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**Emotions and Education: Cultivating Compassionate Minds.**

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**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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## Abstract

This thesis is primarily a philosophical exploration of emotions. From a feminist, liberal perspective, I focus on the cultivation of morally appropriate emotions, particularly compassion, in education. My central claim is that emotions are essential elements of human intelligence and wellbeing. They are complex responses to events of significance to us and, because emotions play a central role in our lives, they help to define who we are and why we are as we are; they are expressions of our values and what we value. Emotions can motivate us to action, and so we need, if we want just institutions, to ensure that those actions are ethical and proportionate. On the view that emotions can be rational, and that they result from eudaimonistic judgements, if we want a society of healthy human beings who have concern for others, who know how to treat others fairly and sensitively, how to take action when things go wrong, then we need to attend, I argue here, to emotional health in education. We should aim to habituate the emotional capacities of all individuals as an enduring resource of good character. At issue, is how to educate young people to have healthy emotions that are ethical, proportionate, discerning and deliberative, that have ethical action as their goals, and which do not negatively discriminate on the basis of gender.

In the development of emotional wellbeing and moral character, compassion is an emotion that merits particular attention. Such is the potential ethical power of this emotion, that I propose compassion to be the arch-guardian of the moral domain and, accordingly, a prerequisite for the cultivation of moral sentiment and respect for human dignity. A consideration of emotions will raise questions about who should feel, how we should feel, when, and to what extent, emotions such as compassion, sympathy or anger in acceptable and appropriate ways. I argue, too, that we should attend to the how and why of interpreting these emotions. Whilst a number of analyses reveal how powerful emotional interpretations are in stigmatising, labeling or stereotyping men and women, rarely, if ever, are questions raised in education about the assumptions on which gendered emotions rest. I respond here by proposing that if education is to serve a role in the cultivation of morally appropriate emotions, then we must question, and should no longer accept, gendered emotions, that is emotions that belong to, or are more ‘natural’ for one sex than another. Acknowledging the importance of care for wellbeing, I question the claims of some care ethicists who would have us believe that care does not require moral theory and that it is not an issue of justice. I assert, to the contrary, that unless an ethics of care rests on sound moral and conceptual constructs, it will perpetuate a bifurcation of emotion and reason whilst sustaining stereotypically gendered emotions. In order to illuminate my argument for the cultivation of de-gendered, just emotions, I draw upon empirical research on the effects of deformed emotional attitudes towards women and children which seriously impede their wellbeing and functioning. I draw, too, on novels, both for the exemplification of my arguments and as a vehicle which, creatively and sensitively used, can help us to shape our imaginative and empathic capacities to take into the folds of our consciousness people who are both similar to and remote and different from us.

I am accompanied throughout the thesis by a fictional pupil ‘Nancy’ with and through whom I exculpate complex theoretical and philosophical issues. The thesis re-affirms the importance of cultivating morally appropriate de-gendered emotions, particularly compassion, and concludes with the proposal that we should incorporate and embed an understanding of the emotions in the education curricula, for both pupils and those who teach them. I propose, too, that emotions might be regarded as an architectonic capability anchoring and influencing all other human capabilities.

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### **Author's Declaration**

I declare, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Signature:

Printed name: Alison MacKenzie

### **Abbreviations Used in this Thesis**

#### **Aristotle**

*NE.*            The Nicomachean Ethics  
*Rh.*            The Art of Rhetoric  
*Pol.*            The Politics

#### **Conrad**

*HD*            Heart of Darkness

#### **Kant**

*DV.*            The Doctrine of Virtue. The Metaphysics of Morals  
*GW.*            Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals

#### **Nussbaum**

*CA*            Capability Approach

#### **Rawls**

*OP*            Original Position  
*VoI*            Veil of Ignorance

#### **The Scottish Government**

*CfE*            Curriculum for Excellence

## Chapter One: Emotions and Education.

### 1.1 Introduction.

In this thesis I construct a predominantly philosophical account of emotions, and of compassion in particular, premised on the view that emotions are often rational<sup>1</sup> and cognitive, and that they result from eudaimonistic<sup>2</sup> judgements. Applying the study to education generally, and to schools in particular, I shall argue that educational research has not yet paid much attention to the construct of emotions, or to how an understanding of emotions can help us to produce what, in Scotland, we now refer to as ‘successful learners, responsible citizens, confident individuals and effective contributors’: the four capacities of a Curriculum for Excellence (SEED, 2004). The aim of my research is to consider how education can cultivate the emotions in ways that enable individuals to fulfill these four capacities, developing healthy emotional landscapes in which all young people can ‘use’<sup>3</sup> their emotions with discernment and sensitivity.

I shall attend, in particular, to the gendered emergence, expression and interpretation of emotions, contending that a division of emotions along gender lines that are culturally and socially constructed is damaging to, and limiting of, the potential of both sexes to flourish. I shall do so against a background of theory and research that seems scant with respect to how we might cultivate emotionally healthy individuals. It is not that emotional intelligence is not recognised, it is. There is an extensive literature on it, especially as popularised by Daniel Goleman (1996) and Howard Gardner (1983) and this is well-known in Scottish schools<sup>4</sup>. However, the aim of such writers is to show us how to use (or manage) emotions for intelligent interaction and behaviour modification rather than how to cultivate emotionally healthy individuals or to provide a philosophical analysis of the

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<sup>1</sup>I will shortly explain why I assert that emotions are often rational.

<sup>2</sup>I use eudaimonistic here following Nussbaum so taking it to refer to a person’s flourishing, wellbeing and the ‘good’, with a meaning ‘compatible with as many distinct conceptions of what that good is as one cares to propose’ (2001:31).

<sup>3</sup>I claim that we can ‘use’ emotions strategically to achieve our ends. We can ‘use’ anger to good effect if we want our partner to take our grievance seriously, for example, or we can feign fear to convey danger to a child. To ‘use’ here means focusing on the relevant thoughts to strategically arouse emotion or to evaluate situations appropriately. See Greenspan (2000:475) who argues that ‘[a]ttention to emotions can induce the reasons for an emotion can induce it – not with certainty but with enough regularity to provide the reasons for a strategy. ...So emotions do have an instrumental role to play in day-to-day practical rationality’. See also Aristotle’s account of inducing emotional states in *The Rhetoric*. Aristotle’s discussion of emotion is clearly appreciative of the rationality of emotion. We might also say we ‘manage’ emotions.

<sup>4</sup>Senior teachers or Deputies who wish to become Headteachers are expected to take the Scottish Qualification for Headteachership (SQH) or the Fast Route to Head Teachership (FRH). Emotional Intelligence forms part of these courses, and Goleman and Gardner are popular.



emotions<sup>5</sup>. Bar-On et al. (2007) argue that emotionally intelligent people understand themselves and others, are emotionally expressive, and can establish, develop and maintain constructive relationships. Emotionally intelligent people are, further, successful: they can bring about change in their social and working environments because they can manage their emotions effectively. What is missing in such analyses is, at best, attention to how one might become emotionally adept in order to be emotionally intelligent if, indeed, emotional intelligence is a concept that has any significant value<sup>6</sup>. On the line I shall develop, emotions are essential elements of human intelligence and wellbeing. Accordingly, they deserve and demand more scrutiny and theoretical attention than populist accounts provide if we are to educate young people who can enjoy emotional wellbeing. This is the central issue the thesis seeks to address. However, before embarking on a more detailed outline of the thesis, I shall pause, briefly, to locate the thesis in my life, to explain how it came about, and to do so with an unashamedly personal, emotional account of its emergence.

## **1.2 Locating this Thesis.**

I am a girl from the Isle of Lewis, a remote island off the North West coast of Scotland, where the Gaelic culture still survives and the Presbyterian Church holds sway. I had a traditional, strict up-bringing in which belief in scripture and church attendance was the norm. Until I was in my early teens, I never questioned either the church or faith in God and, certainly, I did not question how women were supposed to behave. Women were quietly spoken, very respectful and silent in church or when men were present in the house during the Communion. While I often wore trousers, in church or when church guests were visiting us, or we them, skirts and hats were obligatory, excess jewellery or make-up was disapproved of and long hair was desirable. Men, I was brought up to believe, headed households. Women's work was in the home, and women, because of Eve's seduction by the serpent, had brought sin to the world, which justified our inferior status. However, for me, Eve represented reason, a woman who asked 'what if?'. Adam simply followed her, without thought. Both had rested in a state of bliss and enchantment, feeling no fear, shame or jealousy; no compassion, pity or sympathy. As a teenager grappling with the idea of a beautiful Garden inhabited by only two people living a life of no moment until a snake slid

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<sup>5</sup>However, Goleman does draw on Aristotelian philosophy.

<sup>6</sup>For a discussion of such concerns, see, for example, Carr (2000, 2002); Kristjansson (2001); Roberts et al. (2001); Griffiths (2003); Rietti (2009).

along to hiss his seductions to Eve, Eden seemed inexpressibly dull: an Edenic stupor. 'What's the point of having a mind?', I asked. 'Why put the tree there and say don't eat those apples?', 'Does God not understand the psychology of the creatures he created?'. The answers that came back made no sense. In any case, it was Eve who was punished and relegated to second class status, while Adam, who obeyed, ascended to the aristocracy. Someone had to start it? But how unfair! And how convenient!

I have no brothers. I am confident, however, that were my parents to have had a son (and I am very glad they did not), he would have been under the bonnet of the car and his sisters would have been inside doing the housework. As it was, we were inside helping our mother, something I became increasingly less willing to do, as I grew older, preferring books to the kitchen sink. I am also confident that a brother would have been encouraged to be a boy: boisterous, active, loud, into rock music and football. We girls were encouraged to feel bad about being 'angry' and for not being 'caring' enough; in both cases I failed to conform to what was expected. The division of emotional and intellectual labour was also visible in school. The girls did 'Home Economics', as it was then called, and the boys did Woodwork. It was no surprise when boys did well in Maths and Physics, but surprising indeed if one of them was good at Languages or Literature. A girl was *really* bright if she did well in Maths *and* a Science, and even more bright if she was good in *all* Science and Mathematics subjects. I was 'rubbish'<sup>7</sup> at Maths, Chemistry and Physics, I hated Home Economics, but I got along well with Biology and in most other subjects I conformed to the gendered stereotype.

No-one, anywhere, challenged the view that women were different from men. I asked my Dad why he did not stay at home and look after us while Mum went out to work and he replied with the only reason he could: 'That's women's work'. My mum thought my question stupid, retorting: 'I thought you were supposed to be intelligent?'. That was a frequent response when I exasperated my parents with 'all those blinking questions!'. My concern grew about difference as it became apparent that double standards operated when it came to what men and women could do in the realm of sexual expression. Why could the boys get what they wanted, while the girls were labelled 'sluts' if they did? Because 'boys can', is all I received in reply.

'But why?'

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<sup>7</sup>'Rubbish' is an informal and widely used expression that indicates how badly one fares in a subject or the poor state of a skill. Pupils will very often say they are 'rubbish at' Maths, or Art or French.

‘Because they can.’  
 ‘But why?’  
 ‘Because they need to know what to do.’  
 ‘And don’t women?’  
 ‘Not until they’re married.’

As I matured, I saw that these bewildering responses revealed an inequality that somehow transmuted to mean that women were to blame for their sexual assaults: a decent chaste woman would not have been assaulted. I became indignant, especially as I started to experience unwanted sexual attention myself, and to know women who had been harassed but felt too ashamed to do anything about it. There were other attitudes that disturbed me: men who would answer my partner when I had asked the question; men and women who thought angry women were ‘mad’; women and men who thought that women who did not want children were not ‘real’ women or perhaps were just ‘kidding themselves’; watching bright women who had worked hard for their careers relinquishing them as a matter of course to have children. Importantly, I wanted to know why men felt they had the right to women’s bodies, in the flesh or in the media, and why men felt they were being men when they beat up their partners.

It was against this background that my interest in feminism and gender grew and was nourished. My interest in emotions emerged when I studied *Frontiers of Justice* in 2008, a book which, simultaneously, sparked my interest in philosophy. From *Frontiers*, I moved to *Upheavals of Thought*, a work that crystallized my fascination with the emotions. Here was a way to explore my interests: gender, feminism, equality, justice and fairness considered through emotions, a quintessential human capacity, at least as far as the complex (because developed in relation to others) emotions of compassion, envy or jealousy are concerned. Emotions are often talked about, but not always understood, and only rarely does everyday talk of the emotions acknowledge that they can reveal who and what we are, and from where we have come, psychologically and experientially. What do we know about emotions? How are we to understand them? Many people can express their feelings and perhaps articulate what has made them angry or jealous. ‘I was boiling with him because he kicked the dog’. Straightforward cause and effect. But why be angry about a dog? And, here, the person may tell you: ‘I love dogs’. The dog has value to the person who got angry. In cases that are more complex, finding a simple cause might be more difficult and more painful.

‘Why is M angry with her?’

‘She was asked by T to do X and she was busy.’

‘But why get so angry as to stop talking, to avoid contact, not to return messages?’

Here the cause is more obscure, folded deep in angry M’s psyche. To dig out that cause might be uncomfortable if M has to admit that she feels inferior to T, that she had felt on an equal footing with her clever friends, valued her own intelligence, and now she is confronted by someone who makes her feel stupid. M cannot be honest with herself or with T with the result that their relationship becomes impaired through M’s unexamined anger and resentment. M’s perception of T’s request, M’s ethical evaluation of T and the motive behind asking her to do X, and her subsequent conduct towards T, all reveal a set of values, formed by experience, based on self-evaluation in comparison to another or others, which motivates action and orientates a set of social relationships. This was fascinating stuff. Emotions would be the focus of my thesis.

Novels entered my thesis because I love reading. Reading has sustained me since childhood, giving me an exit from the real world and entry into another safer and, often, far more exciting world. With a novel in hand, I can go to a world of magic, to be ensorcelled with the characters as they come under the spell of a wicked witch<sup>8</sup> or a devil’s messenger<sup>9</sup>. I can choose to enter the world of magical realism where midnight’s children<sup>10</sup> are gifted with very special powers but only if hope lives on to keep those powers alive. Or I can disappear down the fabric of a hole in Oxford and find myself in an alternative world with a knife that can create portals to other worlds<sup>11</sup>. Tired of magic, I can pick up another book and follow the pilgrim as he stops to watch a pair of legs waving from a baptismal font and feel some mirth and satisfaction at the sight of a greedy and dishonest pope getting his just rewards by being dumped upside down in the font<sup>12</sup>. A cheeky and subversive, but all too just, punishment; it made me think of the waving wriggling legs of a wood louse trapped on its back. Or I can muse with the author on shallow people who ‘refine the nicer quibbles of non-existence, give vacancy its shape, being in the strictest sense those Arts of Naught practised by hostesses’<sup>13</sup>. And Proust’s hostesses, ‘bring people together’, ‘bring people out’, ‘match guests with one another’, are ‘present but invisible’,

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<sup>8</sup>C.S. Lewis’s *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

<sup>9</sup>Mikhail Bulgakov’s *The Master and Margarita*.

<sup>10</sup>Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*.

<sup>11</sup>Philip Pullman’s *The Subtle Knife*, (*His Dark Matter Trilogy*).

<sup>12</sup>Dante’s *Inferno*, Canto XIX.

<sup>13</sup>Proust (2003/2:177).

and are ‘a good go between’. Proust is perceptive: women *are* very good at those social skills. They *are* ‘naturals’, be they hostesses, church attendees or just simply lassies<sup>14</sup>. I am now a secondary school teacher qualified to teach Geography and Modern Studies<sup>15</sup> to pupils ranging from 11 to 18 years’ old. I love teaching. It can be great fun as well as frustrating. I rarely conform to the rules to punish: they do not work and are often punitive rather than recuperative or transformative. I rely, to a great extent, on my ability to judge the particulars and their relationship to the general (to sound slightly philosophical for the moment), and on finding out what motivates pupils to act as they do. If a pupil arrives in school angry or upset, or is late and aggressive, I want to know why. To insist on punishing children because rather trivial rules have been broken or because they do not know how to eat communion bread is, to me, obtuse. Here we have the universal application of rules without sensitivity to context or particulars, without, that is, an appropriate emotional regard for the child. This has always worried me.

Many teachers are caring and very interested in those they teach. Some are not. Some may be good teachers, teaching their subjects competently, but not necessarily in a caring way, if we take that to mean being sympathetic towards and liking their pupils. I have seen many a pupil sent outside the classroom, being spoken to harshly, their objections being dismissed, their circumstances ignored or treated ineptly. How is it possible to help pupils come to terms with what may have happened to them if those who could help them do not seek to understand the nature of emotions? But what lies in an emotion? How do emotions motivate us to action? What does it mean if emotions are evaluations of self, others and self to others and, further, that emotions express our values, experiences and self-worth? How can we help a pupil, undeservedly feeling shame, to understand, and accept with insight and perceptiveness, her situation if those around her cannot, or will not, or struggle to ‘see’ why she lacks confidence, hides her face, tries not to be seen, continually downplays her abilities, refuses to speak out in class, or is so consumed by shame and loathing she cannot do her work well? What if another pupil, who is neglected at home because her parents are drug addicts, is angry? She shouts, yells, swears, refuses to comply, bangs doors shut, tears up her jotter, tells her classmates to ‘f\*\*k off’, is perfectly willing to tell teachers the same, and picks fights with other pupils in the playground. She is particularly unappealing, I suggest, because she is a girl who is angry and very coarse. She is rather ‘masculine’ in her aggression. If she were a boy, we might be prepared for the

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<sup>14</sup>Scottish idiom for girl.

<sup>15</sup>A Scottish subject, a blend of Sociology, Politics and International Relations.

anger and outbursts because boys are ‘naturally’ more angry and aggressive than are girls, and they need to get it out of their system or teachers will have no end of trouble. Boys, you see, have more testosterone than do girls.

How do we react to a girl who is sullen, uncommunicative and unpopular? Why is her demeanour so unpleasant to us? Why is sullenness her dominant state of comportment? Why immediately punish such pupils for ‘bad behaviour’? Why can we not treat them with a little more compassion? I believe we should be more compassionate but take the view that we are unlikely to be so, or to remain so consistently and over time, if we do not understand what compassion is, or what incites shame or anger, or any other emotion. I work towards the view, in this thesis, that teachers ought to receive an education that attends to the emotions if they are to be duly discerning, discriminating and sensitive to pupils’ emotional states. They might, then, be more likely to take thoughtful action to help their pupils feel respected and valued, kept safe from harm and daily, commonplace indignities. Pupils, in their turn, might feel that they are not just in school to be acted upon, to be taught so that teachers and schools can proclaim good results, but that they are respected and valued in their own right, as young but maturing *individuals*. A common complaint that pupils make is that they are treated like babies, treated with disrespect. Their opinions and concerns do not count, they are shouted at in public, punished in public, sent into the corridor where they can be seen. When teachers make mistakes, they do not get punished. ‘Why’, pupils often ask, ‘is this fair?’. Whilst some pupil behaviours will, of course, deserve punishment or censure, there will also be occasions when pupils might justifiably feel that what is meted out to them is unfair or disproportionate<sup>16</sup>.

### 1.3 Why Study Emotions?

How can a study of the emotions help pupils who ask questions about fair treatment? How can a study of the emotions help the teacher of pupils who ask questions about fair treatment? And how can a study of emotions help teachers act compassionately towards the vociferously angry and neglected pupil or her shy, passive and downtrodden peer? Emotions, I came to understand, are powerful. They provide us with an orientation, an attitude to the world, colouring that world in tints, shades or bold colours, enlivening it or

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<sup>16</sup>See, for example, Hilton’s (2006:205) work with young people excluded from school in which she notes their frustration and anger that ‘disciplinary structures had failed to successfully investigate the root causes of problematic behaviour’.

darkening, depending on what the case may be (Wollheim, 1999). Our emotions have a history, which form in our very youngest infancy. But our emotions, like history, do not move in a single current, but ‘in laminar flows, like different sheets of time moving at different rates, one above the other like the currents in the sea’<sup>17</sup>. Unlike the currents at the lowest level of the sea, which are cold and still, the oldest of our emotions flow in, through and out of our present, like the Aurora Borealis or the Sirocco winds, bringing in their wake heat or cold, depending, as Wollheim (1999) suggests, on what the case may be. Our emotions are not simply our lives’ palimpsests, over which our experiences have been written or erased, but reside deep within our personalities where many different times co-exist, flowing at different speeds and intensities, enshrining our experiences, values, concerns and goals.

How emotions are to be understood and categorized, however, is far from straightforward. While there is rarely agreement on how emotions might be distinguished one from another, or on the processes of emotion formation, let alone on where the boundaries between emotions and non-emotions lie, some emotions are more likely to be characterised as emotional states that prefigure the acute emotions such as anger, or include diverse emotions such as empathy (Lazarus, 1991a:821). Consequently, a robust theory of emotion will be necessary to guide an understanding of emotions’ constituent elements and processes if one is to avoid, as far as possible, the conceptual confusions briefly alluded to here. I aim to show, in this chapter and the next, that such a theory will contain both specific and general propositions that follow the analyses mainly of philosophers, but also of psychologists such as Ortony and Clore (1989) and Lazarus (1991a, b). My focus throughout the thesis, but especially in Chapter 2, will also be on compassion using Nussbaum’s (2001) analysis and her argument that it is central to a good education and a prerequisite for the cultivation of moral sentiment and human dignity. I claim, too, that compassion is especially important to women’s justice and so I, concomitantly, argue for the importance of the emotions to women’s justice for reasons I will develop in the thesis and that I outline, briefly, below.

Countering the view that emotions occur in contrast to rationality, Nussbaum (1999a, b) defends the study of emotions in moral philosophy, arguing that women have been denigrated for their ‘emotional natures’ or deemed to have certain innate emotional capacities. Women are frequently expected to care more, feel more, and be more

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<sup>17</sup>I borrow the analogy from Adam Nicolson’s *Sea Room* (2002:67).

expressive of emotions than their more 'rational' male counterparts. Emotions, to adapt Fausto-Sterling's (2000:8) argument, are embodied in the 'capacities, gestures, movements, locations and behaviours' we are supposed to exhibit. Inevitably emotions are deeply intertwined with notions of gender, part of that extensive repertoire of political, social, moral, ideological, cultural, religious, scientific and racial discourses that have been used over time, place and culture to define who we are. Fausto-Sterling (1992, 2000) and Nussbaum (1999a:29) have argued, from their respective perspectives of biology and philosophy, that notions of what is 'natural' or 'right' follow us everywhere and dehumanise many people on the basis of sex, class, race and sexuality, an argument I support and develop throughout.

