider dramatic acting as a type of pretend play and to use the N&S model to elucidate an actor’s motivation for her actions on stage (e.g., Kampa, 2018; Liao, 2017). According to the N&S model, in order to act as if he were about to commit suicide, Paul needs have a conditional belief that ‘If I act like Romeo, then I should kill myself’ and have a desire to act as if he were Romeo. The N&S model also has many variants in which one modifies the content of desires or asserts that the beliefs and desires that motivate the pretender are

1 This case is similar to imaginative transportation and imaginative immersion. Kampa (2018) refers to the phenomenon as ‘imaginative transportation,’ and Schellenberg (2013), Liao (2017), and Liao and Doggett (2014) refer to it as ‘imaginative immersion’. Kaufman and Libby (2012) name it ‘experience-taking’. I am inclined to claim that these concepts are different (see note 18)

2 It seems that in order to understand this case, one also should answer the question about emotion: why or how does Paul feel the same emotional state as Romeo? One proposal is that we feel the same emotions as characters because we empathize with characters (see, e.g., Currie 1997; Goldman 2006b). This question falls outside the scope of the paper. In the paper, I will only consider the question of action.

unconscious (Funkhouser & Spaulding, 2009; Kampa, 2018; Kind, 2011; Spaulding, 2015). The N&S model and its variants can be loosely called ‘*belief + desire* accounts’, given that they all agree that the combination of beliefs and desires motivates imaginers.

Another cognitive model of imaginative pretense is provided by Currie and Ravenscroft (2002) and Dogget and Egan (2007), according to which *i*-beliefs and *i*-desires, imaginative analogues of beliefs and desires, motivate pretenders. This account can also be applied to explain the motivation for Paul’s acting. According to this account, when Paul acts as if he were Romeo, Paul has an *i*-belief that Juliet is dead and an *i*-desire to commit suicide. Given that what motivates the agent are *i*-beliefs and *i*-desires, this model can be named ‘*i-belief + i-desire* account’.³

The aim of this paper is to defend the *i*-desire account. I do not wish to argue that *i*-desires and *i*-beliefs motivate agents in all areas, but rather to argue that method actors, like Paul playing the role of Romeo, are actually motivated by their *i*-desires and *i*-beliefs. In Section 1, I analyze method acting on the basis of the available empirical studies and describe its four features; in Section 2, I argue that the *belief + desire* accounts cannot explain the features of method acting; in Section 3, I argue that the *i*-desire account can explain that and it is the best explanation of how a method actor is motivated to act on stage.

1. Method Acting and Its Key Features

Method acting is a type or a training technique of acting in which an actor aspires to encourage sincere performances or to behave realistically by fully inhabiting the role of the character. This technique, which dominates the teaching and practice of acting in North America, is derived from the writings of Konstantin Stanislavski (1936; 1961), and is effectively developed by Lee Strasberg (1965; 1987), Stella Adler (1988) and Sanford Meisner (1987). Unlike classical acting, referring to the type of acting in which an actor portrays a role according to a model based on the role, method acting asserts an actor can bring herself closer to the experience of the character and then portray the role from her

³ Many philosophers insist that the theory that beliefs and desires motivate agents is universally efficacious and argue against the *i-belief + i-desire* account. They argue either that beliefs and desires can fully account for imaginative activities, and hence there is no need to introduce *I*-states (Funkhouser & Spaulding, 2009; Kampa, 2018; Kind, 2011), or that the *i-belief + i-desire* account itself faces a number of difficulties (Kind, 2011; Spaulding, 2015; Van Leeuwen, 2011, 2014). Other philosophers do not explicitly refute the *i*-desire account but defend the idea that beliefs and desires are sufficient to account for imaginative pretense (e.g., Langland-Hassan, 2012).

personal experiences.⁴ In a nutshell, the goal of method acting is often understood as for the actor to ‘experience’, ‘live’ or ‘become’ the character.

In my example, Paul is a typical method actor. On stage, he tries to experience the role of Romeo. He thinks and behaves as Romeo, a fictional character. When learning of Juliet’s death, Paul displays sadness and grief and wants to commit suicide, not because he wants to act according to the play, but because he experiences himself as Romeo and is in love with Juliet. Method acting seems to have the following key features: experience-taking, suppression of self-processing, improvisation, and transgression.

Experience-taking. Method acting often leads to an actor’s identification with a character. One of its features is that actors adopt the character’s emotions, thoughts, goals, and feelings. However, this does not sufficiently characterize method acting. In many cases, such as mindreading or empathy, one also often imaginatively adopts others’ mental states. Method actors not only take on characters’ psychological states, but also have particular phenomenological experiences; phenomenologically, these actors are likely to experience themselves as characters or imaginative episodes as facts. For instance, Paul may experience himself as Romeo and feel like he has lost his lover when he learns of Juliet’s death. It is better to use the concept ‘experience-taking’ to describe the actor’s identification with a character. ‘Experience-taking’, introduced by Kaufman and Libby (2012), refers to an ‘imaginative process of spontaneously assuming the identity of a character and simulating that character’s thoughts, emotions, behaviors, goals, and traits as if they were one’s own’ (*Ibid.*, p.1).⁵ Experience-taking occurs when one enters into another’s experience and experiences another’s state as one’s own.

Suppression of self-processing. Kaufman and Libby (2012) provide a detailed analysis on the concept of experience-taking and argue that experience-taking requires that one stops thinking about one’s own identity.⁶ Recently, a neuroimaging study on method

4 The process of creating the model on a role or of understanding the play is an essential part in rehearsing a play or preparing a role. However, for method acting, especially Stanislavski’s theory of acting, this process is not an active process during a performance.

5 Although Kaufman and Libby (2012) principally focus on the experience of reading, it seems that experience-taking also can be extended to the case of pretense or dramatic acting. Kaufman and Libby say that experience-taking is an ‘imaginative process of spontaneously assuming the identity of a character in a narrative and simulating that character’s thoughts, emotions, behaviors, goals, and traits as if they were one’s own’ (2012, p.1). This definition of experience-taking includes the simulation not only of the character’s mental states, but also of their ‘behaviors’ and ‘goals’.