Emotions have been used to dichotomise men and women as unequal complements (Campbell, 1994:47). For example, a consideration of emotions raises questions around *who* and *how* we should express emotions reflecting 'care' and 'nurture'. *Who* should feel, *how* should we feel, when, and to what extent are emotions such as 'compassion', 'pity', 'sorrow' or 'anger' acceptable and appropriate? And *how* should these emotions be expressed and interpreted? 'Feminine' emotions expressing vulnerability, pain or hurt can be characterised as negative traits to dismiss the seriousness of what is important to women. If expressed in the public sphere, such emotions can be judged as over-reactions or their subject as excessively 'emotional.' Whilst a number of analyses reveal how powerful emotional interpretations are in stigmatising, labelling or stereotyping men and women, rarely, if ever, are questions raised about the assumptions on which such gendered views rest. Neither do many analyses ask if we should continue to accept emotions as belonging in one sphere but not another, or to one sex but not another. However, Syed (2008) is aware of how emotions are socially regulated, prescribed and classified, and, further, how the suppression of emotional capacity can lead to discrimination and impair cognitive performance. He also accepts that emotions have cognitive content and his analysis resonates with the work of Nussbaum and what we understand about cognitive dissonance. For Syed, gendering emotions can have adverse effects on psychological wellbeing if the goals of the individual are suppressed, distorted or brought into conflict with the beliefs and goals of institutions or individuals. Following Syed (2008), I will argue in this thesis, that the suppression or over-cultivation of particular emotions, for gendered, social or cultural reasons, or the corruption of emotional functioning from the effects of abuse, are corrosive to wellbeing and functioning.



Many of our emotions, such as anger, hatred, shame or disgust, are learned from our society<sup>18</sup>. These emotions contain positive and negative evaluations directed towards individuals or groups, which are often absorbed from families, peers and wider society, and may reflect cultural artefacts rather than innate disposition to the emotion and its expression. How do we teach so that we judge and evaluate others in ways that respect individuality and difference, avoiding stigma and the corrosive emotions of shame and disgust? How do we educate in order that young people learn to imagine the plight of others, to focus on the intrinsic worth and goodness of others who deserve equal respect, so that one's sex, gender, age, ethnicity or sexual orientation is of no moral consequence? Without attending to such questions in education, as I shall argue in the final chapter, the inequalities and asymmetries of power that women continue to experience, along with the violence that many women experience as a result of asymmetrical power structures, even in the most equality striving societies such Norway and Sweden<sup>19</sup>, will not be eradicated.

How we react to emotions, which ones we exhibit and encourage, which ones we repress or discourage; in short, how we cultivate emotional responses in children is of ethical importance. As I noted above, our emotions are socialized to contain positive or negative evaluations, depending on the social situation, culture, or family values with which we are brought up. Children who express disgust at homosexuality, or express hatred for a football team, or who mock girls for being stupid and fit only for a certain destiny, have not absorbed these values unaided. Such values have been nursed in the home and by the peer group, and reinforced by the child's cultural, religious and social settings and relevant media. If schools are the primary social institutions in which gendered emotions and assumptions about what humans can do and be are visible, then at issue, as I proposed above, is how schools educate young people, of both sexes, to have healthy emotions that are ethical, proportionate, discerning, deliberative and which have ethical action as their goals, so as to avoid practices that are harmful or denigrating. In Aristotelian (2004) terms, our aim should be to cultivate citizens who have developed, or are developing, reasoned self-cultivation, and this should be the goal of good education.

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<sup>18</sup>See Nussbaum (1999a,b, 2001, 2004a).

<sup>19</sup>Whilst official public opinion strongly condemns violence against women and strongly supports equality in Nordic countries, they are still plagued by male violence. Like women worldwide, Scandinavian women are too embarrassed and too ashamed to report the abuse, this time because abusive oppressive relationships are not supposed to be the outcome in an egalitarian society. See Enander (2009).

Why though, should we appeal to compassion in education<sup>20</sup>? Of all the emotions, compassion has been regarded as a sound basis on which to deliberate about the value of external goods and appropriate action in private and public life (Nussbaum, 2001:299). However, we often arrive at compassion by false psychological mechanisms resulting from being taught to have sympathy and empathy for the wrong things, or for only those who are closest to us. That is, people are more likely to have compassion in circumstances that divide and rank human beings creating ‘in- and out-groups’ (Nussbaum, 2001:386). Additionally, we are more likely to have compassion for people along clearly demarcated boundaries ranging from close family, friends and acquaintances to close professional associates, or similarly situated people. I shall follow Nussbaum’s view that the emotional factors that produce such divisions are too deep seated to be eradicated easily, and that emotions such as shame, disgust or hatred, sympathy and empathy create boundaries to compassion that reinforce hierarchies, and keep us partial in our concern for certain groups of people, possibly corroding their ability and capacity to function well.

Compassion, Nussbaum argues (2001:387) requires an appropriate education in connection with a correct theory of concern. Accordingly, education in compassion needs to be designed so that we are aware that notions of humanity can be obstructed by negative emotions that include some people but exclude others, or divide us on the basis of non-moral categories. As noted, the emotions of men and women are gendered, often with harmful results. The moral education of women in many cultures cultivates compassion to a greater extent than it does men in relations of love, friendship and care. The difference between men and women in their emotional expression is the underlying factor of their appraisal of what is of value to their wellbeing and that of others. Differences between the sexes on this basis could begin to be eliminated if the appraisals of what is important to a good life were taught equally to all, such as a life without violence, the non-commodification of women’s bodies and services, and an appreciation of difference and similarity. Equal access to emotional resources, engendered through good developmental

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<sup>20</sup>We should, arguably, appeal to the development of compassion in all of our institutions, not just schools, but particularly in those institutions in which we care for vulnerable people: prisons, children’s homes, residential homes and hospitals, for example. The urgent need for compassionate care is all too apparent given the fresh revelations of child abuse in places such as the Bryn Estan Children’s home in North Wales and Jimmy Savile’s abuse of up to 300 young people at the BBC, in hospitals and prisons. I would like to thank Gayle Letherby for raising this issue with me. Similarly, I would advocate work that sought to make the workplace more compassionate. Please note, too, that I do not want to suggest that all schools are ‘good’, rather that they are one of our ‘primary’, that is basic (in Rawlsian terms), social institutions along with health, the legal and judicial system, for example.

processes learned early in childhood and supported in schools, might begin to help us eradicate inequalities and their attendant injustices.

However, compassion alone, Nussbaum says, is not enough and neither is it a ‘complete moral theory’ (2001:399). It provides, nonetheless, a ‘bridge’ from the self to others not closely associated to us, reducing the distinction between disparate groups of people, as well as differences between the sexes. Compassion can also provide a bridge between intimates. But do intimates not naturally feel compassion for each other? Unfortunately they may not. One reason why gender violence is so pervasive is that the men (and, but far less often, women) who commit violence fail to empathise with their partners, denying them subjectivity (their experiences and emotional capacities), autonomy (the right to think and act for themselves), and integrity (their body and emotions are violable). Violent men, or women, cannot, or will not, sympathise with, or feel compassion for their partners, and so can justify treating them with extreme violence (Borochowitz, 2008). I shall conclude that education curricula should address intimate partner violence, openly and honestly confronting the sources of that violence: women’s inferior status. While there have been great efforts to de-gender the curricula, assumptions about the innate capacities of the sexes still persist and I shall build towards the proposal that, starting from early years’ education, we should cultivate in our pupils the capacity to have, to express and to understand emotions that shape the landscape of mental and social lives, and that particular emotions, especially compassion, do not belong to a particular sex, but are expressive of what it means to be a dignified human being.

I shall argue, relatedly, for a more nuanced, less gendered understanding and acceptance of emotions that transcends their current use. False beliefs about emotions, about gendered human capacity, may mean, for example, that where there are assumptions about what boys and girls can do, there will be correspondingly higher or lower expectations of what they can achieve. If the assumption is that girls are better at languages and the arts and boys at Mathematics and the ‘hard’ Sciences, our cognitively distorted beliefs of what the natural characteristics of the sexes are will mean that we will act in ways that confirm those beliefs: girls will be mathematically less competent, and boys will continue to eschew languages (Buchanan, 2004). There may be a link to be made between subject choice and emotions. For example, and tentatively at this stage, if boys are not educated for compassion to the same degree that girls are, boys may prefer subjects regarded as ‘masculine’, such as Science because it may be perceived as neutral, objective and

emotionless. Languages, Home Economics and Modern Studies are favourites with girls because these subjects are about expression, expressiveness, and caring. We need more 'care' in education, argues Nel Noddings (1983, 2002, 2005), but her arguments do not, I contend, adequately address the concerns I have outlined here. I shall take the view that cultivating care in education, on Noddings' account, is inadequate since, if care is taken to mean sensitivity to others and their wellbeing, that may not be stable enough to extend justice to others, including those not intimately connected to us.

#### **1.4 Understanding Emotions - The Theoretical Approach.**

This section comprises five related parts in support of the cognitive-evaluative approach I take to the emotions. Initially, I outline the cognitive element; secondly, I discuss the feeling component of emotions and follow that by a third section on the intelligence of emotions. The fourth section focusses on rationality and that leads me to the final and fifth part here in which I consider emotions as evaluative judgements and as ineliminable references to the self.

##### **a) Cognitivism**

An understanding of emotion will vary depending on whether the account stems from a particular school of psychology, neurology or philosophy, or whether emotion is subsumed within the domain of affective science. Davidson et al. (2009), for example, regard affective science as a broad concept, distinguished by six major affective phenomena. These are: emotion, described as a brief episode of 'coordinated brain, autonomic, and behavioural change' that prepare the organism to respond to an external of some significance to the organism; feelings which are described as the 'subjective representation of emotion'; moods which are typically diffuse and of low intensity; attitudes which 'colour beliefs, preferences and predispositions towards objects and persons'; affective style which 'bias an individual toward perceiving and responding to people or objects with a particular emotional quality', and temperament which may be determined by genetic factors (p.xiii). I follow a broader conception of emotion than that presented by Davidson et al., drawing predominantly on the cognitive-evaluative approach to emotions.

Cognitive science is the study of how knowledge is acquired, represented and used (Oatley, 1992:3) and cognition, with respect to emotions, also suggests perceptual awareness and the significance of what is happening in our immediate environment (Ben-Ze'ev, 2000:55) through appraisal processes (Clore and Ortony, 2000) which, in turn, give

meaning to our emotional responses through our situational and generalised beliefs (Lazarus, 1991b). Aristotle (2004:2.1) defined emotions as ‘those things by the alteration of which men differ with regard to those judgements which pain and pleasure accompany’, dividing emotions into a tripartite schema of psychological explanation (what ‘state men are in when they are angry’), the character of the object (with ‘what people they are accustomed to be angry’), and the eliciting event (the circumstances). Oatley (1992:19), drawing on an Aristotelian framework, defines emotions as ‘mental states’ which develop as a result of evaluations of what has happened in relation to a person’s goals and beliefs. On Oatley’s analysis, the core of an emotion is ‘action readiness’, based on an evaluation (which need not be conscious) of what needs to be done. Patricia Greenspan (2009:7) understands emotion as a ‘compound of affect and evaluation’ which involve ‘pleasant or unpleasant feelings about valued or disvalued’ features of the emotion’s object. For Pitcher (1965), a person having an emotion could be described in two ways: in an occurrent or a dispositional sense. Occurrent emotions are those which the person is experiencing now whereas dispositional emotions are those which linger in the background and which may not be felt intensely, if at all. According to Pitcher (1965), emotions have several constituent parts. Emotions usually have an object which may be agent-directed or non-agent directed. They rest on some relevant belief or apprehension (reasons for the emotion) which entails ‘modes of behaviour or inclination’ if the emotion is occurrent, or ‘wants, desires, beliefs, and so on’ if it is dispositional (p.333). The characteristic features of occurrent and dispositional emotions can be grouped together under the general heading of ‘evaluations’ (p.334), which, in turn, can be subdivided into positive and negative evaluations (p.334). The reason Pitcher so grouped such seemingly different features as modes of behaviours, desires, inclinations and judgements was because of their intimate connection to cause and effect stemming from evaluational judgements. The definition I use largely follows that of Pitcher, but includes further features which I take from Nussbaum’s (2001) account of emotions to whose account I return in Chapter 2. There is, of course, more to say with respect to an emotion’s constituency and I will return to this, too, in the next chapter. Here, I wish simply to outline an emotion, at a basic level, in order to explain why the cognitive-evaluative approach to emotions predominates in the fields of both psychology and philosophy.

Cognitivism in emotions came to dominate the social sciences and philosophy of mind because of a dissatisfaction with behaviourism’s neglect of values, goals, plans and commitments in motivating the agent to act and the elimination of the subject’s

experiences from the research (Lazarus, 1991b:129-133). A behaviourist approach to emotions tended to focus on innate biological forces such as drives, instincts and needs, taking no heed of cognitive referents motivating the agent to act in some way (Lazarus, 1991a:819). What was missing was any sense that the subject was anything other than an organism prey to her drives, needs and instincts, rather than an agent who reacts emotionally because she appraises an event of some significance that might diminish or enhance her wellbeing. The ‘hydraulic model’ (Solomon, 1993:78) of the emotions, which was an attempt to characterise the workings of the human mind in terms of Newtonian mechanical structures, as well as being a streamlined version of the behaviourism of theorists such as Skinner, came to characterise all the major theories and models of psychology in various positivistic costumes mid century (Solomon, 1993:84). Where emotions were the object of study, these were to be defined as ‘perceptions of bodily states’ (Oatley, 1992:17) and the ‘effects of neurological processes’ (Solomon, 1993:81). Prominent theorists of this position included William James, CG Lange, Freud and Konrad Lorenz<sup>21</sup>. Within the British Empiricist tradition, feeling-centered emotions derived philosophical support from Locke, following Descartes, and were subsequently taken up by Hume. Emotions in this tradition were understood as ‘“internal sensations” of pleasure or pain’ (Deigh, 1994:825). The appeal of processes such as ‘stimulus-response’, concepts of ‘force’ and ‘energy’, was that they were observable, calculable, tangible, predictable and subject to experimentation. They were also mechanistic: they represented reality as it was perceived to be by the observer. The phenomenon of sensation was ‘wholly constructed’ (Wollheim, 1999: 3) out of subjectivity, the ‘feel’ of a mental state. That is, the entirety of a mental state could be captured in emotion words such ‘I feel frightened’ and such an utterance would suffice to convey all that needed to be said without a consideration of the evaluation which aroused the state of fear. As Wittgenstein (1958:103) observed: ‘We think of the utterance of an emotion as though it were some artificial device to let others know that we have it’<sup>22</sup>. Like Jastrow’s ambiguous duck-rabbit illusion, where one alternately sees a duck then a rabbit, intentionality and subjectivity frequently seem to be ‘fused’ (Wollheim, 1999:8). However, the problem with studying human or animal consciousness is that it is chaotic, disordered, and complex, pervaded with the agent’s own unique character and history. Unsurprisingly, such simplistic reducibility of the subject to mechanistic forces failed repeatedly to provide predictive or explanatory accounts of

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<sup>21</sup>For a discussion of the reductionist view of emotions, see Lazarus (1991a:8-15); Solomon (1993, Chapter 3); Deigh (1994); Nussbaum (2001:93-100).

<sup>22</sup>These points allude to an upcoming discussion of the role of feeling in emotional states. For further discussion of these points, see Pitcher (1965) and Wollheim (1999:2-8).

human behaviour and emotion. However, rather than abandon behaviourism or other reductionist models, their proponents sought to come up with yet more complicated models and additional mental variables to fit the complexities of the human mind (Lazarus, 1991a:8-9).

Philosophers<sup>23</sup> had argued, and still do, that eliminating intentionality from emotions was nonsensical. They also claimed that to make sense of human behaviour and motivation, human perceptual, cognitive and interpretive capacity or individuals' values, goals or plans could not be kept out of the research, and neither could their judgements about what was happening to them and why. And so, the cognitivist movement in psychology, supported by advances in neuro-science<sup>24</sup>, began to emerge, offering an understanding of emotions that did have theoretical and empirical explanatory force and predictability<sup>25</sup>.

Behaviourism was discredited, having failed through its own explanatory inadequacies<sup>26</sup>. As a result, computational processes<sup>27</sup> came to prevail in psychology while, in the philosophy of emotions, intentionality gained the ascendancy over feeling-centered explanations (Deigh, 1994). However, the latter have not left the philosophical field entirely<sup>28</sup> although feeling-centered conceptions are unable to explain the intentionality (thought content) of emotions or account for emotions as the objects of rational assessment (Deigh, 1994:825). As I focus on emotions as intentional and rational in the thesis, I will not pursue these concepts in depth here. However, while feeling-centered concepts are not germane to my argument for what an emotion is, it is worth making some general points against including feeling-centered conceptions into an emotion's definition. I do so because 'feeling' seems to be so much a part of the emotional experience that it seems odd not to include it.

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<sup>23</sup>Kenny (1963) and Pitcher (1965) were early proponents of intentionality and cognitivism in emotions. Current philosophers include Solomon (1993, 2003); Deigh (1994); Sherman (1989,1997,1998); Ben-Ze'ev (2000) and Nussbaum (various). But, of course, emotions' intentionality is not new and can be traced back to Aristotle and the neo-Stoics.

<sup>24</sup>See Damasio (1994); LeDoux (1999).

<sup>25</sup>See Seligman (1976); de-Sousa (1987); Smith and Lazarus (1990); Lazarus (1984, 1991a,b); Oakley (1992); Oatley (1992); Ortony et al. (1998); Elster (1999); Clore and Ortony (2000); Oatley et al. (2006).

<sup>26</sup>For an account of what good theory should achieve see Lazarus (1991a). For the difference between binary and prototypical analyses in cognitive science see Ben-Ze'ev (2000:6-9) who, along with cognitive psychologists such as Smith and Lazarus (1990), favours prototypical categories that have no clear-cut boundaries or equal degrees of membership. Such an approach suits the conceptual and analytical complexities of emotions.

<sup>27</sup>In accepting emotions as having cognitive content I do not mean to accept the view that emotions are computational in nature, where computations, inferences or interpretations are products of conceptual or reasoning processes. For arguments against the computational view in emotions, see Ben-Ze'ev (1990, 1993, 2000). For the computational approach, see, for example, Ortony et al. (1998, 2000).

<sup>28</sup>See Goldie (2002) and Pugmire (2005) who argue that feelings should constitute part of an emotion's definition.

## **b) Feelings**

We frequently describe emotions as feelings: 'I feel envious', 'I feel angry', and so on. However, these are figurative uses of language rather than descriptions of literal emotional states. Feelings, as described in these instances, or describing physical states of pain or pleasure, express our own state of mind or bodily state, and do not, necessarily, contain meaningful cognitive content. On the other hand, where feelings are rich in figurative language that is expressive of a real emotional state, say of loss or love, feelings become but a 'terminological variant', as Nussbaum (2001:60) argues, of perception, judgement or belief because of their rich cognitive content. Feelings may accompany an emotion but they are not necessary for it, even if they are that emotion's most frequent companions. 'I'm boiling with rage', is a very common metaphorical expression and no doubt a very angry person may indeed feel physical sensations akin to 'boiling'. But one is not literally 'boiling' with rage or anger, any more than one can be, literally, 'green' with envy. Indeed, what are the characteristic feelings associated with envy? I can feel thirsty without feeling thirsty for anything in particular as thirst is a physical sensation and so objectless. It is doubtful whether I can grieve for no-one or nothing in particular since this is a mental state which does have an object. Neither will everyone feel the same sensation. In some, the particular feeling of 'boiling' may be absent, even while they feel great anger. Feelings, furthermore, are very strong in occurrent (currently experienced) emotions, which is why the feeling component is to the fore in these states. In background or dispositional emotional states, such as long term anger at an old slight, the feeling component will be muted, if present at all. As Pitcher (1965:338) notes, the 'calm' emotions, such as envy, sympathy or hope, do not normally come with any sensations at all: they might, but they need not. In extreme danger, a person may not be aware of any sensation at all, so focused is she on escaping from danger. Pitcher (1965:338) puts the case thus:

A young man, P, is being interviewed for an important job, and he is extremely anxious to make a good impression. One of the interviewers, Q, makes an insulting remark to P, and thereafter an observer might detect an icy tone, creeping into P's voice when he addresses Q, although there are no other signs of anger. The iciness is not intentional, however, and in fact P is so intent on following the conversation and on creating a good impression, that he is not even aware of it, and he is certainly too engrossed to experience any feelings of anger.

P may be angry but he feels or shows no symptoms of that anger. Oatley (1992:20) agrees that there is a 'phenomenological tone' to an emotion which may be consciously felt in occurrent emotions. This 'tone' can help distinguish between emotions (happiness or sadness) but it is clear that the conscious feeling is not identical with the evaluation of



anger in the case of P. What is at the core of an emotion is a mental state which can prepare us for action. Oatley (1992) notes that, in Western culture, we commonly, and wrongly, identify the underlying mental state of an emotion with its conscious feeling 'as if the conscious feeling were the whole emotion' (p.20). That is, it does not need to be the case that there are characteristic sensations that are essential in all cases, and in all circumstances, of anger, jealousy or compassion. I might have an elevated heart rate in fear (getting ready to flee), but I may also have an elevated rate in anger (getting ready, or not, to act) and in love (at the sight of the person I love). It is not the case I am angry because my heart rate is elevated. Likewise, my face might flush in fear (in cases of anxiety) and it might flush in anger (indignation). It might also flush in shame, embarrassment or love. If I lack these sensations, can it be said that I am not frightened, not angry, ashamed or not in love<sup>29</sup>? I may experience none of these sensations in one or more of those emotional states if I have learned to control my emotional (evaluative) response, or have adapted to, or become accustomed to the eliciting circumstances. Just as we can use emotions for strategic purposes, so we can use emotion words to convey an attitude or state of mind. Wittgenstein, in the *Philosophical Investigations* (2009)<sup>30</sup>, seems to suggest, not only that we 'use' (see p.7) emotion words to convey the feeling of an emotion, but, also that emotions are very different states of being from mere feeling.

3. "For a second he felt violent pain." - Why does it sound odd to say: "For a second he felt deep grief"? Only because it so seldom happens?<sup>31</sup>

4. But don't you feel grief now? ("But aren't you playing chess now?") The answer may be affirmative, but this does not make the concept of grief any more like the concept of sensation. -The question was really, of course, a temporal and personal one, not the logical question we wanted to ask.

5. "I must tell you: I'm frightened."

"I must tell you: it horrifies me."- Well, one can say this in a smiling tone of voice too.

And do you mean to tell me that he doesn't feel it? How else does he know it? - But even if it is a report, he does not learn it from his feelings. (Wittgenstein, 2009:i)

<sup>29</sup>A woman might be judged unemotional if she does not cry at a sad film and so deemed lacking in compassion. A man might be called 'gay' if he does cry. These kinds of judgements on our emotional displays, and why we make them, are important aspects of this thesis.

<sup>30</sup>Please note that throughout I have used the date of the edition of the work I am using. For original dates, see end references.

<sup>31</sup>Wittgenstein's philosophical 'remarks', as he termed them are numbered 1-693, a series of 'sketches' on meaning, understanding, proposition and logic which criss-cross each other throughout the length of his investigations and so which he, claimed, defied ordered and orderly sequences. See the preface to the *Investigations*.

While acknowledging emotions as embodied, conscious experiences that can arouse a variety of physiological responses, we cannot confidently assert that these states are so ‘constantly correlated’ with our experiences of emotion that we could put that ‘particular bodily state in to the definition of an emotion type’ (Nussbaum, 2000:58). As the work of, for example, Seligman (1975), LeDoux (1998) and Fausto-Sterling (2000) demonstrates, we are ‘plastic’ creatures in the sense that our mental states need not be permanently fixed, but can change over time to respond or adapt to old and new experiences (and see chapter 5 for further development of the plasticity of the brain). If it is felt that sensations should be part of what defines an emotion (but surely not what distinguishes one emotion from another), it might be safer to allow this only in highly typical, or standard cases, such as those emotions described as basic<sup>32</sup>, so-called because they, anger, fear or surprise for example, are the result of evolution. For the cognitive account of emotions that I follow, and for the reasons I have set out here, it is difficult to agree with Goldie (2000:12) that ‘[f]eelings are, as we all know, at the heart of emotion’. On the account I use here, feeling no more defines an emotion than ‘an army of fleas constitutes a dog’ (Solomon, 1993:97). Feeling is only one aspect of the emotion experience that complements, but does not explain or cause, the intentional state. Feelings cannot distinguish between emotions because they lack the cognitive mechanisms to evaluate or appraise what is happening in the environment (Ben-Ze’ev, 2000:64-66).

This brief explanation for excluding feelings from a definition of emotions, save in typical cases, now permits me to consider a further possible challenge to the cognitive-evaluative account of emotions, namely how cognitive accounts can deal with apparently non-intentional states such as moods and affective states. The general argument against cognitive accounts is that sufferers of anxiety or depression, or those who describe themselves as being down, irritable or happy, cannot identify the object of these states (Goldie, 2002; Pugmire, 2005). One way to get round this problem is to exclude moods from the emotion category, as do Clore and Ortony (2000), but this is perhaps too dogmatic. Others, such as Solomon (1993:71), take the view that moods are generalised

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<sup>32</sup>There are six representative criteria for basic emotions, according to Ben Ze’ev (2000:104-6). Basic emotions are those which appeared early in human evolutionary development and so are *developmental*. The developmental account of basic emotions is closely related to their *functional* purpose, in that they express tendencies to action in response to environmental stimuli. These emotions are present in all human and so are *universal*. They are prevalent because basic emotions occur *frequently*. They are *unique* in being hardwired and manifest distinct physiological and facial changes, and are subject to less flexibility than complex emotions. Finally, basic emotions may have more primitive forms of *intentionality*.

emotions that take in enlarged views of the world, in contrast to emotions which are localised and specific. Another approach is to view moods as emotions looking for an object (Gaus, 1990). One might take the view, following Ben-Ze'ev (2000:87) that moods and affective traits have some intentionality but lack the complexity of emotions, being more diffuse and difficult to specify. However, moods are similar to feelings in that they express the subject's own state of mind. Moods, then, should not be reduced to either emotions or feelings.

### **c) Intelligence**

An additional reason for being cautious about including feelings and moods in the definition of emotion is because, as Nussbaum (2001) argues, emotions are intelligent responses to perceptions of value directed towards those whom we love, goals to which we aspire or events recalled with, for example, joy or grief. Emotions are often imbued with discernment, containing judgements about the salience for our wellbeing of uncontrolled external objects. The evaluations may be wrong, for whatever reason, leading to bad action or negative consequences and I shall show how this can be so in subsequent chapters.

Emotions also, as my opening paragraph to this chapter suggests, can have a complicated architecture that are part narrative in form, involving a history of our relations to things we cherish, fear or loathe. They may be deeply rooted in the layers of our mental soil, from whose imprints and impressions it is often impossible to escape. Moods and feelings cannot capture this complexity. Like the architecture of a building, our emotions' supporting structures are not only, sometimes, visible to us above the surface, but are also buried deep within the terrain on which that edifice stands. Our relation to, and memory of, a deeply loved person now many years dead whose perfume can still assail our olfactory senses, and whose voice may be suddenly heard, simply on hearing her favourite song, or passing by her favourite flowers, is testament to our emotions' narrative force and history. Similarly, I may suddenly be overcome with anxiety on seeing the house where misery and loneliness were once the norm, despite the fact that I have not lived there for thirty years or more.

In mere moments, as Proust notes, we can be moved from one emotional state to another in rapid succession, hurling from states of joy to sadness to relief, as if traversing regions so distinct that their unique features might as well belong to countries remotely located from each other. We can often experience emotions contiguously but so exterior to one another that we can 'no longer comprehend, no longer even picture to (ourselves) in one, what (we)

desired, or feared, or accomplished in the other' (Proust, 2003/1:184). Emotions can not only take us over by their force, consuming our will in the process, but they can also be powerful propulsions to action. One need think only of the power of grief, rage, or infatuated love to understand the elemental force of emotions that, arguably because of that force, are often dismissed as irrational and unintelligent states, a point I shall return to later. We are powerfully moved because our emotions may contain 'ineliminable reference' (Nussbaum, 2001:52) to the self: this is *my* hurt, anger or joy, reminding us repeatedly of our vulnerability and neediness (Seligman, 1975; Nussbaum, 2001), if not, indeed, of our temporality in which our consciousness of death, or fear of illness, persists as a background emotion (Nussbaum, 2001).

#### **d) Rationality**

The claim that emotions are very often rational might strike a discordant note given that emotions have often been thought of as irrational<sup>33</sup>, as blind and unthinking forces that propel the agent almost against her will to act in ways that could not be judged rational. Extreme anger, murderous hate, insane jealousy might be thought of as paradigm examples which support this kind of view. Othello, believing that Desdemona is unfaithful, murders her on what must surely be judged as scanty evidence. Why does Othello seem so ready to be deceived by Iago, to be driven mad by rage and jealousy? The complex psychology involved in Othello's evaluations of Desdemona's fidelity and quality of character, and his consequent actions seem irrational, out of proportion to the actual case<sup>34</sup>. Scorned and shamed, and raving at the Gods for Jason's betrayal of her for Glauce's royal bed, Medea<sup>35</sup> wants justice having sacrificed so much to love Jason faithfully and obediently. Deranged by love, Medea kills her own children. On what grounds can her murderous rage be justified? On just these two accounts, emotions seem to be a threat, not an aid, to rationality. In cognitive science, rationality is defined in the strong sense as behaviour that conforms to an optimum. Irrationality, according to Stanovich (2011:5), comes in degrees and is continuous from 'fully rational' to 'less than perfectly rational'. Medea and Othello are, at least on the first definition, irrational, since neither engage in behaviour that conforms to an optimum, and may be 'less than perfectly rational' at the far end of the

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<sup>33</sup>Plato was of the view that emotions can subvert rationality. Emotions, however, are not necessarily any more irrational than thinking. See Oatley (1992) for a fully developed argument on this point.

<sup>34</sup>For further discussions on Othello, see Cavell (2003), McGinn (2006), Zamir (2007) and Nussbaum (2012).

<sup>35</sup>I am citing from Euripides' version of the play. The Stoics, Seneca included, were greatly interested in Medea for her passionate nature and great spirit but she loses her virtues because of her strong attachment to external goods. Medea loves ferociously. See Nussbaum (1994b, chapter 12) for a compelling account of Seneca's *Medea*.

continuum. But we need to know more, I think, about their emotion situations before we can fully assess Medea and Othello for rationality.

On a simple definition, rationality might be understood as based on reason, reason itself being the faculty by which we reflect, deliberate, assess, evaluate, judge or calculate the ‘best’ course of action. Following Ronald de-Sousa (1987:5), emotions can be linked directly, or indirectly, to rationality in three ways: in judgements of reasonableness, as excuses and justifications, and in the thought-dependency of most emotions. Similarly, Pitcher (1965)<sup>36</sup> suggests that emotions can be judged as being ‘warranted or unwarranted, justified or unjustified, reasonable or unreasonable’ (p.339). A person can have reasons for her emotions and emotions are ‘very often, and perhaps always’ (p.326) directed at an object. The emotion-situation, or the emotion eliciting conditions, consists ‘in part of some apprehension and of an evaluation’ (p.339) which can give reasons to act. To judge whether an emotion is reasonable or unreasonable, warranted or unwarranted, might require that we keep the ‘entire emotion-situation in view’ (p.346), keeping in view the apprehensions and evaluations, along with their supporting reasons. This assumes, of course, that such evaluations and apprehensions are available to us and herein lies the complexity of emotions, but if we could keep those evaluations and apprehensions in view that might help us to determine the rationality, or otherwise, of the emotion.

These considerations raise further ‘puzzles’ (de-Sousa, 1987:5), if not a host of philosophically vexed questions. What, for example, are we to understand as ‘reasonable’ or ‘justified’? While recognising the complexity of these issues, an initial working definition of ‘reasonable’ might include something being considered ‘appropriate’. Alternatively, we might invoke a form of reasonableness that follows conventional, if generally inarticulated, standards such as ‘it is understandable why she got angry in the circumstances’. ‘Reasonable’ might also include the possibility of being subject to ‘argument and justification’, which, as de-Sousa argues, are ‘notions central to rationality’ (1987:5). But how are emotions to be understood as ‘justifiable’? Again, following de-Sousa’s line of argument, when we say that George got angry because his neighbour kicked his dog, we have an explanation, an excuse or a justification for what motivated his emotion, his anger. Was George’s response rational? We could reasonably suppose it was

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<sup>36</sup>Pitcher critiques the ‘Traditional View’ of emotions, particularly that of Hume. This view, Pitcher argues, strips emotions of everything but the sensations they immediately arouse, the ‘pains, tickles, and itches’ (p.326). I will have more to say about the role of ‘feelings’, or affect, in emotions later in this chapter. To anticipate, pains, tickles, and itches can not be judged reasonable or unreasonable, for they do not take an object, have value to us or give us reasons to act, except to scratch the itch or the tickle, and alleviate the pain or irritation.

rational. His dog had been kicked, and we could reasonably add that he had a normative reason to act since he cares about his dog. His caring for the dog gave him a motivating reason, a decisive, or a 'most decisive reason' (Parfit, 2007) to so act. Let us assume that his neighbour had no good reason to kick the animal in the first place since the dog was sleeping in the garden. Even if the neighbour detests dogs because he was once bitten by a dog, on this occasion his action is unwarranted and so unreasonable. Perhaps one might say he was less than rational. Had the dog threatened the neighbour (baring his teeth, adopting an attack posture), then, in one way, kicking the dog might have been the rational thing to do. However, in another way, it would not have been the rational thing to do since kicking the dog could have infuriated the animal further, resulting in an attack and a mauled leg. On this account, the thought-dependency of emotions, what I shall later refer to as their 'object' or 'aboutness', along with their evaluations, can often be assessed as rational.

Being 'rational' might also be minimally understood as taking the required means to achieve a desired end, once a person has reasoned about what that end is and what should be done to achieve it. Here, again, I am alluding to the role that reason plays in emotions and in rationality and I will develop this more fully noting, in Chapter 2, that just because we often know the right means to achieve a desired end this does not mean that we will take the right means. Often we detour from, or skip, the necessary steps in order to achieve our ends, making us rationally inconsistent. Bootstrapping, that is deceiving ourselves as to our true motives, might also detract from the rationality of emotion, creating reasons that justify what we prefer to do. These questions on the nature of rationality are difficult, requiring lengthy consideration. The best I might do here is to propose that emotions have a complex relationship to rationality and to argue that emotions can be rational responses to salience 'among what would otherwise be an unmanageable plethora of objects of attention, interpretations, and strategies of inference and conduct' (de-Sousa, 1987:xv). Further, given, as I said earlier, that our emotions are complexes of our sense of self, personality, experiences, dispositions, beliefs and values, a conclusion that this or that emotion is 'rational' or 'irrational' may be superficial and less than insightful. On the face of it, Othello might be judged irrational. He is consumed by jealousy and rage, wilfully refusing to admit the possibility that Desdemona is not a 'whore', but that she is faithful and deeply in love with him. While everyone else knows the accusation of adultery to be 'insanely false' (Cavell, 1987:125), Othello eagerly grasps Iago's flimsy evidence to corroborate what he wants to find as true. Othello both knows, but does not [want to] know, that Desdemona is honest and just, but he'll 'have some

proof' (III, iii, 389-92). Cavell is less interested in which emotion Othello suffers, 'call it jealousy' he suggests, than that Othello's suffering is an 'extraordinary representation' of the "astonishment" in sceptical doubt' (p.128). Othello wants to keep knowledge at bay. As Cavell has observed, this is a tale of 'knowing the existence of another' (p.125), of 'what it means to know another exists' (p.138). Othello wants to believe, contrary to all evidence, that Desdemona is a 'false' other. He refuses to recognise who she really is, or his relation to her, and in so doing reveals his fear of 'finitude' (Cavell, 1987:127). Even as hero, Othello, too, is vulnerable. He is a human self who is finite, dependent and incomplete. Desdemona's fate is to love that realisation into existence. Othello cannot bear Desdemona's loving gaze because it penetrates deeply into his psyche, perhaps to his own sense of his blackness, a less than 'perfect soul' (I, ii, 31). Is Othello rational? Is he rational to prefer to believe that Desdemona is unfaithful rather than unfaithful? In one sense, given who Othello is, and what he cannot face - his own imperfection - yes, he is rational. Perhaps he is 'rationally irrational', to follow Parfit (2011), but less than rational not to have moderated his beliefs, powers of imagination and imaginary powers (of his perfection). 'It is advice to accept one's humanity' (Cavell, 1987:140). Desdemona is a creature of flesh and blood, of human passions. She is separate from him, exists independently of him and so is not of him. His relationship with her, and her arousal, contaminates his image of himself as finite and perfect. Cavell interprets Othello's scepticism as 'the attempt to convert the human condition ... into an intellectual difficulty, a riddle' (p.138), a 'metaphysical finitude as an intellectual lack' (Cavell, 1976:263). Medea grieves for all she has lost, and what she must now lose through powers not of her making. She has been made 'other', a foreign woman, in Creon, abandoned and threatened with exile. Medea is made wretched, no pity is shown or to her sons. Anger boils, love turns to hate, 'Surely, of all creatures that have life and will, we women are the most wretched' (214-248). The injustice of her situation, her powerlessness as a woman enrages her.

You have this city, your father's home,  
the enjoyment of your life, and your friends' company.  
I am alone; I have no city; now my husband  
insults me. I was taken as plunder from a land  
At the earth's edge. I have no mother, brother, nor any  
Of my own blood to turn to in this extremity (248-284).

The Chorus agree that her anger, to this point, is 'just'. But Medea's rage intensifies. Medea dismisses Jason's insistence that she should approve of his plan, securing her and their children's future by this royal marriage were she to calm her anger, as 'glib high

mindedness'. He is guilty of what she charges. Jason adds insult to deep injury, demonstrating an unscrupulous lack of feeling:

Even you would approve  
 If you could govern your sex-jealousy. But you women  
 Have reached a state where, if all's well with your sex-life,  
 You've everything you wish for; but when that goes wrong,  
 At once all that is best and noblest turns to gall  
 ... If women didn't exist  
 Human life would be rid of all its miseries! (562-593)

'Oh what an evil power love has in people's lives!' (322-354) says Medea. This is a tragedy of excess and monstrosity. Can love be so brutal? Perhaps it can if fate itself is unremittably cruel. Of all the emotions, perhaps the evaluations of love are the most difficult to keep in proportion. The passionate life 'is a life of continued gaping openness to violation, in which pieces of the self are groping out into the world...' (Nussbaum, 1994b:442) and may bring us to make commit than rational acts.

Of course, when we describe an act as 'rational', we often mean it in an ordinary, non-technical sense. That is, an act is 'rational' to the extent that we judge it wise, sensible, understandable, the obvious thing to do, intelligent, reasonable, and so on. If we describe an act as 'irrational', we may intend to suggest that the act was stupid, thoughtless, lacking in sense or unreasonable. I will often use 'irrational' in a weaker sense to mean 'less than fully rational', following Parfit (2011:33). Thus, when I describe an emotion as 'rational', with little or no further explanation, I use the term in the ordinary sense of being 'reasonable'; there are sufficient reasons or enough reasons to act in a certain way. Because I use 'belief' in connection with the rationality of emotions to argue that they are, at least, a necessary condition for emotion, if not also, in many cases, constitutive of emotion, it is necessary to set out what I mean by the rationality of our beliefs. In doing so, I am, again, following Parfit (2011:34) who suggests the following:

What we ought rationally to do depends in part on our beliefs about the facts.  
 If we have certain beliefs about the relevant facts, and what we believe would, if it were true, give us a reason to act in some way, I shall call these *beliefs whose truth* would give us this reason.  
 Some possible acts, then, would be:  
*rational* if we have beliefs about the relevant facts whose truth would give us sufficient reasons to act in this way,  
 what we *ought rationally* to do if these reasons would be decisive,  
*less than fully rational* if we have beliefs whose truth would give us clear and decisive reasons not to act in this way,  
 and  
*irrational* if these reasons would be strongly decisive. (Parfit, 2011:34, italics in the original)



To go beyond the ordinary sense of being reasonable, and to assess whether an emotion is rational we would need, I suggest, to know the ‘entire emotion-situation’ and all of its attendant appraisals, evaluations beliefs and supporting reasons. In ordinary life, having access to all the epistemic facts and reasons is not, however, usually possible. My friend is angry she has not received promotion. This is understandable, and I can sympathise with her, but her anger persists long after she was told she was turned down for promotion. Why? It turns out that her junior colleague was promoted instead. It is often impossible to know the epistemic facts and supporting reasons for an emotion since we frequently hide from what we do and should know. My friend does not confront her anger because she does not want to admit that she is jealous of her colleague.

#### **e) Emotions as evaluative judgements and ineliminable references**

What we can know is, obviously, imperfect and finite. One reason why literature is so valuable in an examination of the emotions, and hence why I draw on it in this thesis, is that novels can offer a more sustained exploration and examination of the epistemic facts of an entire emotion-situation than is often available in ‘real’ life. Novels, at least certain kinds of novel, are ‘profoundly committed to the emotions’ (Nussbaum, 1990:4): the life of compassion, or of anger, or of pity; or of these in combination with other emotions. But even so, what ‘knowledge’, to borrow from Nussbaum (1990), do these emotions contain? Beneath the eruptions of passionate or painful emotions, or below the landscapes of our calmer states, lies the complex person: who, what and why she is and has become. Emotions, too, not only reveal our own values and concerns, but connect us to others, speaking as they do so of our need of others, of our sociability, as well as of our insecurity. As Rousseau so elegantly told us, because we are not immune to vulnerability and the vicissitudes of life, our very weakness makes us sociable.

Our common sufferings draw our hearts to our fellow-creatures ... Every affection is a sign of insufficiency; if each of us had no need of others, we should hardly think of associating with them. So, our frail happiness has its roots in our weakness ... All men are born naked and poor; all are liable to the sorrows of life, its disappointments, ills, needs, its sufferings of every kind; and all at length are condemned to die. (1993:218-19)

I follow Nussbaum’s view (2001:22) that emotions are forms of evaluative judgements that ascribe to certain objects and people things that are of importance for the person’s own flourishing, and that they are acknowledgements of our vulnerability and neediness. In addition to the reasons outlined above, it is because emotions play a central role in our

lives that they help to define who we are and why we are as we are. Because emotions can move us to action, we need, if we want a just society, to ensure that those actions are ethical and proportionate. If we want a society peopled with healthy human beings who have concern for others, who know how to treat others fairly and sensitively, to take appropriate action when things go wrong, we need to attend to our emotional health. Our emotions are about something. They are perceptions of value and they embody ways of seeing the world with the power to increase our attentional capacity towards the object of our emotion. Emotions may contain beliefs<sup>37</sup>, often complex beliefs, which point to our capacity for good or bad judgement. Emotions are our way of connecting to others, of ‘hooking’<sup>38</sup> on to their good or bad, and acting to ensure that they, and we, flourish. Emotions allow us to discern the particulars of a situation, and are a form of critical activity that ought to be cultivated to a high degree if issues of justice and morality are of concern to us. The discriminating power of emotions will ground our ethical responses to external events. Certain emotions, such as compassion, can be cultivated over time as a significant part of developing our moral character and are especially important in diminishing the power of emotions such as shame or disgust that seek to denigrate or exclude, thereby tainting our moral judgements. There is a very important role for education here. Compassion, of course, may result in regard for the foolish, the non-serious, but we can train this emotion to make it sensitive to what is of value and to judge the ‘size’<sup>39</sup> of the event. When the ‘size’ is misjudged, the consequences can be truly awful, as we saw earlier with Othello and Medea.

### 1.5 Emotions, Moral Education and Gender

Forms of moral education that cultivate emotions such as empathy and compassion are important. The use of novels affords a means of cultivating the emotions in schools and I develop this theme in Chapter 7. If the novel is a tour of all human experience, presenting cases of human need, vulnerability and worthiness to cultivate empathic understanding and compassionate appreciation of the characters, bringing pupils to immerse themselves in the

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<sup>37</sup>For further development of beliefs as necessary and sufficient, and constitutive of emotions, see Nussbaum (2001), pp.33-36. Nussbaum holds that beliefs are both necessary and sufficient for an emotion. She notes that the precise relationship between emotions and belief has long been debated, but that most accounts accept that belief is necessary for the emotion to occur. See Williams (1973), Rorty (1980), Lutz (1988), de-Sousa (1987), Nussbaum (2001).

<sup>38</sup>I borrow this from Nussbaum (2001:19).