6 In Kaufman and Libby’s experiments, firstly, participants are asked to complete the Private Self-Consciousness Scale including a series of statements regarding their attention on the self, such as ‘I reflect about myself a lot’ or ‘I’m always trying to figure myself out,’ and asked to give each one a score from 1 (strongly disagree) to 9 (strongly agree)

actors' brain activities reached a similar conclusion. Steven Brown and his colleagues scanned method actors' brain activities (Brown *et al.*, 2019). They found that the dorsomedial prefrontal cortex (dmPFC) was *deactivated* when actors play roles.⁷ The dmPFC is often thought to be associated with an agent's 'sense of self'. The deactivation of the dmPFC represents a 'loss of self', while the activation of the dmPFC represents a 'self-oriented thinking'. For example, in another experiment, individuals were asked to look at emotional pictures including unpleasant situations, such as a gun pointing at the viewer; while individuals consider how they *themselves* react to these situations, their dmPFCs are activated; whereas their dmPFCs are deactivated when considering only the pictures themselves (Gusnard *et al.*, 2001). Therefore, given that the activation of dmPFCs is thought to be associated with a 'self-oriented thinking', method acting seems to involve 'a suppression of self-processing' (Brown *et al.*, 2019, p. 14). In other words, on stage, method actors do not consider how they *themselves* react to those fictional situations; they do not behave and think from their own first-person perspective.⁸

Improvisation. A method actor's performance is often seen as a process of

for each item. In psychological studies, private self-consciousness is often viewed as a 'tendency to reflect on and think about the causes and meaning of one's behaviors and reactions' (Kaufman & Libby, 2012, p.4, see also Gibbons, 1990). Those who have high-level private self-consciousness are more likely focus on their own self-concept or their unique identity. Then, participants are asked to read a work of fiction and to complete the Experience-Taking Measure designed to test the extent to which they adopted the emotions and thoughts of characters. The measure includes seven items and participants evaluate each one on a scale of 1 to 9 (e.g., 'I found myself feeling what the character in the story was feeling' or 'I felt I could get inside the character's head'). The experimental results revealed a significant negative correlation between the level of private self-consciousness and experience-taking: the higher the level of the participants' self-concepts, the lower the likelihood of their taking the experience of the character in the story. Furthermore, in their next experimental studies, Kaufman and Libby reduced and then increased the accessibility of the participants' self-concept and measured the levels of experience-taking. The results suggested that there is a causal relationship between self-concept and experience-taking; the extent to which one's self-concept is salient negatively affects the occurrence of experience-taking. Thus, experience-taking involves not only thinking and feeling how others are thinking and feeling but also a feature of self-other merging: one person relinquishes one's self-concept and stops thinking about one's own identity.

⁷ In their experiment, 15 method actors are asked to answer a series of personal questions, such as 'Would you go to a party you were not invited to?' and 'Would you tell your parents if you fell in love?', from different perspectives including as themselves, as someone that they knew well such as a close friend, and as Romeo or Juliet. The experimental results showed that 'compared to responding as oneself, responding in character produced global reductions in brain activity and, particularly, deactivations in the cortical midline network of the frontal lobe, including the dorsomedial and ventromedial prefrontal cortices' (Ibid., p.1). In other words, method acting was associated with the deactivation in the brain areas involved in thinking about the self. Brown and his colleagues assert that the result suggests that 'acting, as neurocognitive phenomenon, is a suppression of self processing' (Ibid., p.14).

⁸ This feature also entails that method-acting is not what we call 'perspective-taking'. Perspective-taking is a process of putting oneself in another situation in order to recognize and share another person's internal states. It is often seen as a practical basis of mindreading and empathy (e.g., Goldman, 2006a). Some empirical works have shown that perspective-taking increases the degree of one's self-consciousness (Davis *et al.*, 1996), and that perspective-taking is a mental activity involving first anchoring on one's own judgments and then relying on one's own judgements to reason how another person thinks and behaves (Epley *et al.*, 2004). Given that method acting is a suppression of self processing, it should not be understood as a process of perspective-taking.

improvisation: the actor acts spontaneously on stage rather than struggling to construct a model and then acting accordingly. Unlike a Diderotian actor who conforms herself to the model of a role, a method actor is not allowed to imitate a model, but need to make herself 'become' a fictional character and behaves as if she were the character.⁹ A method theorist Leo Strasberg is clear on this point: 'he [the actor] has to permit himself to do it so that it seems to be happening for the first time. This means that the body, the voice, every facet of expression, must follow the natural changes in impulse' (Strasberg, 1965, p. 167). Method acting director Elia Kazan also said: '[A method actor] must be actual, not suggested by external imitation; the actor must be going through what the character he's playing is going through; the emotion must be real, not pretended; it must be happening, not indicated' (Kazan, 1988, p.143). Method acting is a non-conceptual and experientially-driven process. Method actors' thinkings and behaviors are based on their personal experiences, such as emotions, memories, feelings, desires and traits, rather than a theory or a law characterizing a character.

Transgression. Actors may still experience themselves as fictional characters even after the performance is over. Sometimes method actors get lost in the roles they have played and cannot break the character. For instance, Jim Carrey played Andy Kaufman in the movie *Man on the Moon*; Bob Zmuda, a producer of this movie, said that he found that Jim Carrey is very influenced by Andy Kaufman so that he has trouble returning to the real world: while Jim woke up in the morning, he felt becoming Andy and wondered where his life had gone¹⁰. Moreover, when a character has mental health issues, the actor playing the role may suffer from similar mental health problems. 'Post-dramatic stress disorder' is a provocative term used to describe a series of mental health problems that actors suffer from (Seton, 2006). In addition, method acting may also lead to doxastic or quasi-doxastic consequences. Although method actors do not believe they are fictional characters, their acting can produce some effects that we think could only happen if the actors truly believe they are characters. For instance, in a series of experiments, Meyer and his colleagues found that simulating others can change one's self-knowledge and makes one become more

9 Diderot (2000) argued that the actor should construct a perfect model and then imitate the model in acting. He denies that the actor's goal is to 'become' the character. Diderot thinks that emotions are unpredictable and uncontrollable; if an actor has the same emotional states as a character, he would not be able to repeat his performances and give uncontrollable performances.

10 This interview is available online at <http://www.contactmusic.com/interview/zmuda>. See also Liao & Doggett (2014)

similar to the simulated others: people's 'personal episodic memories, personality traits, and physical traits all became more similar to how they simulated another person's experiences and traits' (Meyer, 2019, p.12).¹¹ The experimental results imply that, in terms of personal experiences and traits, method actors may become more similar to characters they have played.¹² Therefore, method acting involves a feature that I call 'transgression', that means that acting performances overstep their boundaries and affect actors' real lives,

While it has been debated whether method acting can be considered equivalent to pretense,¹³ I do not think this is a meaningful problem. In fact, the term 'pretense' is too ambiguous: almost all non-doxastic activities can be seen as pretense. Sometimes pretense is typically seen as children's role-playing, sometimes pretense is viewed a synonym for imagining (Ryle, 1949) or make-believing (Walton, 1990), sometimes even it is equivalent to some non-doxastic attitudes, such as self-deceived states (Gendler, 2007), idiom (Egan, 2008) or irony (Clark & Gerrig, 1984). Given the varieties of pretense, I do not discuss whether method acting is a case of pretense.