<sup>39</sup>Nussbaum employs the idea of ‘size’ in compassionate regard, which she takes from Aristotle. Objects, which have ‘size’ include evil brought about by chance, death, disease and shortage of food, and evils from sources that were expected to bring good things. See *Rh.*1386a4-14. We do not pity, or should not pity, the loss of trivial things such as a ‘toothbrush or paper clip’ (Nussbaum, 2001:307).

worlds of others to simulate their experiences vividly and imaginatively, could be a crucial moral component of cultivating emotions in education. Essential to an education in compassion and empathy, is the selection of situations, characters and texts that are both close to and remote from our own cultural concerns and partialities. If we accept that empathy is protean, there is no reason to think that we cannot extend the boundaries of concern for others, and thereby inhibit exclusive self- and group-privileging. An empathy-free world is not to be endured. The Nazis were very successful in blocking not only compassion for those they wanted to destroy, but empathy too. By describing the Jews as cockroaches, homosexuals as deviants, and the Roma as filth, a rail track was cut to the death camps of Europe. As Burleigh trenchantly puts it, the souls of the Germans were raped when:

... sections of the German elites and masses or ordinary people chose to abdicate their individual critical faculties in favour of a politics based on faith, hope, hatred and sentimental self-regard for their own race and nation. (Burleigh, 2000:1)

If we need a more contemporary, less extreme example, then educators who are confronted with pupils who are angry, abusive, uninterested, cruel, indifferent to other's pain, and so on, will need compassion and empathy if they are to be able to continue teaching them in a non-prejudicial way. This is no easy task for teachers who are expected to deal sensitively and fairly with bad behaviour. If we understand that many difficult and challenging pupils come from abusive and neglectful backgrounds, where violence is the norm, it is not surprising that their own behaviour will be far from what is deemed desirable. These pupils' emotions may well be stunted or maladaptive. That is, the judgements, appraisals or apprehensions may be absent, poorly construed or formed from error, with respect to the extent of danger, motivation or intentions of those who would harm them. The medical evidence supports this view. Victims of abuse tend not to reason well as I shall indicate in Chapters 6 and 7. The question for those of us interested in making the case for compassion (and for the teaching of emotions more generally) in schools, in education more broadly, and, indeed in all public institutions, is how to change the vision of the emotionally damaged person, that is, the person who is excessively angry, unemotional, or both, so that her responses are more appropriate to the circumstances in which she finds herself.

Bowlby (1988) argued that violence in the family was a major contributory cause of many psychiatric syndromes, a fact that had been ignored by clinicians, not least because of the influence of Freudian analysis with its focus on the unconscious and the fantastical.

Ignoring the effects of real life acts and contexts on real life people has profoundly negative real life consequences, as our damaged young children, young offenders and prison populations can attest. According to Bowlby, Freud's decision in 1897 to view childhood seductions as 'aetiologically' (1988: 87) unimportant to mental health, and to dismiss such seductions as the product of their imaginations, ensured that abuse and violence were perpetrated from one generation to the next. Subsequently, Freudian psychoanalysts, Bowlby asserted, did not think it important to consider how parental treatment affected the child. In any case, following Freud, these fantasies were probably the result of prejudice, scapegoating and bias on the part of the child towards her parent[s]. As Bowlby pointed out, and it seems so obvious to us now, 'violence breeds violence, and violence in families tends to perpetuate itself from one generation to the next' (1988:87). Breaking the cycle of abuse calls for significant resources including, I will argue throughout, imaginative resources and imaginative empathy from teachers. It also calls for the cultivation of imaginative empathy in and towards those we teach.

Imagination is also involved in complex emotions because of what we imagine as alternatives for others and ourselves. When we pity, we often imagine that there is little we can do to alleviate suffering, and sometimes this will be the case (as in terminal illness). However, pity, when it is used inappropriately to evaluate another's situation, may mask other feelings, including guilt. If, for example, I remain calm with a pupil who has behaved odiously to another, pitying him rather than being angered by him, this might result in action that is uncaring and disproportionate, sanctioning the poor behaviour rather than condemning it through morally appropriate anger. Similarly, if I pity another pupil, judging her to be inferior in comparison to her peers, and if I believe that it is the pupil's own fault that she has few friends, that emotion may mask my contempt or disgust for this pupil. These are important moral judgements I am making, and the actions I do or do not take, on the basis of those judgements and their concomitant emotions, are crucial for the wellbeing of those I teach.

Inevitably, as I have noted, emotions are deeply intertwined with notions of gender. My analysis of emotions here follows an account of moral philosophy because it is concerned with analyzing, defending and recommending concepts of right and wrong behaviour, with how things ought to be<sup>40</sup>. I will argue that emotions ought not to be gendered. Because

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<sup>40</sup>Kant, for example, proposes that the most basic aim of moral philosophy is to search and establish the supreme principle of morality (*GW*:4:392), the categorical imperative: 'what ought I to do?'. The Humanity

emotions connect us to others, how well we relate to others so that we cause no harm, how we respect others as distinct and separate, endowing them with dignity, and thereby endowing them with dignity, is an important feature of moral philosophy. Emotions pose problems for morality but also aid it, as Nussbaum (2001) claims, and I shall argue that emotions must be part of our educative training. The difficult task for educators is how to help pupils choose and express the right emotion, in the right way and to the right extent. Such an education is about consciously shaping emotional capacities so that we refine them into more discerning mechanisms. To ‘choose an emotion is to choose to cultivate them’ (Sherman, 1997:79) and while we cannot always ordain a given emotion, the aim should be to develop a state of character that shapes emotional capacities as a lasting resource of good character. If we succeed in this endeavour, our emotions become not ‘raw impulses’ but socialised moral responses to events that are often beyond our control. Over time, our emotions can be refined and brought under our control to serve us in ways that express our dignity and that respect the moral worth of others. Gendered emotions may impact on our respect for others persons if we deem their emotional response to be over-expressive or under-expressive of their sex; or inappropriately expressed in certain social situations.

To see how well we can achieve this, I will draw on a fictional pupil, Nancy, who embodies so many of the unappealing traits which confront teachers every day<sup>41</sup>. I will explore some of the complex issues I raise in this thesis through Nancy, bringing to life arguments and discussions that might otherwise seem abstract and remote from daily life. Further, because of my interest in the novel, and my assertion that the novel can be used to cultivate moralised emotions, it is worth asking how the novel might help a pupil like Nancy examine her own emotional states, the states of fictional characters, her responses to those events, and what she can learn from these fictionalised events. That is, how will Nancy understand, evaluate, examine and infer from the narratives she is reading, and how will she compare these to her own life? Will Nancy, despite her own troubles, be able to

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Formula (*GW*:4:431) of the categorical imperative states that we must always treat ourselves or other people not as a mere means, but as ends, respecting our humanity. This formulation, in demanding that we respect humanity, limits what we can do in pursuit of our ends because we must respect, and promote, the ends of others (*GW*:4:430). In the *Nicomachean Ethics* (hereafter *NE*.), justice is the ‘sovereign’ virtue (1129b28) because we are just in relation to *somebody else*. The ‘best person’ is one who exercises justice for the advantage of the other; the ‘worst person’ is one who ‘exercises his wickedness towards both himself and his friends’ (1130a5-10).

<sup>41</sup>In my concluding chapter I note, with thanks to Gayle Letherby for pointing this out to me, that presenting the narrative of Nancy, without a parallel narrative of a boy, has its limitations. The constraints of word limits and my focus on girls and women in this thesis did not permit such an account but this may be remedied in future work.

read with imagination, sympathy, compassion, anger, horror, disgust or envy and, if she can, might that be beneficial to her own emotional wellbeing? I present brief narratives from Nancy which describe her home life and her experiences in school<sup>42</sup>. While the narratives are fictionalised, they are based on many accounts of abuse, of which I have had personal experience, have read<sup>43</sup> or have had recounted by pupils.

Nancy is 14 years old and very slight. While she is often angry, at other times she is unresponsive, seemingly oblivious to her surroundings. She veers from being interested and compliant, to being obstreperous and provocative. While Nancy is needy, she exults in being the object of some very negative attention that includes insults, jeering, dismissal by her peers, and vexed comments by her teachers. She is also the object of ridicule because of the way in which she defiantly stomps down the corridor, ready to lash out should the expected negative comment come her way. Nancy does not know what to do with kindness. At best, she will work quietly, at other times she will leave the classroom, without permission, to seek the one other girl who seems equally bent on staying in permanent trouble. Nancy rarely smiles and rarely displays happiness or contentment. In fact, these states seem entirely absent from Nancy's character. I will follow her through this thesis, imagining what she might do and how she might react in a variety of situations, asking what we could do to help her develop positive characteristics that protect her from the taunts of her peers, and give her a feeling of security in school. Nancy also comes from a violent home, which might help explain her emotional outbursts, her difficulties in affiliating with her peers and teachers and concentrating on her work. The principle question is how we can help a girl like Nancy flourish so that she can enjoy self-esteem and respect that might, more easily, enable us to treat her with dignity so that she can learn to reciprocate? If Nancy is to enjoy a good life emotionally, to realise eudaimonia, and to avoid becoming a victim of later abuse<sup>44</sup>, she will need to be encouraged to use her own agency and effort. This will need time and continuous careful effort. Virtuous action requires internal effort (how can I reason well?) and successful external action (how can I act well?) and both require propitious conditions (a warm and positive environment, a good education), as well as external resources or goods (her teachers' time and compassion). Whatever Nancy's potential capacities, those are not likely to be realised if they are left raw and untutored. The same will be true of her emotions if they are left prey

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<sup>42</sup>The narrative is in the regional vernacular to give the account an authentic feel as few children I teach speak Standard English.

<sup>43</sup>For example, Dobash and Dobash (2000).

<sup>44</sup>As often happens with abused children. See for example, Mullender et al. (2002) and Chapter 7 here.

to the vagaries of her own poorly formed construals and judgements, beyond the reach of her own will and consent to emotional temperance. What I would like to happen to Nancy over time is that she develop the capacity to do more than simply repress or control her emotions, especially her anger. I want her to choose her emotions but choosing ‘involves an education of consciously shaping emotional capacities and refining them into more discerning sensitivities’ (Sherman, 1997:79). So, while Nancy, in common with all of us, cannot always will a given emotion, we can help her, as Sherman (1979:79) suggests to ‘develop a state of character that shapes emotional capacities as an enduring resource of character’.

In the company of Nancy then, and assisted by a number of literary characters, I will develop my analysis of what an emotion is. I like de Sousa’s (1987:1) articulation of emotions as a kind of ‘philosophical hub’ leading us to problems of epistemology, ontology, psychology, ethics, and logical form. From within this hub I will take into account a number of different perspectives on what actually constitutes an emotion, theoretically and philosophically, drawing from other disciplines as and when it is apposite and enriching to my account to do so, and when I need to illuminate the argument. Given emotion’s complexity and variety, to rely only on one discipline alone would be to fail to give the analysis the depth and breadth the study of emotion deserves<sup>45</sup>.

## **1.6 Organisation of the Thesis.**

The thesis is structured around seven chapters, including this introductory chapter. Each chapter adds an additional layer by way of developing the argument of what has gone before. The chapters are threaded through with the narrative of Nancy and excerpts from novels. I selected the novels for this thesis for a variety of reasons. All are books that I loved reading, not least, and importantly for this thesis, because of their rich moral content.

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<sup>45</sup>Other disciplines can give us insights, concepts and formulations that might enrich the philosophical account. For example, fMRI imaging has implicated regions of the brain affected in depression. Damage to this area is now understood to mediate emotional cognition and behaviour that may be dysfunctional in depression. So, rather than speculate about the possible causes of depression, or emotional dysfunction, one can point to significant evidence for the source of a debilitating condition and offer treatment. Similarly, Giese-Davis and Spiegel (2009) demonstrate the importance of understanding empirical evidence if we are to understand emotions and the progression of cancer. For example, they cite the popular misconception that cancer patients who yield to fear will contribute to the progression of the disease. Instead, research supports the association between emotional suppression and helplessness, and repression and cancer incidence. Developments in neuroscience can now provide detailed accounts of the brain science that underlie emotional memory and learning (LaBar and LeDoux, 2009) and Davidson et al. (2009) point to a wide range of scientific, cultural, anthropological and psychological studies which have increased our understanding of emotions.

Proust writes beautifully on the emotions, especially on love, grief and jealousy. *A Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad and *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy (Chapter 3) are both morally complex novels and they exemplify, for me, the consequences of inhumanity, human and environmental degradation, and how well, or not, we behave when the norms of a just society are absent. *Unless* by Carol Shields (Chapter 4) and *Cat's Eye* by Margaret Atwood (Chapter 5) exemplify concerns raised in this thesis with respect to gender stereotypes and their potential to restrict autonomy, agency and personhood. While these novels, and others I cite variously, exemplify the points I make in each chapter, many of them, including *The Road*, *Heart of Darkness* and *Cat's Eye*, are either on reading lists in Scottish secondary schools or are recommended for advanced personal study. Some of the novels, such as *The Road*, might be considered too bleak and hence inappropriate for Nancy and others of her age. However, *Heart of Darkness* is also a bleak depiction human depravity and yet is part of the literary canon along with the war poems of the First World War. The Scottish curriculum also includes holocaust literature as well as teaching on the appalling losses and brutality of the two Great Wars. My view is that literature can play a philosophical and epistemic role in the cultivation of moral emotions and the habituation of character. Reading literature, in this sense, may be instrumental since it is aimed at desiring a good end, but reading remains, nevertheless, good for its own sake.

In Chapter 2, I establish what an emotion is and consider how, and in what ways, emotions are intrinsic to wellbeing. I pursue the line here that emotions are complex, sometimes overt and at other times subtle, responses to events of significance to us: they are a sort of window onto the external world. Emotions, I will argue, as suggested above, are nearly always directed at 'objects'. Kenny (1963:41), for example, stipulates that emotions are 'essentially' directed at objects, that is, they are *about something* which is of some value to us, involving judgements, interpretations, appraisals or beliefs about the object, and they can motivate us to action. I gave the example earlier: 'I am angry with X because he hit the dog. I love dogs, and believe, very strongly, that abusing powerless creatures is wrong.' From this example, we can see that emotions have cognitive content as they involve thinking about, judging, evaluating or imagining the importance of a salient external object and what might be happening to the object. I will argue, too, that emotions can be rational because they evaluate objects. This is critical, not least because emotions, especially women's emotions, are so often dismissed as irrational. On the account I present here, however, it will be evident that this cannot be so. Emotions take in information from the external world and we react, in some way, to that information. I shall claim that emotions are normative and potentially ethical responses to salient events. I will also claim, adding



to the rich complexity of emotions, that they are, usually, an acknowledgement of neediness and lack of control over external events.

In Chapter 3, I focus specifically on the family of what are often known as ‘other-regarding’ emotions, and compassion in particular. A central argument of the thesis is that compassion can guide ethical action because it usually entails intense regard for, and a desire to alleviate suffering from, the object of the emotion. Compassion has a different nature from other emotions such as anger or indeed sympathy, compassion’s close kin. It follows a different course of thought and takes a different object; namely, an object that is suffering harm that is undeserved to some degree. Compassion, appropriately cultivated to see the ‘size’ of the object, is the ‘guardian’ of the moral domain (Haidt, 2009), motivating us to act to alleviate suffering and to regard the object as a person of dignity worthy of our respect. I will suggest that we should aim to cultivate moralised compassion, by which I mean a compassionate regard for the object that is proportional, sensitive, discerning and motivated by appropriate action. I revisit moralised compassion throughout the thesis and will argue, in the conclusion, that education curricula should include a study of the emotions in order that teachers, for example, can be discerning and ethically evaluative.

Moralised compassion, I will argue, is important in the creation of just institutions. My proposal for the cultivation of moralised compassion leads me to the next chapter in which I focus on the ethics of care and the need for that to be supported by moral theory. This chapter comprises a complex and detailed discussion intended as groundwork for the later arguments of this thesis. Essentially, I shall assert that to care in the right way, at the right time and for the right reason, requires an engagement with the rules of moral salience; namely, the capacity to deliberate with perception and insight on articulated features of the environment. Good care demands, I argue, careful, sensitive, self-regarding, as well as other-regarding, thought and action. Discriminating amongst acts of ethical relevance is a matter of sizing up situations in terms of past and current experience, as well as attending to some imaginative and affective feel for the situation at hand. Women, so often seen as ‘natural’ carers because of their ‘innate’ compassionate natures, tend to do most of the caring work, often to their own detriment. Care, too, is often undervalued and rarely understood because it is seen as an activity that requires low-level skills and little by way of intellectual ability or moral capacity. I suggest the contrary. Good care, like all ethical acts, requires the capacity for moral and abstract reasoning. Contrary to deeply held and

stereotypical views, both sexes have the capacities for good care and my position is that care that disdains or ignores the role of justice, universal principles, the importance of conceptual thinking, personhood, and that misunderstands or misapplies emotion theory, including moralised compassion, may be harmful to the care-receiver as well as to the care-giver. Any neglected or over-protected child, indeed carers with few ends of their own, knows this well. Because of its defence of, and intense respect for, the individual, I call on the moral and theoretical principles of liberal theory to support my case here, drawing primarily on Kant and Rawls. I propose that, if we wish to have just institutions, including schools, we need to understand how the role and functions of men and women are gendered and, in turn, how emotions are gendered.

Having established the need for care to be supported by moral theory, I move, in Chapter 5, to demonstrate how women have been brought up to feel more and to care more based on beliefs that they have innate, biological capacities which prepare them for caring roles. Here I demonstrate ways in which ‘science’ is being used to ‘prove’ innate biological difference, suggesting these claims are precipitate and should be viewed with much greater caution. In sum, I argue that if scientists already believe in innate difference then they will be predisposed to find difference when they come to analyse and interpret their results. However, because science is respected and is seen as authoritative, largely inaccessible to non-scientists, the claims scientists make have considerable bearing on how we see men and women. Unless we are wise to the legitimacy, or otherwise, of so-called proven scientific claims, they will serve to further promote and perpetuate gendered stereotypes about emotional capacity and natural sex roles. I then consider studies from psychology which indicate the extent to which emotions are gendered, and the extent to which our emotional expressions and interpretations are influenced by beliefs about who should express which emotion, when, and to what degree.

Chapter 6 comprises a number of themes as it endeavours to pull together the threads of the thesis. Initially, I focus on Nancy and a short narrative from her life, using this to then demonstrate that emotions are vital to good health, wellbeing and functioning. To support the force of this claim I consider a number of psychological and medical studies on the effects of abuse on the emotional states of abused women, as well as the emotional states of men who abuse. In order to cope with adverse conditions and the indignities of abuse, girls and women (as well as boys and men) adopt adaptive emotional strategies which, while rational in the circumstances, are inimical to their wellbeing in a number of

disturbing ways. Having discussed the justifications men make for abusing their intimate partners and their children, I turn to the Capabilities Approach developed by Martha Nussbaum, proposing that this ethical framework can act as a guide to good conduct in our schools so that those concerned for the welfare of children and young adults can evaluate their acts against the ten central capabilities. My specific focus, however, will be on Capability 5, the emotions. Because emotions occur as a result of an eliciting condition in which perception, evaluation, imagination, deliberation, and motivating impulses are all present, allowing us to function in the world, to do and to be in intelligent and discriminating ways, I will suggest that emotions are an architectonic capability that anchors all other capabilities.

In the concluding chapter, I develop my recommendation that a study of emotions should, as a matter of ethical importance critical to wellbeing and functioning, be included in educational curricula. This, I shall suggest, would enable educators to respond to pupils with greater sympathy and compassion and, moreover, ensure they could play a significant role in de-gendering emotions, to the benefit of both men and women. I draw on the books I have used in the thesis to propose that novels can extend the imaginative world of the mind and provide a valuable means by which to examine and understand moral theory relevant to our emotions. In this concluding chapter I also summarise my central arguments, outline the limitations of this thesis, point forward to further enquiry I would like to undertake, and reflect on the personal impact of this thesis.

There is one final, but important, point. The style I adopt in this thesis is not committed to a single disciplinary conception of discourse, and my task is not simply to adhere to the rather economic language of philosophical argument. As Nussbaum (1990:49) has argued, there is ‘no single rule’ as to which style should be adopted in works which use literature to understand life and enrich philosophical accounts. Commenting on the dominance of conventional philosophical prose and regardless of the topic under examination, Nussbaum (1990:19) observed that the style of writing adopted by the descendants of the great philosophers was not just dry, correct, and abstract, but seemed to be ‘a kind of all-purpose solvent in which philosophical issues of any kind could be efficiently disentangled and all conclusions neatly disengaged’. No other style of writing was asserted or denied. Nussbaum attributes this preference to a ‘long-standing fascination’ with the style of natural science. While there is, of course, nothing wrong with this conventional style in and of itself, it is not, in every context and study, the only option.

Content from beyond philosophy has helped shaped the form of my argument. So I am allusive and, sometimes, literary, not always following the conventional structure of traditional philosophical argument. In addition to drawing from other disciplines, literature is used in this thesis both to enrich philosophical points and as an heuristic for moral education, and as in literature, I follow the styles which best suit my purpose, while accepting that these will not please all. Finally, Nancy's dialogue and key parts of her story are italicised, as are the extracts from novels that I use as chapter epigraphs.

## Chapter Two: What is an Emotion?

*The region of sadness I had just entered was as distinct from the region into which I had hurled myself with such joy only a moment before, as in certain skies a band of pink is separated as though by a line from a band of green or a band of black. (Proust, 1913:183)*

### 2.1 Introduction.

If we had no attachments, many emotions would not figure in our lives<sup>46</sup>. It would not matter if misery, ills or sorrow stalked the world, or why, because our insecurity and need of others would not be known to us<sup>47</sup>. But we are sociable and we are insecure, and so we do need others. The first argument I will make in this chapter is that emotions express our deep attachments to people and to our goals and plans. I will begin by providing a general structure of three emotions, jealousy, grief and shame, suggesting that emotions can be cognitive, evaluative and intentional, and that they can reveal our values and aspirations. I will suggest, further, that emotions can entail imaginative reconstruction of what is happening in the external world, and that this capacity requires intelligence and discernment, along with the capacity to deliberate, to reason, well. In arguing in this way, I will be claiming that emotions are not necessarily capricious or necessarily blind to reason. On the contrary, emotions can aid reasoning. Reasoning well with what we have appraised from the external world, indeed from our own internal world, is important to making good assessments of what is happening and what we ought to do in response. Emotions can, of course, lead to immoral conduct, as my arguments on the effects of abuse on women's and girls' wellbeing in later chapters demonstrates, and so I do not argue that emotions are automatically 'self-certifying' (Nussbaum, 1990:42) sources of ethical behaviour. Rather, and following Aristotle, I suggest that we should learn from concrete experience and that this will require the cultivation of perception and judgement, the ability to read the environment for salience, and to deliberate on appropriate responses. If the evaluations are appropriate or well informed, and this is not always easy to achieve, then moral conduct is more likely to follow. And so our emotional responses, if properly cultivated over time, can lead to wisely chosen, virtuous action that responds appropriately to the conditions of human life.