2. The *Belief + Desire* Accounts

The N&S model provided by Nichols and Stich (2000) is one of the most popular forms of the *belief + desire* accounts. It is supposed to explain imagination-based activities such as mindreading, empathy, hypothetical reasoning, and imaginative pretense. The N&S model represents a propositional attitude by means of boxology.¹⁴ Beliefs and desires are two kinds of primary propositional attitudes. Hence, there is a belief box and a desire box. Believing that it is raining means placing the proposition that it is raining in the belief box; desiring that the world become more peaceful means placing the proposition that the world be more

11 In one of these experiments, Participants firstly rated themselves on 60 traits and judged whether some positive and negative traits such as 'charming' or 'unreliable' can be applied to them; and then, they were asked to simulate that they were another person and to judge whether these traits can be applied into the targets they simulated; finally, the participants rerated themselves on the 60 traits. The result demonstrates that thinking about others' traits can change one's evaluations of one's own traits and make oneself become more similar to the target; simulating others change one's self-knowledge (Meyer, 2019, p.5-7).

12 The famous Stanford prison experiment is also a typical example, where participants are asked to play the roles of prisoners or guards. Researchers found that the participants seemed to forget that they were role-playing and to lose control of their behaviors (Haney, Banks & Zimbardo, 1973).

13 Kampa thinks that method acting (he calls it 'imaginative transportation') is not a case of pretense, because it requires more skill and commitment and is more demanding and effective than garden-variety pretense (Kampa, 2018, p.685-7). However, he still argues that method actors are motivated by conditional beliefs and 'as if' desires—two mental states that drive pretend actions.

14 According to a viewpoint of boxology, our mind is a storehouse of various boxes; each box contains representation tokens.

peaceful in the desire box. The two boxes are connected to affection-generating systems and action-generating systems, just as beliefs and desires motivate agents and cause affective states. Nichols and Stich also claim that imagining, like believing, is a primary propositional attitude, and hence there is also an imagination box (or a possible world box). Imagining that Romeo cares for Juliet means placing the proposition that Romeo cares for Juliet in the imagination box.

It should be noted that in the N&S model, an imagination box is not connected to action-generating systems but is rather mediated by a belief box. In other words, for Nichols and Stich, what one imagines does not directly cause actions; rather, the effect of imagining on acting is mediated by beliefs. Then, the N&S model accounting for how one is motivated to pretend says:

To pretend that p is to behave in a way that is similar to the way one would (or might) behave if p were the case. Thus, a person who wants to pretend that p wants to behave more or less as he would if p were the case. [...] we assume that as a possible world description is unfolding in the PWB [= imagination box], the pretender comes to have beliefs of the form: If it were the case that p , then it would (or might) be the case that $q_1 \& q_2 \& \dots \& q_n$, where p is the pretense premise and $q_1 \& q_2 \& \dots \& q_n$ are the representations in the PWB. These beliefs, along with the desire to pretend, lead to the pretense [...] (Nichols & Stich, 2000, p.128).

A commonly cited example in discussions of pretense is Leslie's (1994) pretend tea party, which can be used to clarify the key features of the N&S model. Suppose that children are asked to pretend that two empty cups on the table are full. Someone then picks up one of the cups and turns it upside down. In such a case, children older than 2 years of age can pretend that the overturned cup is empty and that the other is full. According to the N&S model, in the pretend tea party, the children imagine that the two empty cups were full. This imagining causes them to form a conditional belief that if someone turns a full cup upside down, then that cup will be empty.¹⁵ Simultaneously, the children have the desire to

¹⁵ For the N&S model, the inference mechanism which is used in the belief box can also work on representations in the imagination box; imaginings and beliefs can share the same inference mechanism. Many rich details in the

act as if they took part in a tea party. The belief and the desire make the children pretend that one of the cups is empty. In the N&S model, what directly motivates the pretend actions are the conditional beliefs and ‘as if’ desires. Hence, the N&S model is still a kind of *belief+desire* account.

Langland-Hassan (2011) adopts a stronger position according to which mere conditional beliefs and desire are sufficient to cause pretend actions. Unlike Nichols and Stich, Langland-Hassan does not posit an imaginative box. He names his position ‘single attitude theory’ (hereafter, ‘SA theory’), since, for him, pretending that something is the case does not need to imaginatively entertain a proposition. According to SA theory, when one pretends that *p* is the case, what one needs to do is merely hold the belief that ‘if *p* has been the case, then *q*’ or ‘it is as if *p* were true.’ The SA theory accounts for how one is motivated to pretend in the following ways: in the pretend tea party, when a cup is turned upside down by someone, the children see that *one is acting as if one is turning a cup upside down*. Then, based on their background beliefs and desire to play the game, the children form a conditional belief that *if a full cup is turned upside down, then the cup would then be empty*. Their conditional belief, which is accompanied with a desire *to play the game* and a belief that *I should act as if the cup has been overturned*, causes the children to pretend that one of the cups is empty. For the SA theory, pretend actions are similar to hypothetical reasoning, as both require that one must hold counterfactual beliefs such as ‘if *x* had been the case, then *y* would have been’ (Langland-Hassan, 2011, p.166). According to Langland-Hassan, ‘the activity of imagining that *p* consists merely in retrieving one’s beliefs in generalizations relevant to the proposition that *p*, and using them to make judgments about what would likely happen if *p*, all of which may (or may not) guide a sequence of pretend behavior’ (*ibid.*, p.167).

episode of pretense are filled out by our beliefs. Nichols and Stich said:

PWB is the pretense initiating representation. From We are going to have a tea party there are relatively few interesting inferences to be drawn. In order to fill out a rich and useful description of what the world would be like if the pretense-initiating representation were true, the system is going to require lots of additional information. Where is this information going to come from? The obvious answer, we think, is that the additional information is going to come from the pretender’s Belief Box. So, as a first pass, let us assume that the inference mechanism elaborates a rich description of what the pretend world would be like by taking both the pretenseinitiating representations and all the representations in the Belief Box as premises (Nichols & Stich, 2000, p.123).

In the pretend tea party, the child pretends that the two cups are full. Since imaginings and beliefs share the same inference mechanism, the child infers that the cup will be empty if it is turned upside down.

Both the N&S model and SA theory are based on the *belief + desire* accounts of actions according to which beliefs and desires motivate agents to act. However, the combination of beliefs and desires do not easily account for the following features of method acting.