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<sup>46</sup>See fn. 32, p.25. There is a class of emotions, such as fear, anger, disgust, sadness, surprise and happiness, that are 'basic' and universal, the product of evolution. This is a classification that goes as far back as Darwin. See, for example, Wilfred Janig in Davidson et al. (2009:176). Fear, along with other basic emotions, is not the result of associative learning, and cannot be completely changed or modified. Robinson Crusoe, though solitary for a time, could almost certainly experience fear, anger or sadness.

<sup>47</sup>See Nussbaum (1986) on the role of fragility and vulnerability in moral life.

The philosophical bases for the case I will make here, and indeed throughout the thesis, derive from Aristotle's virtue ethics and Kant's moral philosophy<sup>48</sup>. I will then discuss emotions in more detail, examining their characteristics, components and structure. This examination will include the evaluation, motivation and feeling associated with emotions, along with the characteristics of emotions' intensity, duration and social comparison element. For the social comparison part of the discussion, I shall refer to my fictional pupil Nancy. The purpose of deconstructing emotions in such detail is to demonstrate that emotions are compound and diverse, complex and subtle, and that they may consist of multiple entities. This section is followed by a discussion on the intentionality of emotions, intentionality being that which tells us what the emotion is 'about', the 'object' of the emotion, and what circumstances elicited the emotion. Briefly, intentionality, here, focusses on the following: Nancy is angry at X because X has done Y and Y is important to Nancy in some way<sup>49</sup>. From intentionality, I move to a consideration of beliefs, judgements and appraisals, portmanteau terms for the evaluative component of the emotion. This evaluative component is very closely linked to the intentionality of the emotion because in having an emotion I am responding to something I judge or believe to have occurred. To take the brief sentence once more: Nancy is angry at X (intentionality) because X, Nancy believes, has done Y and Y is important to her in some way. That emotions have evaluative components consisting of beliefs, judgements or appraisals can be seen if Nancy now receives new information about X. Nancy was angry at X because she believed he had done Y. However, she now learns that X did not, in fact, do Y. W, his friend, is culpable. Therefore, she is angry at W and remorseful for blaming X. In setting out the argument for beliefs in this way, I am asserting that emotions can be malleable: change the evaluation and you can change the emotion. Nancy moves from anger at X to remorse for accusing X of doing Y. The combination of intentionality and evaluations forms what is referred to as the propositional content of emotions.

My next move is to argue that emotions can be rational and intelligent, and that they are essential to ethical conduct. I will support my argument by relating rationality to three real and one fictional example, and by following Hampton's (2007) account of *Mens Rea*, looking at willful irrationality and culpable rationality. What I am interested in here is the role of choice in actions, and how choice is guided by reason. How we deliberate, the decisions we come to or judgements we make will depend, to a great extent, on the quality

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<sup>48</sup>I acknowledge, however, with thanks to David Carr for pointing this out, that Aristotle and Kant are not everywhere consistent, especially with regard to practical reason.

<sup>49</sup>I call this, simply, the X-Y-Z scenario.

of those deliberations and the views or beliefs which inform the deliberations that motivate us to subsequent action. Our upbringing, education and the kind of society in which we live has a profoundly significant bearing on our deliberative capacities and on the beliefs we hold. Emotions, I shall argue, can act as our moral compass and serve as strong barriers to immoral conduct. They can connect us, as I suggested earlier, to virtuous conduct and I argue, here, that emotions are rational to the extent that the beliefs they contain are true and the values they express are good. Saving my examples for later treatment, I will resort, for brevity and simplicity, to the X-Y-Z scenario of the kind I used above.

Nancy was angry at X because she believed he had done Y. Her anger was fair and rational on the basis of the evidence she had. It turns out, however, that it was W who committed the act but Nancy refuses to believe it was W and continues to accuse X, despite supporting evidence from witnesses. Is Nancy being rational in her anger at X? Perhaps not. Her belief is now false but she is refusing to accept the truth that it was W. This might be because she harbours resentment at X for other misdemeanours and cannot let go of this opportunity to be angry with him, even though on this occasion that seems neither rational nor fair. Here she wants to uphold and defend herself as a person of dignity and of value. Nancy is perhaps being willfully irrational and her unjustified anger is not virtuous. But it seems unfair to say that she is willfully irrational once we know that, lying deep within her emotional complex, there is a reason for her anger at X. X has teased and taunted her so often that she does not trust her peers who back the claims of the popular X. It may be that Nancy does not understand the real reason for her anger in this situation: confused, neglected or abused children often do not, or cannot, distinguish between their emotions or the causes of their emotional states. Emotions are complex, subtle, nuanced, painful, revelatory and masking. She is responding to, and trying to cope with, adversity, but in maladaptive ways. It seems, superficially, that Nancy is irrational; but given that what is at stake are her dignity, self-esteem, and experiences, I think Nancy is all too rational. Her behaviour is also understandable because intelligible (some aspects of rationality depend on the concept of intelligibility<sup>50</sup>) on the basis of what she reasons and why. Nancy's experience has taught her to distrust her peers. She does not, so far, have clear and decisive reasons to believe that it was, in fact, W who committed the act. So, for good experiential reasons, perhaps even for good epistemic reasons (no-one has persuaded her, or provided

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<sup>50</sup>Goldie (2000:12) prefers the notion of 'intelligibility' as it is a 'thinner' notion than rationality, a claim for which, on his view, over-intellectualises emotions.

her with evidence that it was W not X), Nancy is holding fast to her current belief. She might, however, be judged as ‘irrational’ in the ordinary sense of ‘foolish’.

In holding to the complexity, rationality and intelligence of emotions, I will argue for a moral theory that makes a claim for the intrinsic and equal worth of human beings. I shall do so for three reasons. First, respect for intrinsic and equal worth enables the person to be and to do in order to flourish in truly human ways: we have dignity by virtue of being human. Secondly, intrinsic and equal worth may enable us to have a sense of what a person needs, as a particular and distinct person, in order to flourish as that person. And thirdly, such a moral theory can help us recognize our own and other’s neediness and vulnerability, that we should not be ashamed of that neediness or be made vulnerable to exploitation because of it. I will develop these themes further in the next chapter. Emotions, as noted earlier, are our lives’ palimpsests on which our experiences have been written. Emotions, and the experiences which give birth to them and shape them, live deep within our personalities where many different times co-exist, flowing at different speeds and intensities, enshrining our values, concerns and goals.

## **2.2 The General Structure of Emotions: Jealousy, Grief and Shame.**

Emotions, I have said, may be understood as cognitive, intelligent and rational responses to external stimuli. In stating that emotions contain cognitive content, I am referring, following Lazarus (1991a:820), to knowledge and appraisal of what is happening in the environment<sup>51</sup>. By intelligent, I mean that the evaluations and motivations constitute, to a considerable degree, an appropriate and intelligible response to the eliciting condition. That is, the evaluation and action make the emotion intelligible<sup>52</sup>. As Nussbaum (2001:16) observes:

[w]hen we wake up, we have to figure out how to live in [the] world of objects. Without the intelligence of the emotions, we have little hope of controlling that problem well.

By rational I mean responding to facts or events that give us decisive reasons to act and to take efficient measures to pursue our valued goals. Following Parfit (2011:113-115), what

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<sup>51</sup>See Aristotle (2004); Scherer (2009) and Ellsworth and Scherer (2009). The concept of cognition also encompasses patterns of perceptions, processing of data and perceptions, computational processes, interpretation of events, and appraisals of salience.

<sup>52</sup>See de-Sousa (1987, chapter 5).



makes our evaluations or beliefs rational, or not, is their content, not the consequent action arising from those evaluations and beliefs<sup>53</sup>.

In summary, an emotion may be understood as consisting of the following parts:

- Emotions often have *objects* which are of some value to us. This is the ‘thought content’ of a mental phenomena emotion (intentionality)<sup>54</sup>.
- Emotions have *cognitive content* because they involve thinking about, judging the importance, value or non-importance of a salient external object.
- Emotions often involve *judgements, interpretations, appraisals* or *beliefs* about the object of value.
- Emotions may contain *general* (dogs are great companions) and *concrete* (my dog is a great companion) evaluations; and *background* (ongoing emotions, and dispositional) or *situational* judgements (happening now, or episodic).<sup>55</sup>
- Emotions may be *rational* because they *evaluate* objects of value thereby judging the extent to which the external object is important to one's well being and flourishing. One reason why my PhD is very important to me as it that it may help me in my career (*self-referential* emotion). However, someone else may judge it unimportant because a PhD is of no value to that person's career or wellbeing, though she may judge, nevertheless, that it is important to me. Emotions may be ‘constitutively’ rational (Greenspan, 2000:478), at least to the extent that they help realise a valued end. Emotional behaviour, of course, may not be rational. It may still, however, be ‘*rationally irrational*’ (Parfit, 1984:14) meaning that I may sometimes depart from reason in order to achieve some end.
- Emotions may be classified as *negative* or *positive*. Negative emotions are those which contain negative appraisals. Anger and fear are the obvious emotions in this category and others include grief, shame, disgust, dread, unhappiness and resentment. Positive emotions usually contain positive appraisals. These might include pride, joy, jubilation, gloating (taking pleasure at another's misfortune), hope, admiration, awe and esteem.
- Emotions can be *motivations to action*. Peter is beating a dog, for no good reason that can be seen, and I may be moved to act in some way. I like dogs and feel pity for the dog's situation. If I do not like dogs then I may be less likely to experience an emotion at the animal's beating. Rather, I might ignore the dog's treatment. (Here, we can see how emotions can contain moral content, judgements of what is right or wrong, what we ought or should do.)

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<sup>53</sup>I acknowledged in the introduction that there is contestation, complexity and ambiguity in what rationality entails, especially in discussions of emotions and emotionally inspired immoral behaviour (Othello), and irrational actions which emerge from false beliefs or erroneous evaluations. Othello's beliefs were irrational, his action extreme. His actions, however, may be seen as rational according to what he believed, as well as by what his society judged as appropriate for their norms and customs. The acts were rationally derived from, and supported by, beliefs, themselves formed from experience and disposition. Nancy may have erred in her judgement, but experience had formed in her a belief never to trust her teasers.

<sup>54</sup>Mental phenomena, Wollheim proposes, need not be ‘complete thought’ as grammarians would term it, or a ‘proposition’ but, rather, may be limited to a ‘concept’ as in (to use his own example) ‘fear is a fear of frogs’ (1999:6). And see chapter 2.

<sup>55</sup>Wollheim (1999:1-2) discusses this distinction in terms of mental states and mental dispositions. Mental states are the ‘transient events which make up the lived part of the life of the mind’. Mental dispositions are ‘persisting modifications’ which underlie mental states. Mental dispositions are formed from our life histories and innate abilities. They contain beliefs, desires, memories, abilities, skills, and so on, and ‘wax and wane’ throughout the course of our life.

- Emotions can be an acknowledgement of *neediness* and *lack of control* over external events. I fear death or illness; I love my mother and need her for my well-being (as I do my friends)
- Emotions may require or depend upon an active *imagining* of the object. Even when there is no object present, as in objectless (irrational) fear, fear is nevertheless present. I fear I am going to fall off the side of the mountain even though I know the ridge is too wide for that to happen. Here I am imagining myself falling off the mountain.

I noted in the introduction to this chapter that if we had no attachments we would have no need for emotions because our insecurity and need of others would not be known to us. But humans are sociable animals and we are insecure: we cannot control every aspect of our lives and life is often contingent on others and events in ways that are unpredictable and unexpected. Few, I imagine, live strictly deterministic lives in which everything is known and mapped out. If there are people who so do<sup>56</sup>, they may have few occasions to express their emotions as their lives are so uneventful. We can also posit that when significant events do come along, their responses will be more maladaptive than people with eventful lives rich in contingency and unpredictability because they will lack the emotional experience and resources to respond. We can examine the strengths of these claims by looking at just three examples: jealousy, grief and shame. Let us begin with jealousy. Jealousy is a powerful and often destructive emotion. It expresses our deep attachment to another and our fear of losing that person to a rival. In being jealous, the threat to our self-esteem is painfully exposed to us because the object of our jealousy is a person who knows us intimately and is one, the one, we love deeply. To have our need of intimacy spurned, to feel insecure at the thought that sensitive and deeply personal details may be whispered to the rival, can generate such intense pain that we are propelled to action. The most extreme action is to eliminate the rival altogether, killing her new lover, then, possibly, his partner and her children before committing suicide, or slowly awakening to the horror of what has occurred – if the jealous killer can. The more common response is suspicion and acting on suspicion so as to restore our damaged self-esteem. If we had no attachments, we would experience no jealousy. I will now extend and deepen the argument with further examples.

Another emotion that speaks of our deep connection to, and need of, others is grief. Grief, that complex gnawing presence that marks us irredeemably with the irrevocable loss of the person we have loved, can leave us insensate from pain. We do not grieve at just anyone's death, though we might feel sympathy at the thought of the pain being suffered by those

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<sup>56</sup>In the mythic Garden of Eden, perhaps.

who were close to the person who has died. We grieve for someone who was invaluable to us, or for a creature we loved dearly, though the intensity of feeling for the latter may be significantly less than the intensity of feeling for the former. It would be strange indeed if we grieved intensely and for a long time over the death of a cat. In such a case, it might be reasonable to assume either that this a pathological form of grief, where grief is parading as depression or hiding a serious mental illness, or that the object of grief is masking the true object of sadness which might be the loss of the cat's owner. In grief, we are concerned not only with our own misfortunes, but the misfortunes of others. I have grieved for a close family relation who became lost to Alzheimers, for friends who lost their dreams when their pregnancies ended in miscarriage, and for a colleague who lost his son in a car crash. If grief can show us our sociability and need of others, it can reinforce this when we are confronted with misfortune and ill-luck. In feeling grief for others too, we demonstrate our capacity for imaginative sympathy or compassion for their misfortune: the erosion of brain function, miscarriage and accidental death has not happened to me, it has happened to others, but I can construct their experiences in my mind so as to connect with them emotionally and extend my moral concern to them. My capacity for imaginative construction is also a demonstration of complex intentionality<sup>57</sup>; namely, what my imagination is recreating, constructing or altering, how such experiences relate to me and to my own vulnerability to misfortune, what it must feel like to face a future without a cherished person or realizing a cherished goal, and the emotions that these constructions arouse in me. Here we may begin to see why emotions can be asserted as intelligent responses to what we most value.

The third example of an emotion that reveals our sociability and insecurity is shame. Shame can move us to hide away when we know we have committed a deed that will hurt or embarrass those we respect. We feel shame because the opinion of others is important to us. To feel shame is to feel that our character is bad in some way, that our morals and principles have gone awry, or that we have been exposed for what we really are. If we doubt shame's power, we need think only of those who are prepared to commit suicide rather than confront shame head on: it is too painful. Shame can become pathological, infecting our behaviour, thought patterns, and responses to normal events. For women and men brought up to believe that sex is a religious sin, a dirty animal act that is shameful, having a normal sexual relationship can become very difficult if they believe that their god

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<sup>57</sup>See Ben-Ze'ev (2000) for the relationship between imagination, emotions, and the intentionality of both and their relation to morality. Nussbaum (1990, 1994a,b, 2001) has also discussed this relationship.

is watching their every shameful move. Shame, however, also has the cleansing power to help us eradicate the effects of our bad deeds through atonement, redeeming us in the eyes of society and ourselves: we can restore our self-respect and sense of dignity. Shame can also act as a powerful disincentive to act badly in the first place. But shame, though it can play a positive role in our moral and social life, can also be distorted by our norms and beliefs forcing ourselves and others to ‘hide from humanity’ (Nussbaum, 2004a). Women who have been victims of abuse and violence often speak of their shame and humiliation from the loss of control over their body and environment, from a sense of powerlessness, the crushing of their dignity and self-respect, and of being treated as objects of no value<sup>58</sup> who can be invaded physically and emotionally. The fear and anxiety that ensue from abuse, particularly repeated abuse, disables victims, leaving them emotionally obtuse in extreme cases, and less responsive to what is happening in their environment. If a persistent sense of shame goes accompanied by fear and anxiety, we may have a troubled person indeed. In the case of shame, the evaluation is negative, and the response adaptive: the person hides from others. Abuse and its effects on emotional functioning is the subject for Chapter 6 though, I will refer to this theme throughout the thesis.

We know well that societies across time and cultures single out groups of people for special treatment, stigmatising them so that we feel not only shame, but disgust for what we believe them to be or do<sup>59</sup>. The dehumanising treatment of the Jews in Nazi occupied Europe is well known, as is the evaluation of homosexuals as abnormal and aberrant, and the continuing persecution of the Roma in the UK and Europe. But we also single out people who have mental and physical deformities, children from the ‘wrong’ families who get into trouble and are branded as ‘thugs’ or ‘neds’<sup>60</sup>, individuals ‘out of control’ and who need ‘punishing’. Career women who delay having children or put their children into nursery so that they can pursue their careers, are made to feel guilt, a powerful ally of shame. Such women may also be held responsible for our society’s current ills<sup>61</sup>. And we are still glued to the view that female victims of sexual assault and violence cause their own atrocities, largely, I would suggest (and will argue in Chapter 5), because we are not free from the stereotypes, or social and cultural practices which view women as an inferior

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<sup>58</sup>For ways in which helplessness and powerlessness can be brought about, and their effects on a person’s ability to function well, see Seligman (1975).

<sup>59</sup>For an excellent account of the role of shame and disgust in our lives, see Nussbaum (2004a).

<sup>60</sup>A ‘ned’ is a derogatory Scottish term used to describe working class youths who wear casual clothes such as tracksuits and baseball caps with the inference that they engage in casual violence and petty crime. An alternative term, more widely used in the UK, is ‘chav’.

<sup>61</sup>See Almond (2006); Centre for Social Justice, *Breakthrough Britain* (2007).

sex<sup>62</sup>. Anger, disgust and masculine pride predate on women's vulnerability; fear, shame and disgust devour their victims. In shame, then, it is not only one's own personal beliefs, moral values and ethical actions that become exposed to view, but that of the society in which we live.

In briefly outlining the general structure of the three examples of jealousy, grief and shame, I am suggesting that emotions can be cognitive<sup>63</sup>, that they are responses to what we value both for ourselves and for others, that they can be intelligent and discerning, and that they connect us to the world. Emotions, in short, are compound and diverse, complex and subtle, and they consist of multiple rather than single entities (Ben-Ze'ev, 2000). An emotion consists of several entities (Greenspan, 1989), arriving in clusters rather than singly. Jealousy's close associates are, for example, fear, envy, pride and anger; the associates of grief are anger, sadness and (hopeless) love; and shame often arrives in the company of guilt, remorse, fear and disgust. This is not surprising given that an emotion's eliciting condition may be sudden and volatile, or stable over time (as in grief), and the object of the emotion is of value to one's wellbeing and sense of self. Each emotion will vary in intensity, depending on the context and the relationship between the person experiencing that emotion and the external object and, should this be in doubt, we would do well to remember that we have many kinds of love, anger, fear, and sadness. Like the movements in a Beethoven symphony<sup>64</sup>, the relationship between and within the emotions is dynamic: the intensity will vary, rise to sudden or slow prominence, endure or subside, depending on the context and personal evaluation of what is happening in the world. With that in mind, let us return to grief.

Grief may come with shock, disbelief, anger, deep sorrow, remorse, guilt, feelings of irrevocable loss and pained love, along with relief if one has watched another's suffering or abuse, playing out in symphonic complexity over the life of the emotion itself. Proust, who arguably captures the rich detail, texture and nuance of emotions better than most writers, expresses not only the ineliminability of an emotion to our personal concerns, but

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<sup>62</sup>For extensive analyses of women's inequality and ill-treatment globally, see for example, Nussbaum and Glover (1995); Nussbaum (1999a,b, 2000a); Charlesworth and Chinkin (2000); Mackinnon (2005, 2006). I mean to suggest that in the context of assault these might be among the dominant emotions felt by perpetrator and victims. See Nussbaum (2004a) for the role of disgust and shame in law, public life and morality, in which she cites the case of lesbian murder occasioned because the murderer found the act 'disgusting'.

<sup>63</sup>I adhere very closely to Nussbaum's analysis of the emotions in *Upheavals of Thought* (2001). I am also highly influenced by Ben-Ze'ev's *The Subtlety of Emotions* (2000).

<sup>64</sup>I could have chosen any composer but Beethoven was the first I heard when my mother bought cheap classical cassettes from Woolworths when I was 15.

also its power to come at us from nowhere, as if from some distant country. Here he writes of Marcel's' grief for his grandmother who has been dead for some time.

And I began once again to listen, and to suffer; when we are waiting, the double trajectory, from the ear that gathers in the sounds to the mind which processes and analyses them, and from the mind to the heart to which it transmits its results, is so rapid that we are unable even to perceive its duration, and we seem to be listening directly with our hearts. (2003/4:134)

Given the suddenness of Marcel's grief, and the way in which the emotion seemed to engulf him, it is easy to see why the Stoics considered that emotions were 'non-reasoning' movements, pushing us around at their will<sup>65</sup>, as if our emotions were gates to be hammered open and shut in the howling wind. The Stoics were not alone. Kant, whose views on emotions are complex and more subtle than is generally recognised to be the case (Sherman, 1995,2007), argued that emotions could not adequately ground moral practice. Emotions, he thought, were too unreliable in motivating us to virtuous action, being too capricious and too quick to find new interests or objects. Even in ordinary speech, we often dismiss emotions as irrational and inimical to good judgement. Kant also feared that our passional natures meant surrender to others, leaving us open to their instrumental use, to become, that is, the playthings of other people because of our attachments to them. Jealousy leaves us prey to negative thoughts about our loved one, and in jealousy we may harm the person we love. In grief we are so overcome by sorrow and depression that we leave ourselves vulnerable to being manipulated in some way, assenting unthinkingly to a course of action that is not in our best interests, for example. The passions, therefore, had to be subject to the 'sovereignty of reason' (Sherman, 1997:167).

To claim, as we often do, that emotions are capricious and blind to reason is, however, a misconception. We do reason in emotion, albeit that we do so more easily in some rather than others (jealousy as opposed to compassion), and more easily in less intense states than in intense ones (calm as opposed to boiling anger). Though Kant was suspicious of the power of emotions to ground stable moral action, he nevertheless accepted that our emotions record moral salience and express candour in the sense that it is difficult to hide what is of value to us when we are in the grip of an emotion. Nancy could not let go of her anger at X because she was asserting her dignity and her need to be feel moral anger at his taunts and mockery. Kant believed, as Sherman (1997:33) notes, that properly cultivated, emotions could be important supports for moral duty and could be shaped by reason. Like

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<sup>65</sup>See Nussbaum (2001:19-33).

Aristotle, Kant believed that we are practical agents because we give ourselves reasons to act and to make choices that are morally accountable. Put simply, it is not a question of emotion versus reason; rather it is that our emotions can be imbued with reason and intelligence. Emotions' epistemic function provides us with the intelligence from the outside world, riveting our attention, and preparing us for deliberation and choice. For these reasons, our emotions can be said to be intelligent and thinking dimensions of our human personalities. The power of emotions can draw us towards ethical reasoning because of the judgements they contain and the values they express, as I have begun to show in my examples above. These values can move us to act out of compassion, to correct a wrong or to strike in revenge.

The relationship of emotions to virtuous action is that virtuous actions are wisely chosen actions that respond appropriately to the conditions of human life<sup>66</sup>. Virtuous actions can also be informed by our emotions, themselves appropriately cultivated over time. This is the Aristotelian position. Emotions help us 'see' what is salient in all of the event's colour, hints and hues<sup>67</sup>. In Kant's philosophy, an appeal to reason must be made in order to carry out a good action, because reason, if properly grounded, lies outside the contingencies of human life such as ill-fortune, the temptation to give in to bad acts, to ignore suffering because it is too troubling to get involved. As free rational agents, our duty is to cultivate our emotions so as to diminish their more capricious elements, to rein them in so that they do not undermine our moral duties to act well in our own and other's interests, as well as to aid us in making good moral choices. While anger is appropriate when someone we care for has been badly treated, getting angry and then hitting our spouse for breaking a vase is surely excessive. In surprising respects, Kant's position on emotions, and their importance in moral life, is close to Aristotle's own philosophy. Both hold that being virtuous involves practical reason which guides the habituation of good character and sound emotional repertoires. Practical wisdom<sup>68</sup>, very generally, is the knowledge or understanding that we

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<sup>66</sup>Wisdom helps us arrive at truth (*NE*.1139b15), it is the knowledge of what is beneficial to oneself (*NE*.1141a25-30) and is concerned with human goods.

<sup>67</sup>Cf. *NE*.1105b20-30. Virtue may make us susceptible to feelings of anger, sorrow or pain. The disposition in virtue is the condition in which we are emotionally well or ill-disposed. If we express too much anger we are ill disposed and do not see salience in the right way. We are moved by emotion and disposed by virtue. *NE*.1106a5-10. The young are not wise in particulars and cannot be philosophers owing to their lack of experience though they can easily develop an understanding of abstract thought and principles. *NE*.1142a10-22. Education, of course, can play a vital role in cultivating virtuous disposition.

<sup>68</sup>As Aristotle says, we are not born with wisdom but acquire it with age and experience. See *NE*.1143b5-15; *Rh*.1389a-13890a, though Aristotle is not always complementary about the old in the *Rhetoric*. Those in their prime he admires as having continence, neither excessive nor deficient in their appetites. This links to the previous note about being able to 'see' from experience. Diversity of experience gives us moral knowledge and practical wisdom, provided we can deliberate well about those experiences, come to the right judgements

acquire over time to enable us to do the right thing in any given situation, to pick out situationally significant events so as to judge what is morally salient. Practical wisdom is a virtue<sup>69</sup>. I shall now move on to demonstrate<sup>70</sup> how emotions may help us see the world and deliberate well over time by explicating the characteristics, components and structure of emotions.

It may be argued at this point that there is a fundamental difference between Kant and Aristotle's ethics and the nature and source of morality. Kant's morality is pure morality (*apriori*) which he frees from empirical content, and strips from human contingency while Aristotle's ethics are permanently rooted in the particular human case. However, there is a line of philosophical thought which sees a greater affinity between Aristotle and Kant than has traditionally been the case. Barbara Herman (1993), Nancy Sherman (1997) and Nussbaum (1999), for example, have questioned whether the rigid distinctions between deontology and virtue ethics are necessary or, at least, if they are over-drawn. While Kant's metaphysical conception of morality is *apriori*, his morality is concerned, nevertheless, with how we are to be with others. So for Kant (2008:5):

Morality requires the 'thought to occur to him (he can scarcely avoid doing so) of what sort of world he would create, under the guidance of practical reason, were such a thing in his power, a world into which, moreover, he would place himself as a member.

Our maxims must be those that others could (not) or would (not) endorse and so the formulae of the CI are expressive of the universalizability of our maxims. Being members of a Kingdom of Ends (our community), if we are to enact maxims, we need to have thought through 'what the order of nature would be once the effects of the newly adjoined law of nature have had sufficient time to work themselves out' (Rawls, 2000:169). The universalising element of the CI enjoins us to ask: could others, similarly circumstanced, endorse or act on my specific maxim?

Aristotle asks us to judge the particulars of each individual case, but does not generally ask us to draw universal principles from the conclusions of our evaluations, and neither do these evaluations draw us away from our point of view to other reasoning agents<sup>71</sup>. By

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and choose the correct course of action. See books II and VI. Youth live by appetite erring towards excess but are inclined to pity due to their naivety, their belief in men's honesty. *Rh.*1389a-1389b

<sup>69</sup>*NE.*1140a25-35; 1140b5-30.

<sup>70</sup>For Kant's position on emotions, see Sherman (1997). For Aristotle's account of virtues, see Hursthouse (1999).

<sup>71</sup>See Sherman (1997, chapter 7) and Nussbaum (1994b, chapter 2).



contrast, Kant's formulae of the CI, as noted, do. Further, the role of rules in Aristotelian ethics is not of great importance, since ethics is not a precise science (*NE*.1103b34-1104a10). We live in a world of change, and our responses have to be responsive to that change. How well we respond will depend on our practically wise response to the particulars (*NE*.1141b13-14). If the account of Kant's CI-p<sup>72</sup> is accepted, then Kant and Aristotle may not be too distant from each other. As Sherman (1997:1) notes, 'it has not been appreciated that Kant develops a complex anthropology of morals – a tailoring of morality to the contingent features of the human case'. In the Doctrine of Virtue (6:217):

...a metaphysics of morals cannot dispense with the principles of application, and we shall often have to take as our object the particular **nature** of human beings, which is cognized only by experience, in order to show in it what can be inferred from universal moral principles.

### 2.3 Emotions' Characteristics, Components and Structure.

On the account I have given here, I have suggested that emotions can be cognitive, intelligent and rational, forming part of our ethical reasoning: they are about something, rich in different grades of thought that range from being clearly defined to fuzzy and inchoate. They result, I will argue, from eudaimonistic judgements<sup>73</sup> on what is important to our wellbeing and flourishing. Emotions, following Ben-Ze'ev (2000) can be divided into four basic components: cognition, evaluation, motivation and feeling, a conceptual division of the experience of emotions. The characteristics of emotions' intensity, that is duration and social comparison, are properties of the whole emotional experience.

We typically experience emotion when we have a valenced (positive or negative) reaction to individuals, events or objects (Ortony et al., 1988:13) which significantly impacts on our personal situation or which disturbs our equilibrium in some way. The intensity of emotion will depend on a range of variables such as the degree to which the event is undesirable for oneself or for another, judged praiseworthy or blameworthy, appealing or unappealing. Emotions can be further classified into wellbeing emotions (with respect to desirable or undesirable events), loss emotions, fortune-of-others emotions (*schadenfreude*), prospect-based emotions (hope), attribution emotions (gratitude, contempt), and the attraction

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<sup>72</sup>Categorical Procedure.

<sup>73</sup>The eudaimonistic judgement is a central component of Nussbaum's (2001) analysis of an emotion's constituents. Nussbaum's account of eudaimonia is influenced by Aristotle who argued that the ultimate end of a good human life is happiness, a happiness derived from practical activity, the realisation of goals and plans, and emotional and intellectual development connected to virtuous activity.

emotions<sup>74</sup>. The eliciting condition for an emotion is primarily psychological rather than physical (Oatley, 1992:19) because physical stimuli tend to produce reliable effects on the individual, regardless of who they are. If Nancy, my fictional pupil, were to stand in a very cold shower she might shiver, draw in her breath sharply and probably yelp in pain, before becoming accustomed, briefly, to the temperature. If Charlie, her classmate, took a similarly cold shower, he too might shiver, gasp and yelp, though he might bluster that he can take it (he is a boy). Emotions are not like this. Compare Nancy to a shrew and she might get very angry indeed, believing herself to have been slighted. Compare Charlie to the same creature and he might well laugh and treat it as a joke, taking the view that the comparison was not meant to harm him. The differences in the pupils' reactions to their comparison to the shrew lie in their evaluations, their judgements of deliberate harm or humour, how they judge their standing in relation to other people (the social comparison), and their personal histories.

A discussion of the social comparison element is important to this analysis if we are to understand why some people become more excited than, or react very differently from, others in a given set of circumstances. Our social world is an emotional one, a theatre in which the range of human emotions will be expressed in varying intensities and frequencies, and where we discriminately compare ourselves to other people. Whom we discriminate for comparison depends very much on our relation to the social comparators and the view we take of ourselves. Our social comparators tend to be close to us, though they can be casual acquaintances or, in more extreme cases, our idols (our ideal figures). More significantly, our social comparators also reveal our 'ideal' states (Ben-Ze'ev, 2000:24) and this, in turn, is heavily influenced by social norms and practices. Those to whom we compare ourselves and why, can reduce or increase our sense of stability and self-worth, can hinder or aid us in achieving not merely our goals, but simple or complex tasks, and they can determine our values and emotional responses. Nancy has no friends. She lacks self-esteem. She is often mocked. Her attempts to rise above her lot and assert herself are met with ridicule at worst, indifference at best. To whom she compares herself is significant, if she dare compare herself to anyone at all. And if she does, it may be to her secret idols that she turns in order to give her succour and hope in her lonely world. To compare her to a shrew is therefore cruel, an unwitting reminder to Nancy that she is of no consequence. Her emotional lot is an unstable set that is likely to be triggered by

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<sup>74</sup>See Ortony et al. (1988) for a very detailed examination of emotion structure and organisation and see, also, Ben Ze-ev (2000).

seemingly nothing at all. She will ‘lose it’, as the parlance goes, and any chance she might have had of completing her class work, of being able to concentrate, will be gone. Charlie, on the other hand, can take it in his stride because he does have a good circle of friends and is known as a joker. Crucially, Charlie is overweight and tall, with plenty more room for growth to continue stretching his limbs. Comparing Charlie to a shrew is incongruous because it is so clearly ridiculous, evincing good-natured laughter<sup>75</sup> as opposed to the malign laughter that Nancy’s comparison elicits. And, unlike Nancy, Charlie can return to his work once the laughter has subsided and some calm has again settled on the room.

On the surface, what we have is a single comparison and two pupils. What we end up with are two very different outcomes, each circumscribed by complex [in]sensitivities and distinct personalities. In one, the comparison is catastrophic, engulfing the pupil in turmoil and humiliation, while destroying her desire to learn. There is no emotional stability here. Nancy is small and pinched looking: the comparison to a shrew might be apt but it is intensely insensitive. Its cruelty lies not only in the comparison to the shrew, but also in the chain of imaginative possibilities that are set off in the minds of the pupils. The *mélange* of words, ideas and images will certainly redefine the borders of imagination for Nancy and the pupils because she, unlike the pupils, will be placed further outside the social territory of her classroom, in a desert of alienation and loneliness, while pupils unlike Nancy will remain in the fertile plains of social stability and cordiality, bound together by the single object of their malign mirth: Nancy. In the Charlie example, the comparison is so disparate it is stimulating, switching the pupils on to different cognitive processes employing incongruity, the blending of words and images in amusing ways, and the engagement of imaginative possibilities so different from Nancy’s. The moral implications could not be clearer. The dignity of one has been violated, while the dignity of another has probably been enhanced. In Nancy’s case, the teacher’s discernment of the particulars is obtuse (or she is indifferent), inhibiting Nancy’s ability to flourish and eroding her sense of wellbeing. The emotions aroused in Nancy then, are likely to be those of anger, shame, intense embarrassment, hate directed towards herself and others, envy and fear. Her classmates are likely to be experiencing *schadenfreude*, pity, contempt and disgust. I would like to think there might be pupils who would feel compassion for Nancy and show her mercy by not joining in the laughter. As for those feeling pity, the typical belief is that she

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<sup>75</sup>There is interesting work on the role of humour in learning, especially its moral role in promoting wellbeing and flourishing. Humour used cruelly is inhibiting and crushing on the esteem of the receiver. Used well, and for good moral reasons, humour can be enabling and stimulating. See, for example, Scruton (1982); Billig (2005); Davies (2011).

is suffering but that there is little they can do to help her for three possible reasons. Firstly, is the belief that Nancy brought this on herself and is therefore responsible for her plight. Secondly, is the belief that she is inferior and intervening to alleviate her situation will do no good (Ben-Ze'ev, 2000:328-329). And thirdly, is the belief that the pitier has few resources to help, including moral resources such as courage, moral indignation or the requisite interest in justice, because pity is often combined with a 'repulsive bid for self-esteem' (Solomon, 1993:281). The pitier holds herself to be better situated than, or superior in some quality to, the pitied and so, in pitying in this way, she augments her self-esteem at the expense of the pitied. The evaluation of the pitier is contemptuous. We are often ashamed of our neediness, and fearful of our vulnerability. Pity is a way out of this morass.

By now, we can start to see that emotions contain complex beliefs and judgements about what is of value and significance to our wellbeing and flourishing. They express our values and attitudes towards one-self and others, and are sensitive to personal and contextual factors. Emotions vary in intensity, duration and stability, and express our vulnerability to events often beyond our control. Emotions contain comparative concerns and perceptions of available alternatives, expressing what is, what was, what will and could be, the possible alternatives available to us, and they are set against a background framework of personal concerns (Ben-Ze'ev, 2000:19). Nancy's anger at her treatment, her despair at the situation she was in, was intensified because she could see no alternative but to remain and endure this. She could, of course, have got up and left the room. But this is hardly an alternative if she knows the laughter will increase and she will be punished for walking out without permission. The lack of an alternative can also explain why people do not change boring jobs or remove themselves from abusive relationships. The alternative might be worse or simply perceived as not available, as in Nancy's case here in class and at home. While there is moral complexity in the instrumental and exploitative use by one partner against the other, or one pupil against another, there is moral complexity, if not perplexity, in the one who submits to such abuse, in that she abets the moral corruption of her partner by failing to resist his abuse. 'Undue humility makes tyranny; weak concession creates selfishness' (Bronte, 2006:169). While Bronte's assertion is powerful, in the case of domestic violence, this might seem a simplistic take on abuse, especially when the abuse has been taking place for some time, or where a powerless girl like Nancy lacks the moral and social resources to resist tyranny or to be resistant to the selfishness of others' demands. I shall explore this theme in greater depth in Chapter 6. A genuine moral agent,

as Hampton (2007:7)<sup>76</sup> remarks, has to have a good sense of her own claims if she is to be a genuine partner in a morally sound relationship and be able to respond legitimately to the claims of others, such as those of her children, the very children, including Nancy, who sit in our classes with their bundles of emotional troubles. What the preceding analyses also demonstrate is that emotions are also ‘about’ something. We do not simply get angry for no reason (while we may be dispositionally angry, a trigger is still required), or become jealous over the beauty of a rose. Emotions, in addition to their cognitive content, complex beliefs and judgements, and intensity variables, also have an ‘object’ which is what they are ‘about’. So emotions, to use a more technical term, are intentional, as I shall now explain.

## 2.4 Intentionality.

There has been a long tradition, dating from Descartes, that humans are more matter than mind. This tradition has woven its threads through the enlightenment, modern genetics and physics, behavioural psychology and even into the political realm. We are atoms, moved by the selfish, self-protecting (of the organism) will of our genes<sup>77</sup>, self-sufficient, pushed to co-operate by contract<sup>78</sup> (we will see similar arguments in Chapter 5). As Midgley (2001:4) comments, such atomistic doctrines rest on the belief that the ‘ultimate law of life’ is competition between separate units, a stark contrast to Aristotelian eudaimonia for which the ultimate object of life is happiness. ‘The individual organism is not fundamental to life, but something which emerges when genes ... gang together in cooperative groups, as “selfish-co-operators” ’ (Dawkins, 1998:308). On such a view, it seems, there is no such thing as society, inter-connectedness or dependency. Co-operation, where it occurs, is for selfish ends and for achieving self-sufficiency, a view, in fact, that is also shared by skeptics of the enlightenment and its ‘masculine’ philosophy, as we shall see in Chapter 4. What we strive for is control and dominance<sup>79</sup>, and our genes, like our emotions, must be

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<sup>76</sup>The importance of moral agency and an awareness of one and other’s legitimate claims will be discussed in later chapters.

<sup>77</sup>Dawkins (1976).

<sup>78</sup>A political idea, of course, dating from Hobbes (1651) that still has currency in modern economics and politics.

<sup>79</sup>See Nussbaum (2001) for the profound neediness and complete dependency of babies on their carers, and their desire to control and dominate their environment. Other good, but different perspective, accounts come from Donald Winnicott (2000); Nancy Chodorow (1979); Bowlby (1988). The neediness and dominance is not a preface to a life lived in dominance and selfishness, but to a life of sociability and wellbeing as a result of good care in infancy and childhood. I return to care in Chapter 4.

brought under our control, in order to rid our lives of messy and perplexing realities<sup>80</sup>. But our emotions are not so amenable to control when they are responses to valuable ‘external goods’<sup>81</sup>. Neither can we, as the ancient Stoics advised we should, extirpate emotions from our lives<sup>82</sup>. Were we able to do so, we would have no need of civil society and perhaps we would have no need for faith or the arts, or even the close social bonds I suggested above. Our very humanity would be compromised. Complex emotions<sup>83</sup>, which comprise envy, shame, disgust, schadenfreude, regret, sympathy, compassion and so on, teem with intentional content because they are about oneself in relation to someone or something else. These emotions are social emotions, based on complex social comparisons and they occur in complex social environments. And these complex, social emotions have existence because of our ability to imagine others as having similar intentional capacity, as well as our ability to imagine alternative scenarios with regards to our own prospects and goals. These emotions, and our capacity for developing them, allow us to develop a moral point of view, such that:

Morality is inconceivable without the idea of choice among imagined alternative actions, and we cannot consider others to have moral rights and responsibilities if we cannot imagine them as having experiences such as suffering and joy that we ourselves know. (Ben-Ze’ev, 2000:107)

On Ben-Ze’ev’s<sup>84</sup> analysis, second order intentionality manifests information about our own and others’ attitudes, wishes and desires. Moral complexity arises when information about one’s own intentional concerns (first person information) combines with information about another’s intentional concerns (third person information) giving rise to a common intentional schema. Within the schema, we can imagine not only our desires and wishes for the past, present and the future; we can imagine these same things for others. So, the ways in which another’s perspective may differ or be similar to one’s own and our ability to make social comparisons becomes the basis of morality and of making moral judgements. Earlier Nancy and Charlie were compared to shrews. Nancy took the comparison badly, seeing it as a slight to her character and features, which diminished her self-esteem and

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<sup>80</sup>Genes, ironically, are in fact inert molecules that cannot function except in cooperation with other genes and can only realise their function within the cell.

<sup>81</sup>The Stoics defined external goods as those things over which we have little or no control. ‘We are responsible for some things, while there are others for which we cannot be held responsible. The former include our judgement, our impulse, our desire, aversion and our mental faculties in general; the latter include the body, material possessions, our reputations, status – in a word, anything not in our power to control’. Epictetus (2008:221).

<sup>82</sup>See Nussbaum (1994a,b, 2001, 2004a).

<sup>83</sup>These complex emotions may be contrasted with basic emotions such as fear, anger and happiness which can lack intentional content.

<sup>84</sup>See Ben-Ze’ev (2000) for a detailed account of intentionality in the affective realm.

ability to work (first person information). In her evaluation, the laughter evinced by the cruel comparison is indicative of her low standing with her peers (third person information). The common intentional schema is that Nancy knows she is not popular and cannot move easily among her peers, and her peers have judged her a misfit and best avoided. Those who could have come to her rescue have remained quiet. Charlie's situation, as we know, is completely different.

One of the key components of the intentional dimension<sup>85</sup> is evaluation (which may be expressed as an appraisal or belief). As we have seen, how an event is appraised will determine the emotion we experience and, to a great extent, our behaviour in what Frijda (2007:4) terms the 'law of situational meaning'<sup>86</sup>. If Nancy learns that her father is gravely ill in hospital and there is little hope of recovery, she might experience fear at the thought of his pending death, as well as compassion for him if he is in pain. If, however, the relationship with her father happens to be a distant one because she was estranged many years previously, it is less likely that she will feel fear, sorrow or compassion, though she might feel slight sympathy for those about to lose him. Nancy's emotions might be different again if her relationship with her father rested on dislike and active hostility, having been the victim of his abuse over many years. She may well feel relief, pleasure and a sense of 'good riddance' that he will no longer be alive to inflict harm on anyone unfortunate enough to come within the borders he controls. As we shall see in Chapter 7, this is how Nancy feels about her father. He is a violent and an abusive man.

Emotions have objects, and so are intentional<sup>87</sup> because they have a reference to, and are directed towards, something that often lies beyond our control. The term 'intentionality'

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<sup>85</sup>I use dimension here for the mental dimension. The two basic mental dimensions of emotions are intentionality and feeling, where feeling is the subject's own state of mind, and intentionality, as noted, that of evaluating the object's significance (Ben-Ze'ev, 2000:49).

<sup>86</sup>Emotions, according to Frijda (2007), emerge and develop according to definite laws that can be specified. They are natural, fully determined phenomena, even despite personal idiosyncrasies, and they come under the laws of situational meaning (context or eliciting conditions), the law of concern (events of personal value), the law of apparent reality (events are appraised as real), and so on. They chime closely with the analyses of many cognitive-appraisal theorists in the field of psychology such as Arnold (1960); Clore and Collins (1988); Lazarus (1991a,b); Oatley (1992); Elster (1999); Ortony and Clore (2000). Amongst philosophers following a similar analysis are Solomon (1993, 2003,); Ben-Ze'ev (2000); Nussbaum (2001, 2004a, c, 2006).