Experience-taking. For the N&S model, the three mental states of conditional beliefs, ‘as if’ desires, and imaginings characterize children’s pretend play. If Paul’s acting is equivalent to a children’s pretend play, then, while playing the role of Romeo, Paul imagines that he is Romeo; almost at the same time, he is motivated by a conditional belief ‘if I were Romeo, I would commit suicide’ and a desire to ‘act as if I were Romeo’. Yet it seems that the imagining, conditional belief, and ‘as if’ desire cannot ensure that Paul is experiencing the role of Romeo. An ordinary actor who does not feel becoming Romeo also need to imagine that he is Romeo. This non-method actor also can be motivated by the same conditional belief to commit suicide and the same desire to act like Romeo. In fact, almost all actors can be motivated by conditional beliefs and ‘as if’ desires when playing roles. The N&S model and SA theory cannot distinguish between an ordinary actor and a method actor. The proponents of the N&S model and SA theory need other factors to interpret why actors feel themselves becoming a character. These three states of conditional beliefs, ‘as if’ desires and imaginings cannot fully account for why an actor experiences a role.

Besides, the contents of conditional beliefs and ‘as if’ desires imply that a person holding the two states does not experience herself as a character. Experience-taking requires that method actors adopt characters’ mental states as their own. For example, as a method actor, Paul feels loving Juliet; when learning of Juliet’s death, he truly feels sad and even himself having a disposition to commit suicide.¹⁶ These states motivate Paul to pretend to drink poison, like tragic emotions motivate Romeo to drink poison in the fictional world. However, for the N&S model and SA theory, an actor must hold a conditional belief that ‘if I were Romeo, I would drink poison’ and a desire to ‘act as if I were Romeo’; the two states motivate him to pretend to drink poison. In this case, the actor does not adopt Romeo’s mental states. Romeo has a desire to die, but not a desire to act as if he were Romeo; while

¹⁶ Someone might think that it is impossible for an actor to really want to die when the character needs to commit suicide. However, if an actor can suffer from post-dramatic stress disorder or the same mental health problem as a character, why is it impossible to love a fictional character and to want to die in order to accompany that character? Another reason is that while an actor wants to commit suicide on stage, he does not really choose to die; thus, an actor cannot really have a disposition to suicide. In section 3, I argue that the actor does not choose to die because his mental states are limited to the episode of imagination.

Romeo believes that he should drink poison, he does not need to ask himself whether he is Romeo. Romeo neither suffers from a personality disorder nor philosophically questions his own existence. If Paul had these conditional beliefs and desires, he would not experience himself as Romeo.

Improvisation. For method acting, an actor's performance on stage is a non-conceptual and experiential process; the actor spontaneously acts on stage. However, imaginative activities characterized by the N&S model and SA theory are based on a conceptual process. When actors think and behave according to their conditional beliefs, their behaviors are based on a theory consisting of several conditional beliefs. First, an actor considers what Romeo would do; then, the actor constructs some conditional sentences characterizing Romeo's behaviors, such as 'if I were Romeo, I should drink poison,' or 'if Romeo learned of Juliet's death, he would display tragic emotions.' Finally, the actor acts in accordance with the contents of these sentences. That is a conceptual process rather than an experientially-driven process. Method actors' performances are based on their personal experiences, including emotions, desires, and feelings, rather than a result of conceptual and theoretical processes.

Transgression. The contents of conditional beliefs and 'as if' desires imply that actors holding them can distinguish the dramatic world from the actual world. In other words, they know that what happens in the dramatic world cannot happen in the actual world. However, the feature of transgression entails that actors behave as their characters even after the performance is over and that their acting on stage can affect their judgments about real facts. If actors know that a fictional world is quarantined from the real world, why is such a transgression possible? It is very difficult for proponents of the N&S model and SA theory to account for the feature of transgression.

Conditional belief. The N&S model and SA theory face an essential problem: in many cases of pretense, an agent does not hold relevant conditional beliefs. Suppose that Paul pretends to drink poison on stage. According to the two theories, the belief that 'if I were Romeo, I would drink poison' should be attributed to Paul. Nevertheless, he may not hold such a belief. Paul might think that it is better to stay alive because he believes that if Romeo had chosen to live, Juliet could have forever existed in his memory. Paul may judge that the greatest love would have been for Romeo to live for Juliet. In this case, Paul would

believe that ‘if I were Romeo, I would choose to live’ and not ‘if I were Romeo, I would drink poison.’ Paul’s conditional beliefs would not be consistent with the play. In this scenario, Paul pretending to drink poison would stem from the requirements of the play or other relevant factors, not from his own conditional beliefs.

* * *

One of the variants of the N&S model is to say that what motivates an agent are *unconscious* beliefs and desires and that an agent does not need to consciously think about what she would do in fictional situations. For example, Kind (2011) claims:

Admittedly, belief–desire explanations of pretend behaviour do often sound like rather implausible descriptions of what people engaging in pretence are consciously doing, but of course, there’s no reason we must maintain that the beliefs and desires posited by these explanations are conscious beliefs and desires. We explain ordinary behaviour all the time in terms of non-conscious beliefs and desires (Kind 2011, p.435).

Kampa (2018) considers method acting as a case of imaginative transportation and proposes that while an actor is ‘transported into’ the role she is playing, she is motivated by unconscious beliefs and desires:

It is, rather, to say that, in episodes of imaginative transportation, this process of filtering and inferring occurs outside of conscious awareness. Pretence-Meredith can consciously ask herself ‘What would Carrie’s lackey do in this situation?’ and make inferences on the basis of her answer. Palief-Meredith executes roughly the same cognitive operations, but she does it unconsciously.¹⁷ Indeed, Meredith doesn’t need to ask herself ‘What would a lackey do?’; she just thinks like a lackey would think and does what a lackey would do, without any explicit metacognition (Kampa 2018, p.692).

Kampa and Kind’s points imply that a method actor is motivated by her unconscious beliefs

¹⁷ The ‘palief’—a new word created by Kampa (2018)—refers to the case of imaginative transportation. Put simply, when Paul feels loving Juliet, he *palieves* that he loves Juliet.

and desires. Paul does not consciously believe ‘if I were Romeo, I would drink poison’ and desire to act like Romeo; on the contrary, he consciously assumes the identity of Romeo and feels having Romeo’s mental states. Moreover, what actually motivates Paul is still the combination of his conditional beliefs and ‘as if’ desires, although these mental states are outside of his conscious awareness.