<sup>87</sup>'Intentionality' should not be confused with 'intensionality', a related concept from semantics and logic. See Kenny (1963) who uses 'intensionality' to explain the language of emotions, as well as to discuss the objects of emotions following Brentano and the Scholastics. In the preface to the 2003 'Action, Emotion and Will', he acknowledges that the reasons for using 'intensionality' no longer seem cogent. The phenomenological concept of 'intentionality' is the preferred one in both philosophy and psychology, bypassing descriptions of the objects of thought in language to go direct to the objects themselves. For Carr (2012, personal communication), the notion of intentionality is closely related to that of 'intensionality'.

was introduced by Jeremy Bentham (1780, Chapters VIII and IX) in order to distinguish acts that are intentional from those that are not<sup>88</sup>. Franz Brentano, who borrowed the notion from the Scholastics (such as Thomas Aquinas), stated that the unique characteristic of mental phenomena is that every mental act is directed at an object, and he used this key feature to distinguish mental from physical phenomena.

In presentation something is presented, in judgement something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired and so on. This intentional in-existence is characteristic exclusively of mental phenomena. No physical phenomenon exhibits anything like it. (Brentano, 1874:88-89)

That is, emotions do not consist of bodily sensations<sup>89</sup>, but of ‘mental phenomena’ or cognitive appraisals. Ben-Ze’ev (2000:49-51) defines intentionality as a subject-object relation, the relation of being ‘about something’ of which we have some information. Pitcher (1965:326-327) defines it similarly. Emotions which are directed towards an object, thing or person, he calls agent-directed emotions. Nussbaum, likewise, says that an emotion’s intentional object is interpreted or appraised to reflect the importance of the object to the person having the emotion and she, too, refers to the ‘aboutness’ of the emotion (2001:27). However, the object is no mere object that is simply appraised and targeted by the emotion as an arrow at its target, rather it is internalised, embodying a way of seeing something that is of consequence to the person. Hence the emotion’s complex intentionality as I noted earlier. Goldie (2002:16) also accepts emotions’ intentionality though, curiously, he prefers intentionality to ‘aboutness’ even though, on the analysis here, ‘aboutness’ is part of the definition. Arnold (1960) suggests that emotions are aroused only when an event is appraised, or evaluated, as being of personal concern: ‘affecting me personally as an individual with my particular experience and my particular aims’ (p.171). The object of an emotion being appraised can be a person, thought, concept,

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Modern analytical philosophers, following Brentano, have identified a ‘certain class of psychological reports that exhibit some of the same logical (grammatical) peculiarities as modal statements (about possibility and necessity) and counterfactuals. What they all have in common is that they are statements or reports in which other propositions or statements ... are embedded (as in A believes that p, B fears that q, it is necessary that p, or if p should occur then q may be expected to follow). On Brentano’s criteria not all reports of mental events (such as ‘A is in pain’) are intentional - but all intentional contexts are clearly also intensional’. See Deigh (1994, 2000) for a similar discussion.

<sup>88</sup>See Deigh (1994) for a discussion on the history of intentionality in emotions. Deigh suggests that intentionality was removed from the definition of emotions for a more mechanistic conception in order that modern philosophers such as Descartes, Locke and Hume could distinguish themselves from medieval, Scholastic thinkers.

<sup>89</sup>Goldie (2002) argues, following the analyses of William James’ seminal (1884) and Gabrielle Taylor (1988), that feelings should be part of the definition of emotions. Pugmire (2005) also includes feelings in the definition of an emotion. The reductionist view of emotions is thoroughly refuted by, for example, Kenny (1963); Solomon (1993); Deigh (1994); Ben-Ze’ev (2000) particularly against Paul Griffiths (1997); Nussbaum (2001).



dream, idea, image, event or insult and have definite or indefinite form. Nancy can be angry at Charlie for insulting her, angry at the thought of the particular injustices perpetrated against women in the Balkan (or any) conflict<sup>90</sup>, and angry with herself for her insensitivity towards her vulnerable mother. The thought, or intentional object, is as diverse as is human experience. To sum up, the intentionality of the emotion is how we see, interpret, evaluate or appraise the object of our emotions. Why emotions are aroused, in part, by our evaluations now follows.

## 2.5 Beliefs, Appraisals and Judgements.

As I have indicated, emotions often embody complex beliefs or evaluations of the eliciting event. In the appraisal theory of emotions, the evaluative aspect constitutes a stage in an information-processing sequence in which the salience of an event is appraised for its importance and relevance. According to Clore and Ortony (2000:29), appraisals are built by assembling data from the external world, which are then ‘computed’ as likely to be good or bad. In cognitive psychology, the appraisal mechanisms tend to be focused on the realisation or thwarting of goals, standards (norms and consensus) and attitudes (dispositions) (Ortony et al., 1988). Philosophically, the most influential argument for emotions containing belief comes from Kenny (1963) who asserted that the object of the emotion must have a certain character. What qualifies something as the appropriate object of an emotion is the person’s belief that it has a certain character, such as that the object is fearful<sup>91</sup>, and so belief and propositional content are essential to emotion arousal.

However, stating that beliefs are part of the emotion is controversial and there is some disagreement about whether it is sensible to talk about emotions in this way. Deigh (1994), for example, considers that Kenny took a step too far in asserting that emotions must, in every case, have belief *and* propositional content. Deigh (1994, 2000) accepts that young children and dogs obviously have emotions, but their intentional states cannot contain beliefs about their objects, because beliefs require language, and so the subject’s *beliefs* about the object cannot be the best explanation for the emotion. Hursthouse (1999), while accepting that young children have beliefs, questions whether they can make judgements.

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<sup>90</sup>Nancy might understand the injustice of these acts given her own personal experience of sexual and physical abuse. Understanding the roles of the United Nations and the European Union in the context of Balkans’ Conflict was also part of the Modern Studies course until recently.

<sup>91</sup>Aristotle suggests we see fear as a ‘kind of pain or disturbance resulting from the imagination of impending danger, either destructive or painful’ *Rh.*1382a.5. The important point is that the danger is close to hand, ‘impending’ and expected. Things that are far removed from us, such as death, do not arouse fear.

On her view, to insist that children make judgements is to make the emotions too rational and too theoretical.

Nussbaum (2000b, 2001) addresses these criticisms well. The evaluations (or cognitions) of children and animals may not be sophisticated as they lack the experience to draw on critical reasoning to reflect on the events taking place. But this does not mean they passively accept the reality before them: they are aware of what is good for them and they may experience intense emotions in reaction to what is happening around them. The intentionality discussed here is that of being ‘about’ something, of the emotion having a target so to speak. Both animals and young children have emotions, not just feelings. Their anger, happiness, fear or affection is real. There is evidence that infants and young children are capable of cognitive evaluations (Lazarus, 1991a:829). Babies’ distress-panic systems respond when the care-giver leaves (Panksepp, 1986). Three month old babies show distress as well as anger, becoming distressed if the caregiver leaves. At four months, babies show anger at restraint and look at the source of restraint (a wrist, for example), and at seven months they will look at the face of the person restraining them. At four months, the baby appears to show some rudimentary understanding that the restraint is external and that some form of blameworthiness is attributable to the restrainer. At the least, one can say that the baby gets angry or distressed because her goal is being thwarted. If goal frustration is the cause of her anger, then cognitive processes are involved (Lazarus, 1991a:829).

Seligman’s (1975) work on animal helplessness, fear and depression rests on a theory of contingency (lack of control in the environment), cognition, which Seligman interprets as the way the animal ‘represents’ the world to itself and behaviour. We cannot understand, Seligman argues, animal behaviour unless we grant that they have cognitive representations of that world: the animal’s helplessness is learned behaviour and depression is a result of the creature’s realisation that it has no control over the pain stimulus. The work of Sarah Hrdy (1999, 2009) and Frans de Waal (2006, 2009, 2011) on primates reveals the emotional intelligence of animals. De Waal (2009) links philosophy to his work, and in doing so argues that human morality would not be possible without emotional development and that such development, involving higher order cognition, is very evident in primate societies. He cites the example of Georgia (pp.59-61), a female Chimpanzee who liked to ambush spectators with water. Is this evidence of planning or of intentional actions? It is hard to conclude that her ambushes were not the product of planning and a desire for some mischief at the expense of the human animals that came to

see her. Mary Midgley (1979) asks what we mean by conceptual thought. While the upper reaches of conceptual thought belong to the human species, and no gorilla thinks of relativity theory (and neither do many humans, she quips), what are the lower limits of conceptual thought? Dolphins, elephants and apes can make up games or invent new tricks on the spot. Midgley (1979) cites the example of Jane Goodall's chimp, Washoe, who regards himself as an 'honorary person' but, using cards, classifies other chimps as 'black bugs'. Similarly, Vicki, another chimp, sorted pictures of humans and animals into respective piles, save the picture of herself. This she put into the human file while her father's picture went into the animal file (pp.219-220). Vicki regards herself, like all apes brought up by humans, as a person. Does this imply conceptual understanding of the difference between species and self-hood? The evidence points strongly towards the affirmative. What these examples from the animal world show is that intentionality, rich mental phenomena, need not be the sole preserve of the human animal.

Korsgaard (2006:109-112) examines intentionality in animals at a number of levels. At the most basic level, Korsgaard argues, intentionality is about functional organisation of any object: the purpose of the heart is to pump blood; a spider moves towards her web. At a 'higher' level, the intentional or purposive functions of these movements are based on perception. The spider moves towards her web because her meal is trapped there: she sees the moth as food although we might not accept that the spider is entertaining thoughts about food. If a group of chimpanzees set out to trap a rhesus monkey are their actions mere functions of hunger, or are they engaged in some form of communicative, cooperative and coordinated activity? Is the purpose of hunting 'before their minds'?<sup>92</sup> Arguably, yes. The animal, however, is motivated by its desires and emotions (aided with some kind of reasoning powers, I would argue). At a deeper level of intentionality, however, we leave animals behind when the question moves to whether our ends are not just good, but whether they are justified (Korsgaard, 2006:114). That is, and following Korsgaard, we can subject our ends, and their means of realisation, to assessment, and reject or adopt them (in Kantian terms). Intelligent animals do not seem to do this.

As I have indicated, emotions can be cognitive and the cognitions are appraisals of events in the environment. A 'judgement' might suggest a concept of language. I do not mean 'judgement' to have that connotation. Appraisal might be more appropriate. In any case,

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<sup>92</sup>According to de Waal, these animals have a theory of mind, taken to mean that social animals have the capacity to take the perspective of others, an evolutionary strategy that allows social cooperation to occur. At the core of empathy 'is emotional linkage ... upon which evolution (or development) builds ever more complex manifestations, including appraisal of another's knowledge and intentions' (de Waal, 2006:72).

some emotions do not need language to be manifested or conveyed. Remorse for an act, or fear about the future, does need language and a sense of temporality (Kenny, 1963:43).

Greenspan (1988) grants that emotions essentially contain beliefs that are partly factual and partly evaluative. However, she prefers to include beliefs in a broader evaluative framework in order to allow for propositional attitudes that are weaker than strict belief. Her concern is that if the intentional component of the emotion is belief, then the emotion is justified for and by belief. By way of example, Greenspan cites her persistent fear of skidding in icy conditions after a car accident. Because Greenspan's example might be seen as a good reason to discount the role of belief in emotion formation, it is helpful to look at how fear is appraised and to consider which part of the brain registers the appraisal and subsequent acts. Experiencing a very slight skid and momentary uncontrolled movement had Greenspan gasping audibly in fear (1988:18-19). While accepting that her reaction was a conditioned judgement to the thought of danger, it was a response to the earlier accident in which the judgement of danger was made, and not to a judgement in the current situation that danger was imminent. Further, as she had no urge to alert others in the car<sup>93</sup>, this was not a 'universalised belief' that she was in danger, but a rather trivial lapse from rationality that cannot even be supported by unconscious belief. Thoughts-of danger, harm, pleasure and so on, either from memories of past or current events, or thoughts which anticipate future events, can, of course, arouse our emotions but whether 'thoughts-of' constitute belief is complex.

If we accept, and I argue for this below in more detail, that belief belongs to the family of appraisals which also comprise judgments or evaluations, then we can use this in Greenspan's example of fear. The language we are using is about evaluating what is of importance to the person, of seeing X as Y (Nussbaum, 2001). Nancy sees earwigs as horrible little creatures that want to nest in her ears, even though she knows this is untrue and that earwigs are harmless. But because she developed this belief as a very young child, she cannot, even years later, stop herself from reacting in disgust when she sees these creatures. What this shows is that we can hold general beliefs that contradict our specific beliefs, especially when the beliefs are the result of long years of habituation<sup>94</sup>. Using

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<sup>93</sup>Emotional responses tend to produce action.

<sup>94</sup>Ben-Ze'ev (2000:58) suggests that deliberative evaluations are schema in which we consciously think about an event, person or idea, and begin to feel emotionally aroused. Such evaluations are under our control, and typically use available semantic information in a linear and serial mode. An example might be the feeling of pleasure and pride at achieving a long sought-after promotion. Deliberative evaluations have a preparatory role, getting us ready for some action but deliberative and schematic evaluations can contradict each other. Fear persists in situations we know to be safe; prejudice persists even when we know its harms and believe we have expunged the negative evaluations from our schema. These can be explained 'by assuming that

Clore and Ortony's (2000) analysis, I suggest that the kind of fear that Greenspan experienced when she thought the car was going to skid, as well as the automatic arousal of hidden or unconscious attitudes, was a reinstatement of prior appraisal<sup>95</sup>. Significant events become embedded in the personality of the person, throwing that person straight back into the scene and into the grip of the original emotions. Vietnam veterans are well known for their panic attacks on hearing the sounds of helicopters many years later and World War 1 veterans, too, are still seized by the smells, sounds and terror of the trenches. Nancy, many years after she has left home, might become gripped by fear and feel her throat constricting as she watches a scene of domestic violence in her favourite soap opera.

Ledoux's (1999) experimental work on fear in rats also helps to explain why Greenspan would not have been conscious of a 'belief' when she felt the car skid. Her momentary fear was a protocognitive response. That is, she experienced an early perceptual process (fear) which identified the stimulus (skidding and loss of car control) which linked to an emotional response (thought of danger and harm to her body or life) which prepared her for action, the avoidance of danger. A cognitively controlled process, taking in the data from the outside world, appraised the context and its significance to Greenspan. It happened so quickly and lasted only moments because the data was processed in the amygdala and hypothalamus for the sake of speed and safety, a distinct evolutionary advantage. By this time, the information had made its way up to the neo-cortex after which she became conscious of her fear and subjectively appraised the reality of danger. LeDoux has shown that aversive behaviour can begin before the fear is felt. I would like to suggest that this is why Greenspan did not alert anyone in the car to the danger. Although it happened so quickly, she had enough time to realise she did not really *believe* she or her companion were in danger.

Goldie (2002) takes the view that the inclusion of belief not only over intellectualises the emotions, but risks omitting feelings from the definition itself. His concern is that beliefs could be feelingless, characterising emotions impersonally while ignoring the personal point of view of the person experiencing the emotion. As noted in the last section, Goldie

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certain schematic evaluations become constitutive to a degree where no intellectual deliberation can change them' (Ben-Ze'ev, 2000:58). See too LeDoux (1999, Chapter 7).

<sup>95</sup>Spontaneous responses of the kind discussed can also be referred to as schematic evaluations. See, for example, Ben-Ze'ev (2000:59-60); psychologists Lazarus (1991b:151); Ekman (1992:187-189); neuro-physiologists LeDoux (1999); Panksepp (1998). Schematic evaluations are typically fast, automatic, and occur with little awareness, arising from structures set during evolution and personal development, and so embodying personal historical narratives. Being part of our psychological make-up, schematic evaluations need only the right circumstances to be triggered, such as the skidding of a car.

stresses the intentional element of the emotion, which he characterises as ‘feeling towards’ the object that contains neither belief nor desire. In many respects, intentionality is, he claims, more fundamental to emotional experience. ‘Feeling towards, moreover, as it is thinking of with feeling, is a sort of thinking’ (p.19). I have some difficulties with the argument as Goldie develops it. There is a distinction to be made between true and false beliefs, and appropriate and inappropriate emotions. Goldie (2000) agrees that emotions will often contain beliefs and that they help make the emotion intelligible. The ‘mistake’, he asserts, is to suggest that beliefs ‘exhaust the intentionality of emotional experience and that they are therefore sufficient to make sense of emotion ...’ (p.18-19). In many respects, intentionality is, Goldie claims, more fundamental to emotional experience, and feelings can have a ‘sort of borrowed intentionality’ (p.54) where body and mind are fully united in the emotional experience towards the object of the emotion. This is largely a phenomenological account of the emotions and so quite different from the cognitive approach I have adopted here. One of Goldie’s projects in his philosophical exploration of the emotions is to give feelings a prominent role in emotions. The strength of feeling associated with an emotional experience, what some psychologists might term the ‘valence’ of the emotion, is the attractiveness or aversiveness of an event, object or situation. The bodily feelings that ensue are consequent on what has been appraised or believed to have occurred. The intensity of bodily feelings will depend on what is at stake for the person so aroused. I am not sure why, in order to give feelings their place, bodily feelings need to ‘borrow’ the emotion’s object. This seems to unnecessarily complicate the account.

Similarly, there is no reason to think that beliefs render an emotion feelingless. Beliefs are often predicated, as I have argued, on complex personal factors such as disposition, socialisation processes and personal values. Beliefs are also predicated on complex social structures and meanings which help define what is beneficial or harmful (Lazarus, 1991a:821). We can experience strong negative emotions, such as anger or fear, if we have reason to believe that what we value is threatened in some way. Or we can experience what psychologists classify as positive emotions, such as joy or happiness, if what we value is enhanced or promoted in some way. Negative emotions are those which contain negative appraisals about an object or event, and may be classified as ‘displeased about’, ‘displeased for’ or ‘disapproving of’. Anger and fear are the obvious emotions in this category. Other such emotions include grief, shame, disgust and resentment. Positive emotions usually contain positive appraisals. These might include pride, joy, jubilation, gloating (and *schadenfreude* which is pleasure at another’s misfortune) and esteem. In the

appraisals of some of these emotions, the person may not be liked, she may be deemed to have deserved the bad outcome or the event is appraised as being undesirable for the other person (Ortony et al. 1998:100).

Following Goldie (2002:46-47) is it correct to talk of a ‘belief’ when jumping out of the way of an oncoming bus<sup>96</sup>? Belief might not be the appropriate construal in the case of the oncoming bus because the response is one of being startled (a reflex action preparing the agent to act), followed by fear (an adaptational, automatic and rigid response to an immediate threat of danger), aware that a dangerous object is coming towards one. Once we take into account the role of danger-avoidance reflexes, we might then go on to comment that experience plays a greater role than active belief in cases such as this: we know from experience that if we do not get out of the way of the oncoming bus, we will be seriously injured or killed. That knowledge is a learned belief about the potential harm of buses. One acts on that belief unconsciously and so automatically since we jump from fear. On this account, it is not that in having beliefs ‘we almost have to post-rationalize’ (p.47) the bus story, since post-rationalisation is simply not necessary in cases such as this. Neither do beliefs over-intellectualise fear. Goldie is correct in saying that beliefs, on this occasion, do not cause the emotion of fear: automatic, non volitional mechanisms do, and this kind of fear operates on a different neural network from other emotions<sup>97</sup>.

In a second example, an employee receives news that a merger might result in a job loss with no prospect of a redundancy settlement because she has only recently been appointed (Goldie, 2000:46). The employee deliberates on her prospects and begins to feel fear. The role of belief, in this example, is, as Goldie notes, stronger, featuring in the employee’s reasoning. Belief alone, Goldie claims, is neither necessary nor sufficient to arouse the emotion, as belief gives psychological episodes ‘too intellectual a flavour in explaining ... action’ (p.47). This much is true. On the account of emotions I present in this thesis, there needs to be, in addition to the object (fear of losing one’s job), some cognition about the value of the salient external object, involving a judgement, interpretation, appraisal or belief about the object of value. The employee’s fear, further, may contain a general evaluation (the merger is potentially very bad news) and a concrete evaluation (I might be made redundant), and a background, ongoing emotion (anxiety because I have little experience). Finally, the employee is likely to be engaged in active imagining of the object (she is unable to fall asleep for worrying about all the possibilities if she is made redundant

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<sup>96</sup>Goldie’s example (2000: 46-47).

<sup>97</sup>See LaBar and LeDoux (2009).

and cannot find a job). This fear, which one may describe as a form of reflective fear, is given shape by the employee's psychology and is different from the acute fear aroused by the oncoming bus which has little, if anything, to do with disposition of character. Goldie relies on a 'recognition-response tie' (p.47) to accommodate the deliberative complexity of one (fear of redundancy and the thoughts the fear incites) and the 'animal-like' response of the first (the oncoming bus). This recognition-response tie is, perhaps, too constraining to capture the complexity of emotions in the second case, but might accommodate the non-volitional unconscious emotion of the first.

Emotions can be justified or not, reasonable or not, depending on the beliefs they contain. Pitcher (1966) and Nussbaum (2001:46) both argue that having an emotion depends on what the person's beliefs are, not on whether those beliefs are true or false, so this need not imply that they contain 'truth' claims. In any case, Pitcher (1965:332), who Goldie (2002:18) cites as a philosopher who wishes to capture the intentionality of emotions in terms of beliefs<sup>98</sup>, comments that it would be 'infelicitous' to insist that there must be a relevant belief in every emotion. Pitcher, in order to allow for a flexible interpretation of what a person cognises, uses the portmanteau term 'apprehension' to cover diverse modes of awareness, of which belief is one. As Pitcher points out, one may simply 'imagine' an event to experience an emotion but he does take it that a factual belief is required if a person is to have either an occurrent (in the grip) or a dispositional (of some duration or residing in the background) emotion. If we are unhappy with the idea of 'belief', then a general apprehension in which we judge, assume, know, evaluate, appraise, apprehend or take a view of the object in some way will suffice (Pitcher, 1965:332). As Epictetus (2008:228) commented, we are disturbed not by things, but by the view we take of them.

What the preceding discussion alludes to, in discussing beliefs, is whether emotions are rational phenomena. Are we right to believe we are being insulted or harmed, and thus to be disturbed? Is this a rational response? Epictetus would argue that it is, because of our view of the harm done to us. However, he tells us, unsympathetically and in good Stoic fashion, that our minds have been 'complicit in the provocation' and so should take time to cultivate control and be removed from such externals (2008:228). Aristotle, by contrast, thought that that a person deficient in anger was not only 'foolish', lacking in 'perceptivity and sensitivity', but was also liable to 'servility' if he failed to defend himself or his friends and family (*NE*.1126a5-10). Emotions are not only, often, rational responses to our

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<sup>98</sup>As does Kenny (1963).



sense of self-worth and what we value; they are also moral virtues if cultivated in the right way.