Why are Paul’s conditional beliefs and ‘as if’ desires unconscious? It may be because of Paul’s cognitive attention to the fictional contents. Kampa (2018) and Liao (2017) respectively identify method acting with imaginative transportation or imaginative immersion: while Paul feels becoming Romeo, he is immersed or is transported into the role of Romeo; a method actor who experiences a role is more likely to be an immersed pretender or an agent who is transported into an imaginative world.¹⁸ And then, they use the term ‘cognitive attention’ to account for imaginative transportation and immersion. Liao explicitly said ‘Immersed pretenders and actors attend to the fictional content of make-believe, such as information about imaginatively-attributed mental states of their characters’ (*Ibid.*, p.7; see also Kampa, 2018, p.691-692). While Paul assumes the identity of Romeo, he attends to the contents of Romeo’s mental states. Besides, attention is a finite resource—when one turn one’s attention to one thing, one often loses one’s attention in another thing. Thus, while Paul attends to the fictional contents, he also loses his attention to real world features, such as his own beliefs and desires. That explains why Paul’s conditional beliefs and ‘as if’ desires are unconscious.

According to Kampa and Liao, the motivation for Paul’s behaviors on stage still derives from his conditional beliefs and desires. However, unlike an ordinary pretender, Paul’s beliefs and desires are unconscious because he attends to the contents of Romeo’s mental states, such as loving Juliet, and ignores his own beliefs and desires. I call this thesis ‘*cognitive attention + belief + desire* account’. Compared with the classic N&S model, this account adds an element of cognitive attention and asserts that conditional beliefs and ‘as if’

18 The phenomenon of identification with a character is similar to imaginative transportation or immersion. However, I am inclined to claim that transportation or immersion is different from experience-taking. The two terms mean that one person is immersed or transported into the fictional world and all her mental systems and capacities become focused on events occurring in the narrative. That does not literally entail that one person adopts a character’s thoughts. In fact, the Transportation Scale, proposed by Green and Brock (2000, p.704), does not include any expressions that mean that one subject adopts the thought and emotion of another person. Moreover, a recent empirical study provides evidence that identification with a character and imaginative transportation are distinct processes, because they are determined respectively by different factors: the valence of information about the hero of a film affected the level of identification (but not the level of transportation), and the time of deeds affected the level of transportation (but not the level of identification) (see Tal-or & Cohen, 2010).

desires do not need to be conscious.

The *cognitive attention + belief + desire* account is based on imaginative immersion or transportation. However, the latter does not necessarily entail a blending of the real self with the fictional characters. Actors, immersed or transported into fictional worlds, might forget about times and spaces, but *not* feel themselves becoming a character. Moreover, cognitive attention cannot sufficiently lead to experience-taking. In fact, almost all mental activities and human actions require varying degrees of attention. Non-method actors also need to pay attention to the mental states of the characters they play; however, this does not mean that they feel themselves becoming the character. Consider a Diderotian actor who has played the role of Romeo for many years and has also memorized all of Romeo's lines and actions. He has no need to consciously think about what Romeo would do. All that he does on stage arises from his unconscious beliefs and desires. Besides, he also maintains attention to the dramatic world; without attention, he could not continue his performance and reply to other actors' acts. However, as a Diderotian actor, he refuses to identify himself with Romeo and to adopt Romeo's mental states. Therefore, he is unlikely to feel being Romeo. Acting from both unconscious states and cognitive attentions is surely not sufficient for experience-taking.¹⁹

Cognitive attention is also not a necessary condition for method acting. A method actor can adopt the states of a character without attending to relevant fictional content. When Paul identifies himself with Romeo, he acts like a real Romeo. Sometimes he can automatically and spontaneously do something on stage without attending to the relevant contents of Romeo's mental states. For instance, Paul may hug and kiss the actor playing Juliet. Like Romeo, Paul's behavior is motivated by his love for Juliet. Since Paul has 'become' Romeo, the love for Juliet may have been integrated into Paul's own internal disposition and nature. Paul hugs and kisses Juliet because of his internal nature and disposition. He does not need to consciously turn his attention to the contents of Romeo's states, such as 'I love Juliet'. Compare: you love your wife. Because of your love, you hug and kiss your wife. But in order to do that, you do not need to consciously turn your attentions to the content 'I love my wife'. Your actions are based on your internal

¹⁹ Maybe a method actor needs to more intensively attend to the fictional contents than a non-method actor. However, it is very difficult to explain what is an intense attention. In addition, even if a person intensively attends to fictional contents, he does not always assume the identity of a character. For example, while we are reading, we also intensively attend to the fictional content; but we do not always feel ourselves becoming characters.

disposition, into which your love has been integrated. Thus, while Paul feels becoming Romeo, he might kiss Juliet with the same motivation that Romeo has. He does that because of his internal disposition, not because of his conscious attention to the concept of love. While Paul ‘becomes’ Romeo, he does not always need to pay attention to Romeo’s mental states; the latter is a part of Paul’s behavioral disposition. Given that attention is neither sufficient nor necessary for experience-taking, the *cognitive attention + belief + desire* cannot account for method acting.

* * *

Another popular account involves modifying the content of desire: a pretender has a desire to behave in a way that is similar to what an imagined scenario requires (Kind, 2011, p. 433, see also Funkhouser & Spaulding, 2009)²⁰. Namely, we have a desire to reply to our imaginings, to act according to our imaginings, or to act out our imaginings, and we are motivated by one of them to pretend.²¹ This account can be applied to method acting. For example, Paul imagines that he is Romeo and should commit suicide. Then he desires to act out his imaginings, which motivates him to pretend to drink poison.²²

Improvisation. Method acting is a process of improvisation that can be given two interpretations. In a negative interpretation, method acting is *not* based on a conceptual process and it is *not* an imitation. Method actors do not use their beliefs or imaginings to construct a model and then imitate it or make it true. In a positive interpretation, method

20 Strictly, this account should not be seen as a *belief + desire* account, but rather *imagining + desire* account. Unlike the N&S model and SA theory, this account implies that imagination can guide actions. However, unlike the *i-belief + i-desire* account, it denies that imagination can be motivators of actions. Hence, this account is an intermediate theory between the *belief + desire* account and the *i-belief + i-desire* account.

21 Schellenberg (2013) argues that a desire to ‘make true in fiction’ motivates an agent to pretend. I suggest that a desire to make true in fiction should be replaced by a desire to make true in *imaginings*. An actor may imagine something that is neither true nor false in the fiction and act accordingly. For example, on stage, faced with the actor playing the role of Juliet, Paul may imagine that Juliet is 170 cm tall; but his imagining is neither true nor false in Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*. For this reason, I propose that a desire to make true in fiction should be replaced by a desire to make true in imaginings.

Despite the content of a desire motivating a pretender, Schellenberg proposes an interesting position: while an actor is immersed in the role, imaginings and beliefs are on a continuum. In other words, there is a single box that represents a continuum from belief to imagination; there are not two independent boxes called ‘belief’ and ‘imagination’. In this paper, I only focus on an actor’s desire-like state rather than cognitive state. Thus, I remain neutral on the relationship between imaginings and beliefs. For arguments against her position, see Liao and Doggett (2014), who argue that Schellenberg’s stance itself implies the existence of I-desires.

22 An often cited objection is to say that a desire to reply to imaginings involves a concept of imagination (see, Currie & Ravenscroft, 2002, p.122-23; Velleman, 2000, p.255); but it seems obvious that a child or a method actor does not deploy the concept of imaginings. Schellenberg (2013) argues that this objection is not plausible. A desire to reply to imaginings (For Schellenberg, it’s a desire to make true in fiction) is a *nonconceptual* state having conceptual content. A mental state *M* with conceptual content *p* is a nonconceptual state if and only if a subject can be in *M* without having the conceptual tools to individuate the conceptual content of that mental state. Thus, it is possible for one person to have a desire to reply to one’s imaginings without understanding the concept of imagination.

acting is based on actors' personal experiences. Method actors' performances come from their own emotions, memories, and desires. When an actor is motivated by a desire to reply to her imaginings, her actions seem to be an imitation rather than an improvisation. First, she characterizes a role in her imagination. Then, she acts it out because she has a desire to reply to her imaginings. Her goal on stage is to conform herself with her imaginings. Moreover, while an actor needs to be motivated by her desire to reply to imaginings, her personal experiences seem to be insignificant and worthless. It is not necessary to experience the role of Romeo in order to play it; all she can do on stage is to act in accordance with the contents of her imaginings. For example, an actor imagines that Romeo is sad and that Romeo decides to kill himself when learning of Juliet's death. This actor displays sadness and pretends to drink poison because he wants to show what he has imagined to the audience. In this case, the actor's genuine emotions, affective attitudes, and personal experiences seem to be useless in terms of performance. This type of performance is not method acting.²³

3. Method Acting and I-states

In this section, I would argue that it is plausible to attribute *i*-beliefs and *i*-desires to dramatic actors, and that I-states can explain the features of method acting. It follows that the *i-belief + i-desire* account is the best explanation of method acting.

In the last two decades, many philosophers have claimed that human imagination involves an ability to recreate mental states. Currie and Ravenscroft (2002) distinguished creative imagination from recreative imagination. The former is the capacity to 'put together ideas in a way that defies expectation or convention' (*Ibid.*, p.9), while the latter is the capacity to recreate imaginative states that are not perceptions, beliefs, or desires but are like these states— 'like them in ways that enable the states possessed through imagination to mimic and, relative to certain purposes, to substitute for perceptions, beliefs or [desires]' (*Ibid.*, p.11). Alvin Goldman (2006a, 2006b) introduced the concept of enactment-*i*-imagination as a matter of creating or trying to create the simulation or the facsimile of a selected mental state in one's own mind. Given that there are three typical mental states—

²³ While an actor is motivated by a desire to reply to imaginings, her imitation may be unconscious. She does not need to consciously ask herself: 'what am I imagining?'. My objection is not that an actor having a desire to reply to imaginings must understand the concept of imaginings or consciously ask himself. It is rather that a desire to reply to imaginings limits an actor's acting in a process of imitation and that it does not leave space for improvisation.

beliefs, desires, and perceptions, people can have recreative beliefs, recreative desires, and recreative perceptions that are seen as imaginative recreations of beliefs, desires, and perceptions. These recreative states are abbreviated as *I-states*.

An i-state is an imaginative recreation of its counterpart, and it duplicates or resembles its counterpart in certain significant respects, such as contents, functions, representational structure, or phenomenological qualities. Put simply,

a mental state *M* is an i-state *iff* 1) *M* duplicates, replicates, or resembles another state, *M*#, in some significant respects ; and 2) *M* is an imagining.²⁴

I-states include not only cognitive attitude, but also conative and perception-like attitudes. I-beliefs and i-desires are the two typical forms of I-states.²⁵ Philosophers have come to a consensus that imagination can share some of the characteristics of belief. In contrast with the consensus regarding i-belief, i-desire is quite controversial. The current debates on i-desires focus on two essential problems: the first is whether i-desires produce affective states (Currie, 2010; Doggett & Egan, 2012. For the objections, see Kind, 2011; Salis, 2014; Spaulding, 2015); the other is whether i-desires can motivate agents (Currie, 2002; Currie & Ravenscroft, 2002; Doggett & Egan, 2007). In this paper, I do not consider the problem of affective states, but focus only on the problem of motivation.

* * *

When Paul feels becoming Romeo, he shares some of Romeo's mental states. How does he share the mental states of a character? The simple answer is to say that Paul and Romeo have the same cognitive and conative attitudes. Romeo believes that Juliet is the

²⁴ Imagining seeing a red apple shares the representational content and the phenomenal content of seeing a red apple. Therefore, 'imagine seeing' is an *i-perception*. Nevertheless, the condition 1) needs refinement. A problem is that similarity, or resemblance, is symmetrical; when 'imagine seeing' resembles 'seeing', 'seeing' also resembles 'imagine seeing.' But 'seeing' is not an i-state. In order to avoid this problem, we introduce the condition 2).

²⁵ I-beliefs and i-desires are often involved in two typical activities: mindreading and affective responses to fiction. Consider the activities of mindreading. Suppose that Ed has dressed up as a vampire. When his neighbor sees him, she dashes into her house. In this case, she has a belief that I am stuck with a vampire and a desire to escape from the vampire. In order to understand her behavior, Ed comes to have a pretend belief that I am stuck with a vampire and to have a pretend desire to escape from the vampire. Ed's pretend belief and desire copy the content of his neighbor's belief and desire. His pretend belief and desire are not genuine belief and desire. It is rather that Ed imaginatively believes or desires. Thus, pretend belief and desire are I-states.

Considering the affective response to fiction, suppose that you are reading Anna Karenina. You may imagine that Anna killed herself. Your imagining produces your affective response: you feel pity for Anna. Thus, your imagining is an i-belief because it shares the mind-to-world direction of fit of a belief and plays more or less the causal roles of beliefs such as generating emotional responses.

most beautiful girl; Paul should also believe that. Romeo wants to commit suicide; Paul should also have a desire to die. However, this is not plausible. Usually, a mental state is individualized by its content and type. A belief that it is raining is distinguished from a belief that it is snowing because they involve different content, although both of them are beliefs; the belief that it will rain and the desire that it will rain have the same content, but they are different because the former is a belief and the latter is a desire. It seems that Paul does not and cannot really hold the same *types* of mental states as Romeo. If the audience left the theater, Paul could stop his performance, but a real Romeo could not. That implies that Paul does not hold a belief that he is Romeo. If Paul holds a desire to commit suicide, he may really choose to die. Yet, Paul does not choose to die. Hence, Paul does not really desire to commit suicide. If they had the same types of attitudes, Paul would be irrational and could not succeed in playing the role of Romeo.

Given that Paul and Romeo do not hold the same types of attitudes, the only interpretation is to say that they share the same content. When Romeo believes that Juliet is the most beautiful woman in the world, Paul entertains the same proposition. When Romeo desires that Juliet not die, Paul reports that he also hopes that she not die. Besides, it seems that Paul's mental states also share the phenomenal contents of Romeo's states. When feeling becoming Romeo, Paul also knows what it is like to love Juliet, to die for love or to live as a part of a family in the Middle Ages.

Sharing the same content is not enough to ensure that Paul adopts Romeo's thoughts and feelings. Suppose Paul hopes that Juliet dies. This shares the same content as Romeo's belief that Juliet dies, but in this case Paul does not adopt Romeo's states: Romeo believes that Juliet dies, but does not hope that she dies! Paul's mental states share not only the same contents as Romeo's, but also share the same 'direction of fit'. Our cognitive attitudes such as belief, supposing, or accepting share a mind-to-world 'direction of fit.' They aim to fit the world. In contrast, conative attitudes such as desire, wish, or hope share a world-to-mind 'direction of fit'. While Romeo believes something, Paul should hold a *cognitive* attitude that has a mind-to-world 'direction of fit'; while Romeo desires, hopes, or wishes something, Paul should hold a *conative* attitude that has a world-to-mind 'direction of fit' (the 'world' refers not only to the actual world, but also the fictional world).

Paul's mental states are neither an acceptance nor supposition. I admit that if Paul

supposes, accepts, or half-believes what Romeo believes or perceives, he too can share the same mental content as Romeo. However, Paul shares not only the content of Romeo's cognitive attitude, but also the content of Romeo's conative attitude. Besides, as a method actor, he also comes to have mental images concerning Romeo and Juliet, is emotionally involved in his performance, and is even disposed to do something that Romeo would do. Simply cognitively supposing, accepting, or quasi-believing something cannot produce these abundant activities. Paul must have a series of mental states including cognitive, motivational, affective, and sensory attitudes.

Therefore, method acting is an imaginative process in which we have a series of mental states, including cognitive, conative and sensory attitudes, that share the same propositional and phenomenal contents and the same 'direction of fit' as a character's states. This seems to be equivalent to a definition of an I-state. We know that I-states are seen as a series of imaginative states that resemble their counterparts in some significant respects, such as contents, functions, or representational structures. This definition of I-states is equivalent to the description of the mental states in method acting performances. Hence, method acting is a case of I-states.²⁶ When Paul experiences himself as Romeo, he is occupied by I-states.

In section 2, I have argued that beliefs and desires cannot account for some of the features of method acting. Hence, the proponents of the *belief + desire* accounts have no alternative mental state to explain how an actor is motivated. It is better to claim that the combination of i-beliefs and i-desires motivates method actors to act on stage. When Romeo has a desire to buy poison, he is motivated by the desire to buy poison. When Paul has an i-desire to buy poison, he is motivated by his i-desire to *pretend to buy poison*. I do not require that Paul performs the same actions as Romeo (if Paul really were to do all the things as Romeo did, then he may be irrational) but that his actions be *the fictional*

26 Gendler (2008a, 2008b) introduces a new term, 'alief,' which is an automatic attitude that exists in tension with a person's explicit beliefs. For example, a person standing on a transparent glass balcony may believe that he is safe, but alieve that he is in danger. His alief may motivate him to feel fear. Besides, Kampa (2018) introduces the term 'palief' to describe the mental states one has during imaginative transportation.

It is better to use the term 'I-states' to describe experience-taking. Unlike alief or palief, there is abundant evidence in favor of the thesis of I-states. For example, empirical studies demonstrate that imaginings resemble perceptions in many significant aspects (e.g., Goldman, 2006, p. 151-157). In cognitive science, some studies have revealed that imaginings share 'the same code' as beliefs (Nichols, 2006). However, there is no empirical evidence for the existence of alief or palief. I-states are a kind of state that we have known, but alief and palief are unfamiliar states that are created by us in order to account for certain particular phenomenon. For this reason, if I-states can account for method acting, then it should not introduce alief and palief.

counterparts of Romeo's actions. For example, Paul's i-desire to die is the fictional counterpart of Romeo's desire to die, and Paul's pretending to drink poison is the fictional counterpart of Romeo's actions.

* * *

I-states can easily account for the features of method acting.

Experience-taking. This feature implies that method actors imaginatively adopt the mental states of a character and also experience themselves as a character. I-states can easily account for this feature. As demonstrated, I-states can share phenomenal contents of their counterparts. In other words, I-states can provide the phenomenal contents of experiencing a thing, although we do not really experience it. For example, i-seeing a red apple can make someone know what it is like to see a red apple. While watching a horror film, i-desiring to avoid a monster can create the experience of being 'pulled' or 'tugged' to escape it. The combination of this i-desire and an i-belief that there is a monster causes affective states, such as fear.²⁷ Similarly, while i-seeing Juliet, Paul may know what it is like to see Juliet. While having an i-desire that she not die and an i-belief that she died, Paul may know what it is like to learn of Juliet's death and experience the same affective states as Romeo would have. Thus, Paul has a series of phenomenal experiences that Romeo would have. All these phenomenal experiences together recreate his feeling of 'being' Romeo.²⁸ In this way, Paul experiences himself as Romeo.

Suppression of self-processing. Method actors' performances are not based on their thoughts about how they react to a scene as themselves, but rather about how they, as characters, react to a scene. I-states also can account for this feature. Paul has not only a series of I-states recreating Romeo's mental states, but also imagines being Romeo. The latter is not propositional or sensory imagining. Rather, he is engaged in 'experiential imagining', which is a kind of imagining *from the inside*. Paul imagines having an experience of being Romeo. In this case, Paul does not pick up himself as the content of his imagining. In other words, such an imagining does not involve the representation of Paul

27 There exists a theoretical position that holds that we do not have real emotions toward fictional events but quasi-emotions. Quasi-emotions differ from real emotions as regards their cognitive origin (quasi-emotions are not generated by existence beliefs) and their behavioral consequences (quasi-emotions are not motivational). Though quasi-emotions are not real emotions, they are phenomenologically similar—both can be seen as a kind of affective state. (See Walton, 1990).

28 In order to have a feeling of being Romeo, Paul must have many phenomenal experiences that are similar to what Romeo would have felt. Only having a few experiences would not cause Paul to feel becoming Romeo.

himself (Williams, 1973; Recanati, 2007). When Paul imagines being Romeo, he does not imagine that *Paul himself* loves Juliet, drinks poison and kills Paris, but only imagines loving Juliet, drinking poison and killing Paris. Given that imaginings are a recreation of mental states, Paul's imagining being Romeo recreates a subjective experience of being Romeo.²⁹ On the basis of this particular recreative experience, Paul does not think about how he himself acts, but about how he being Romeo acts.

Improvisation. Method acting is an experiential rather than conceptual process based on improvisation, not imitation. According to the i-desire account, actors' performances are motivated by their own i-beliefs and i-desires. While playing the role of Romeo, Paul has an i-belief that Juliet is dead and an i-desire to accompany her; the combination of the two I-states motivates Paul to pretend to drink poison on stage. Both the i-belief and the i-desire are states that Paul really holds.³⁰ As demonstrated, I-states can provide phenomenal experiences that are similar to what Romeo would have felt. In this sense, Paul may feel that he really loves Juliet and wants to die for love. Subsequently, Paul is motivated directly by his own affective states and his own 'wanting' for love. Thus, Paul's performance is based on his personal experiences. Hence, the i-desire account does not imply that method acting is an imitation.

Transgression. An actor's performance can affect real life. For example, an actor may still feel herself being a character after the performance is over, or she may become more similar to characters she has played. Recently, psychologists have discovered several cases in which merely imagining *p* produces effects that we think only believing or perceiving *p* would cause. Although we only imagine *p* and believe not-*p* (or something incompatible with *p*), our reactions under certain situations are characteristic of genuinely believing or perceiving *p*. Gendler (2003, 2006) named these cases 'imaginative contagion'. Many psychological experiments reveal the existence of imaginative contagion. For instance, in an experiment, children were asked to imagine that one of two empty boxes is

29 It is impossible for a person to have an experience of being another person. This kind of experience is subjective; only Romeo can have an experience of being Romeo. I suggest that Paul's imagining being Romeo is not a perfect duplication of Romeo's subjective experience, but an *imperfect recreation*. In our daily life, many things are imperfect recreations of other things. For example, a hobby horse is an imperfect recreation of a real horse because it only simulates a horse's head; its other parts are not similar. When I say that imagining being Romeo is a recreation of the experience of being Romeo, I mean that it is an imperfect recreation. It should not be confused with the term 'identity' or 'sameness.'

30 Strictly, it should be said that one *actually* has I-states, but *imaginatively* has the *counterparts* of I-states. For example, Paul i-believes that Juliet is the most beautiful woman. In this case, he actually has an i-belief, but imaginatively have a belief that Juliet is the most beautiful woman.

occupied by a monster or a rabbit. When asked whether there was really a monster or a rabbit in the box, children could confirm that they were just imagining. However, while adults left the room, half of the children opened one or two boxes; those children opening the boxes reported that they did so because they wondered whether there was something in the boxes (Harris, 2000, p.173-80). It seems that in this case, children's imaginings produced a doxastic consequence, like really believe something that was in the box. In another experiment, researchers asked supporters of political party A, supporters of opponent party B, and people who are neutral to imagine supporting party A. They also asked them whether they would do something to benefit party A. During a non-election period, there were no differences among the three groups: 80% of A-supporters, 80% of B-supporters, and 80% of neutrals reported that they would help party A. However, during an election period, only 40% of B-supporters reported that they would assist party A (Harvey, 1992). In this example, B-supporters imagined that they were A-supporters, but their reactions during an election period displayed characteristics of believing that they were A-supporters. I have argued that method acting is based on a case of I-states. Given that I-states are imaginings, the phenomenon that performance affects real life can be seen as a case of imaginative contagion: method actors' I-states produce effects that we think only their real counterparts could produce. Actors may feel themselves being a character in their daily lives, or they may become similar to characters they have played. This occurs because their I-states play the functional role of their real counterparts in producing doxastic consequences. For instance, after the performance is over, Paul may still feel like being Romeo, because imagining 'I am Romeo' mirrors the functional roles of believing 'I am Romeo.' Psychological studies about the nature of imaginative contagion can better account for the features of transgression.

To sum up, method acting is based on an imaginative process in which one person's mental states resemble the character's but are of a different type; this is equivalent to the case of I-states. Hence, I conclude that method acting is based on I-states. Since method actors do not have appropriate beliefs and desires to perform actions. It is rather that i-beliefs and i-desires motivate them. In non-imaginative situations, beliefs play a guiding role, and desires provide the impulse for action. On stage, i-belief plays a guiding role and i-desires provide the impulse for dramatic actions.

Conclusion

Supposing that Paul is a method actor. While feeling becoming Romeo, he adopts Romeo's mental states as if they were his own. I have argued that the *belief + desire* accounts cannot account for Paul's actions on stage, and that only I-states can account that. It can be concluded that while an actor feels becoming a character, her i-desires motivate her to act on stage. Moreover, my aim is to argue that method acting performance is motivated by i-beliefs and i-desires; for non-method performance, I am inclined to think that it is still motivated by beliefs and desires.

With respect to the psychology of dramatic acting, two important questions need to be answered. First, it is the question of what kind of mental states drive *actors'* performances. Second, it is the question of how *audiences* are affected by dramatic acting. The second remains a central issue in philosophical studies of our affective responses to fiction (e.g., Carroll 1990; Gendler 2008a; Gendler & Kovakovich 2005; Moran 1994; Radford 1975; Walton 1990; Weinberg & Meskin 2006). However, there are relatively few philosophical studies on the first question. I hope that the present paper can help clarify this question with respect to the psychology of what motivate actors.

In addition, some opponents may claim that method acting is an extremely non-standard behavior and that the *i-belief + i-desire* account can only be applied in the context of dramatic acting. In fact, method acting also happens in children's pretend play. Sometimes a child is an innate method actor. When a child pretends to be a cat, she imagines being a cat and is immersed in her imaginings so that she sometimes experiences herself as a cat. Children's pretend play is not usually based on a theory, but a process of improvisation. In addition, method acting also happens in social life. Someone often needs to play various roles in different social contexts. For example, an undercover agent may need to play a member of mafia, so he experiences himself as a drug dealer and acts like a criminal so that he sometimes loses himself in his pretending. A boy may want to become a mature man, so he tries to 'live' a role of a gentleman and to act as if he were older. Perhaps in all these cases, agents are motivated by I-states, rather than beliefs and desires.³¹

31 Thanks to three anonymous referees for their constructive criticisms and helpful suggestions, and to Guillaume Dechauffour, Victor Nifle, Jean-Baptiste Rauzy and others for comments on previous versions of this paper presented at the doctoral seminar at the Sorbonne in 2019.

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