## **2.6 Emotions' Rationality and Intelligence.**

In 2007 and 2011<sup>99</sup> Louis Theroux made two documentaries on the Phelps family who are notorious for picketing the funerals of American soldiers killed in Iraq. Titled the 'Most Hated Family in America', the family is headed by Grandfather Gramps, the preacher in a Baptist church comprising, mainly, his extended family of about 70 people. It is the family's belief that the death of soldiers is God's revenge for the USA's tolerance of homosexuality. They are also rabidly anti-Semitic, believe that President Obama is the 'Beast' in the book of Revelations that predicts the return of Christ, and regard it as their duty to celebrate God's judgements on murders, cancers, natural disasters, and the loss of loved ones to fornication. Theroux described the Grandfather as highly charismatic, persuasive and a compelling speaker who has passed his beliefs down through three generations of the Phelps family.

In the UK, John Sweeney was sentenced to life imprisonment in 2002 for the attempted murder of a girlfriend with an axe and knife. In April 2011, Sweeney was sentenced to four life sentences when he was found guilty of murdering two other former girlfriends, dismembering their bodies and dumping them in canals in Rotterdam and London. The court described Sweeney as a 'hateful, controlling and possessive man'<sup>100</sup>. Sweeney also expressed his misogynistic views of women in his artwork, which the prosecutor at the murder trial said revealed his obsessive and virulent hatred of women and a preoccupation with dismemberment.

In August 2010, CCTV cameras filmed a woman in Warwickshire, England, dumping a cat in a wheelie bin<sup>101</sup>. She apologised profusely and claimed that it was a split second decision that she could not make sense of.

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<sup>99</sup>BBC Magazine (2007) 'America's Most Hated Family' at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/6507971.stm>. 30 March. 'America's Most Hated Family in Crisis' was aired on BBC Two, Monday 4th April, 2011. The first documentary was on BBC Two, April 2007.

<sup>100</sup>Summers, C. 'Killer Planted Clues in Misogynistic Artworks', at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-12749478> Monday 4th April, 2011).

<sup>101</sup>'Woman Who Dumped Cat in Wheelie Bin is Profoundly Sorry', at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-coventry-warwickshire-11087061>, (25<sup>th</sup> September, 2010).

*Nancy sat at her desk, quietly catching up with the work she had missed. She had just returned from her latest expulsion from school, this time for swearing and shouting at a number of teachers. Her teacher was also catching up with some work and had put on music that both agreed they liked. Nancy and teacher chatted away, Nancy asking questions about her work, the recent elections to the Scottish Parliament and the music being played. Her teacher asked her why she had shouted and sworn at her teachers. Her reply was the usual one:*

*'cos they hate me, they're always pickin' on me. I get blamed for everythin' that goes on, e'en when it's no ma fault. They dinnae see or hear what the others get up tae. They just see me. They're all fucking mongos!'*<sup>102</sup>

*At that moment, Stephanie walks by. They are awkward friends but they can act tough together. Her teacher quietly cautions Nancy to stay and not to leave the classroom, reminding her that she was now risking school transfer if she got into more trouble. Nancy ignores her and disappears down the corridor. Warily, Miss Cameron picks up the phone and dials the office number.*

In the light of the examples I have offered here, the assertion that emotions can be rational and intelligent, and that they contribute to ethical reasoning, may seem a gross contradiction. Rabid anti-semitism is neither rational nor intelligent: neither is dumping a cat in a bin or murdering women one cannot control or possess. Depicting the US President as the Biblical Beast is absurd and picketing funerals to celebrate God's punishment is grotesque. Nancy, despite knowing what will happen to her, defiantly chooses those actions that will unquestionably land her in trouble. What is rational or intelligent about all of this? And to where has ethical reasoning disappeared?

To the people who hold anti-semitic, racist or misogynistic views, these views are perfectly rational and perfectly intelligent. The Bible is correct<sup>103</sup>. Women are inferior to men. The dominant emotions are hatred, disgust and pity. The bearers of such beliefs judge their views to be correct and based on 'fact'. On the view I follow (and see earlier), the use of 'rationality' is partly being used here in the ordinary sense of 'intelligent' or 'understandable'. If we are aware of the facts that give us reasons to act then in most cases we should probably respond to those reasons (run from danger, help a friend in need, listen to our conscience, not steal). What we rationally want or do depends on our beliefs (Parfit, 2011:1). Beliefs, be these true or false, give us apparent reason to act, and may be justified. Beliefs include assumptions of which we may not be aware, such as moral rightness or wrongness. If the beliefs are false or based on ignorance, it may be rational to act on those

<sup>102</sup>A 'mongo' is a Fife expression widely used by pupils to mean a stupid person, someone of low standing. 'Dinnae' - 'don't', 'e'en' - 'even'.

<sup>103</sup>This raises questions of interpretation of scripture. How one interprets scripture will be a function of one's beliefs, which in turn will be shaped by faith.

beliefs. In cases such as these, we have merely apparent reasons (Parfit, 2011:111). Of course, by this stage, some might argue that acts are irrational when they causally depend on false or irrational beliefs. I tend to think, however, that such conclusions might mean we pass over complex cases too quickly without insight and understanding.

I, as a reasonably ethical person, with strong moral views, abhor such attitudes, but I do not consider them or their underlying emotions necessarily irrational, not when we take a closer look at them. What I do hold is that the thoughts the emotions contain are defective and the beliefs false and ungrounded (Nussbaum, 2004a:11). If we accept that the emotions described here are irrational in a normative sense, then we can agree that they should not be guides to ethical reasoning. If people have been brought up to believe that racism is right and homosexuality wrong, that sacred texts are to be interpreted in certain ways, then their beliefs might be judged reasonable. If the norms of a society are that women are inferior to men (and there are plenty of such societies to choose from) it will seem perfectly reasonable to many living in that society to assume this to be the case, and misogyny will not be out of place, even to the extent of misogyny resulting in murder. I am not here necessarily thinking of Sweeney or his like, but of honour killings that occur in this country, despite the laws against murder.

Sweeney has a visceral hatred of women. His beliefs about women may be judged irrational, along with his fear of women (if that is what motivates his misogyny), since he harms them (through control) or murders them. I do not know the origins of his misogyny, but if he holds the typical misogynistic beliefs that women are whores, gateways to the devil, or that they threaten masculinity, his beliefs might in one way be considered rational, not least because such views have an ancient pedigree. Justification for misogyny, which Jack Holland (2006) describes as the ‘world’s oldest prejudice’, can be found in many passages in many religious, literary and philosophical texts. If one way to judge rationality is to look for consistency in the beliefs about reasons that motivate action, misogyny might also be judged rational. Looked at from another perspective, if beliefs are based on how well they fit the world, then most reasonable people would conclude that women are not whores, gateways to the devil or threats to masculinity (though my experience and knowledge tell me that such attitudes are faring rather well in the world). If Sweeney also thought he was Jack the Ripper, his belief would be patently irrational since he simply cannot be Jack the Ripper: Sweeney’s murders are very different in kind and number, as are his targets. Sweeney might justify his actions on that account, his belief of who he is

giving him decisive reasons to murder. This makes him very dangerous indeed since his justified beliefs make (did make) him more likely to succeed.

The Phelps are acting on beliefs with content that is morally questionable, as are the acts motivated by those beliefs. In the ordinary sense of rational, their beliefs and acts are, of course, not rational. Rather, they seem ‘crazy’, ‘stupid’, ‘senseless’ and ‘thoughtless’. The Phelps may be irrational to the extent that they seem unwilling to respond to alternative accounts concerning homosexuality, Obama and Jews (though these prejudices are far from extinct in the USA or elsewhere). The Phelps have apparent reason to believe what they do since they base their ‘facts’ on biblical text, the ‘truth’ of which gives them, they think, sufficient reason to act. Picketing funerals, labelling Obama as the ‘Beast’ of revelations are causally related to their beliefs about the immorality of homosexuality and the wickedness of the President, even though their beliefs are epistemically irrational<sup>104</sup>. It might seem patently irrational to believe that the President is the Beast of Revelations. He clearly is not. But the Phelps appear to hold fast to this view despite the fact the Obama looks like a very ordinary human being. It is not about what Obama looks like, of course, but what the family believes he represents. The belief, in my view, is not justified.

Blaming the death of soldiers for a society’s tolerance of homosexuals is surely irrational since there is no evidence that this is God’s view. Why wait for a war in Iraq to punish soldiers? And why select soldiers for punishment? Are the Phelps’ acts justified by their beliefs? In one way, what the Phelps believe gives them decisive reasons to act. Their acts, on this criterion, are rational because the acts are rationally derived from, and supported by, their beliefs: they believe they are acting on the word of God and ridding the world of some evil<sup>105</sup>. Parfit (2011:117) proposes that acts are best called irrational ‘only when ... in acting in some way, we are failing to respond to clear and strongly decisive practical reasons not to act in this way’. Depending on where one stands on the rationality or otherwise of faith and the truth of scripture, one may be judged rational or irrational on account of one’s beliefs. There are strong reasons not to picket the funerals of serving

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<sup>104</sup>But are such beliefs justified? This is difficult to answer because many people are strongly motivated by faith and what they take to be the irrefutable word of their God.

<sup>105</sup>Even here, an answer to rationality is not straightforward for there is a long history of persecution of homosexuals, racial minorities and Jews based on, and inspired by, scriptural interpretation. The Phelps may not only be drawing on scripture, but also from social, historical and cultural views about what it means to be a homosexual, racial minority or a Jew. They may also be drawing from scripture and social and cultural knowledge on the corrective methods required to deal with what they may believe to be deviant or deficient characteristics. The Phelps might seem extreme because they are vocal when other like-minded persons now keep silent for fear of opprobrium. Society has, thankfully, become more intolerant of discriminatory and prejudicial practices but doubtless many individuals continue, privately, to hold views most of us would condemn.

soldiers, call the President the Beast (though ludicrous, it masks racial prejudice) or engage in anti-semitic acts as they cause harm and distress. They are also, on most humane views, deeply immoral acts, and therefore irrational because not in accordance with the moral law.

In sum, and following Parfit (2011:117):

[T]he rationality of our beliefs depends on whether, in having these beliefs, we are responding well to epistemic or truth related reasons ... to have these beliefs. The rationality of our desires and acts depends on whether, in acting in these ways, we are responding well to practical reasons ... to act in these ways. We might respond well to either set of reasons or apparent reasons, while responding badly to the other set. We might be practically rational but epistemically irrational, or practically irrational but epistemically rational.

These claims are based on beliefs and acts with no normative content. The examples I have discussed are patently rich in such content. To murder, abuse, treat with contempt or disrespect is morally irrational.

Emotions are affected by influencing belief. Change the content of the belief and we will change the emotion. Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian understood this, as have many dramatists, poets, writers and speech makers before them and since. There are important implications for education here. Beliefs taught early become ingrained and deeply habitual. What we teach children to fear, respect, love, loathe or avoid is a matter of moral importance and, hence, important to a good society. Racism or hatred directed at groups who do not fit our norms of what is right or normal are not necessarily unreasoning or irrational but they are problematic. Simply suppressing feelings of hatred will not work: we might hope to reason with such people that their views are defective, but this takes patience and effort (Nussbaum, 2004a: 34-35). Persuading a psychopath that his views of women are unreasonable is unlikely to work without tremendous commitment of time and resources: it may never work. But we can work with children to prevent bad beliefs from becoming habituated.

The examples I have used here also show why emotions are treated with suspicion and regarded as irrational forces that impede the functioning and realisation of our goals. Emotions, however, need not impede functioning or the realisation of our goals. For Solomon (1993:xviii), our reality is given shape and structure by constitutive judgements that tune us into the world. Lazarus (1991b: 467) advises that we should think of people as irrational only when the reasoning process itself is illogical. Hidden in the illogicality are faulty premises: flawed beliefs, values and commitments. When the Duchesses de

Guermites<sup>106</sup> on hearing of her friend Swann's impending death, nevertheless goes up to change her black shoes for red ones to attend the next ball, we wonder at her values. For her, it seems, the colour of her shoes is more important than the news that Swann will soon die. And though the Duchesses declares she hates the recondite trappings of her social life, the wearing of the right shoes, speaking only to the right people, displaying the right calling cards on the table, indicate that she cannot relinquish the grip her empty, but splendid, life has over her. However, her choice, in her terms and in her world, while vain, may be thought of as rational, while we judge her 'irrational' in the sense of being insensitive or thoughtless.

Oatley (1992:155-156) concludes, on the basis of a number of experiments on logic, that irrationality is not particularly characteristic of emotion but is characteristic of thinking. The difference in emotional reasoning and unemotional reasoning is that, in the former case, the individual has to come up with the solution to a problem that suddenly arises, whereas in the latter, the individual can draw on cultural experience, defined and soluble problems in some domains, involving skills or technical know-how. New problems, whether arising in situations that elicit emotional responses or which confront the intellect, often result in errors: errors of reasoning, biases<sup>107</sup>, misunderstandings, wrong intention formations, incorrect selection, giving up too soon, and so on. As Oatley aptly points out, 'emotional thinking may seem more irrational than non-emotional thinking because it is often applied to insoluble problems' (p.155-156). And while it is true that the expression of emotion is a cultural artefact that reflects a society's norms and values, as well as being the expression of an individual's personal values, commitments and goals, what is neglected in some discussions of rational intellect versus unreasoning emotion, is the fact that rationality is itself a social, not an individual, phenomenon. When Fermat devised his Last Theorem in 1637, he left many a mathematician puzzling over its solution for over three hundred years until its resolution in 1995. Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky and Gogol, among others, all absorbed the influence of Dickens into their great novels. Rationality is indeed social and founded on the funds of existing and past thought. As J.S. Mill eloquently remarked, apropos the lack of great works by women and their supposed lack of original thought:

original thinkers are those who have known most thoroughly what had been thought of by their predecessors... Every fresh stone in the edifice has now to be

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<sup>106</sup>Proust (2003/3:595-596).

<sup>107</sup>Oatley (1992:156-157) shows that biases in human thinking are a major source of error. There is a large body of research that shows how common in thinking are errors in reasoning and biases that result in irrational choices and incorrect solutions.

placed on top of so many others that a long process of climbing, and of carrying up materials, has to be gone through by whoever aspires to take a share in the present share of work. (2006:208-209)

We might look at the bias towards intellectual rationality in more philosophical depth by considering Hampton's (2007) original account on culpability and defiance, in *Mens Rea*, or guilty mind. While her focus is on legal culpability, rather on the cognitive slips or premature terminations that Oatley discusses above, Hampton is interested in what it means to accuse someone in law of being culpable for a wrong they have committed. My interest in her account is her analysis of defiance in which people act illegally, immorally or irrationally. Hampton (2007) argues that to 'be rationally culpable is to be irrational, though not every mistake made by a reasoning person is irrational' (p.74). To find myself in the wrong village because I read the map incorrectly is a mistake, but it is not the result of an irrational act. If, however, I knowingly carry out an act I know is imprudent, plain daft or against the law, then my act is wilfully irrational and it might also be termed a 'cognitive bias', as I suggest below. If I undertook an act which I should have known was imprudent, then I have been negligently irrational. I cannot, for example, claim I am innocent of breaking the speed limit on the motorway or avoiding tax laws because I did not know what the particular laws were: the courts will take the view that these are laws I should have known about or about which I should have taken steps to be familiar<sup>108</sup>. Non-rational mistakes are different in that while they are a 'species of irrationality' (Hampton, 2007:75) in which we make mistakes in processing information, in the way we reason logically, or in how we see the world, there is nothing intentional about our mistakes. These are non culpable failures of reason of the kind that Oatley discusses.

Wilfull irrationality, however, is different and interesting, all too familiar and puzzling. Teachers might recognise the following:

A pupil, Sean, is sitting Higher Geography<sup>109</sup> against the better judgement of his teacher. He has been advised that he must attend class, undertake homework, revise regularly, pay close attention in class, and so on. He has also been told that if his prelims are poor, he will have to drop a level. He fails to heed any of this advice. The prelims have come and gone, and the geography papers marked. Sean has achieved 37 percent. Results come into school in August. Sean has been awarded a 'No award' in Geography and has performed pretty abysmally in his other subjects. None of his teachers are surprised.

<sup>108</sup>A point Aristotle makes. *NE.1113b30-1114a5; Pol.1274b18*.

<sup>109</sup>Scottish secondary school qualification. Scottish students require Highers to enter university. Prelims are preliminary exams taken by all Scottish pupils before the final diet of exams. They give a good indication of the candidates' likely performance in the external exams.

This is an all too typical example and an endless source of irritation for teachers and parents. Given his goal of getting to university, knowing that he had to work to get his higher, he ought to have acted rationally. Sean needed to do X in order to achieve Y. Instead, Sean thought he could do Z and still achieve Y thereby subverting the course of action that reason directed he should take in order to achieve his goal. Following Hampton, we can conclude the following of Sean.

The fact that the action he contemplates is irrational gives him not just reason but the best reason in the circumstances not to do the action; reason's directives are authoritative in the situation. (2007:77)

How do we make Sean's action intelligible? On Hampton's analysis, we can suggest that Sean is faced with a choice. He could conform his actions and desires to the dictates of reason which would mean temporarily giving up his job and some of his social life, attending school or doing his homework. Alternatively he could defy reason's authority and substitute in its place the authority of his desire to achieve his higher by some mysterious, serendipitous means<sup>110</sup>. Sean chose to be defiant. More precisely, he chose to be defiant of practical reason. Sean wanted to do Z, but he knew that in choosing Z he could not achieve Y even though achieving was, or so he claimed, his most important goal. He chose Z. He wanted his hamburger without collecting it, to jump on his tricycle and ride to London from Fife<sup>111</sup>. Or, to use a more common analogy, Sean wanted the mountain to come to him. The point of this line of argument is that when the world does not go the way we would like, we rationalise. We justify our irrational acts through recourse to all manner of rationalisations. The once in a while heroin user will not become addicted; the smoker will not die of lung cancer; Sean will pass his Higher without any effort on his part. All supplant reason's authority with something more congenial to their worldview because each sees themselves as being somehow different from the rest of humanity. These 'cognitive biases' might take the form of 'confirmation bias' if we look for evidence to confirm our pre-existing hypothesis or biases (Oatley 1992:149) or 'over-confidence' bias when ambiguity is suppressed and coherent explanations constructed

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<sup>110</sup>An interesting alternative to this philosophical interpretation is that of de-Sousa's (1987) analysis of cognitive bootstrapping.

<sup>111</sup>I use these examples metaphorically. They originate from Hampton (2007:79-81). The hamburger example comes from a child who wanted a hamburger but did not want to go to the only outlet that was still open. In 'defiance of an unacceptable directive of practical reason', she threw a tantrum because she wanted to 'have the hamburger without getting it'. In the other example, Hampton's son wanted to go to San Francisco on his tricycle. Her point is that children throw up the flaws in human reasoning that adults can disguise by the veneer of sophistication and civilisation.



(Kahneman, 2011). People rely on a small number of heuristic principles to reduce complex tasks to simple judgements, often leading to systematic errors, as in assessing probability and hypothesis testing (Kahneman and Tversky, 1974)<sup>112</sup>. Kahneman's extensive research demonstrates that we will often give up rationality (what it is logical to do) rather than abandon attractive projects and goals, and Sean is a fine demonstration of that abandonment. Further, while sub-processes of the brain cannot be described as 'rational' or 'irrational' *per se*, (they are, rather, efficient or inefficient), these processes may, as Stanovich (2011) observed, contribute to personal decisions and beliefs. What is important is how the environment in which a person is acting contributes to the quality of the decision making process (Oatley's point as noted above), as well as to a person's personal beliefs, values, and attitudes. Sean may have failed because he was simply lazy. However, he was adamant that he could achieve his Higher on his plan of action. The Duchess may have demonstrated misplaced values in preferring red shoes to speaking to Swann, and so may be judged as morally less than rational, but she was, in two ways, rational. She was epistemically rational because what she did was determined by her beliefs about her social standing and social mores. And she was instrumentally rational because she behaved in a way that allowed her to achieve what she most wanted: the preservation of her reputation for exquisite taste and supreme elegance.

But there is another way in which defiance can make a person culpably irrational, and such defiance points to a crucial moral implication to which I will shortly return. If I perform an action in ignorance of its effects, *prima facie*, I am innocent and I might be excused my ignorance (Hampton, 2007:84). If, however, my ignorance was such that I ought to have remedied it at some earlier time, then I cannot be excused. Even in cases where I might have been genuinely ignorant to begin with, there is enough evidence to be had to lead me out of my ignorance. In effect, what each lazy student of the Sean kind (junk food eater, or silent Auschwitz resident) would have is that:

I defied reason (in its theoretical or practical guise) in order to choose to remain ignorant, and for this reason my failure to procure my goals by virtue of that ignorance makes it appropriate to call me 'irrational' rather than merely 'mistaken'. (Hampton, 2007:84)

We might now see the moral implications here. Ignorance of the Nazi project was no excuse. Neither is being ignorant of the fact that one's child is being abused by one's

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<sup>112</sup>This paper is a classic treatment of the errors in cognitive processing and remains one of the most cited papers in the Social Sciences (see Kahneman, 2011:8). Stanovich (2011) makes a clear distinction between intelligence and rationality. Rationality, for Stanovich, is a more 'encompassing construct than intelligence' (p.37) because it concerns the actions of a person in her environment.

partner an excuse if the behaviour of the child changes so suddenly and uncharacteristically, yet the mother refuses to confront what she sees before her for fear of losing her partner. But, of course, we are saying far more here than that many Nazi supporters and Nazi spectators were wilfully ignorant and negligently irrational, or that the mother demonstrated those same dispositions. There is a moral problem inherent within these species of reasoning. Sean's problem is different. I think we can safely say that he was wilfully irrational without saying that he was morally negligent of his studies. Like irrational people, immoral people know the better but do the worse 'because they believe they can install a new reason-giving authority over their actions that transforms the worse into the better' (Hampton, 2007:91-92). And implicit in the act to disobey the authority of reason or morality is *choice*. Sean, for example, chooses to evaluate a situation or action as better, not worse, in order to achieve a goal that is convenient to his scheme of ends or reasoning. In the cases we have here, that would have been to rid Europe of undesirable human beings and to keep a partner at the injurious expense of a child.

Emotions, then, should not simply be dismissed as irrational and inimical to functioning, unless we also, in order to be balanced, say the same of (some forms of) intellectual reasoning. Emotions allow us to function very well. We run in fear from an attacker. We love our children, parents, siblings and close friends, and we bask in their wellbeing and flourishing. We react in anger at watching a dog being beaten unmercifully. While there are, unsurprisingly, disagreements about the extent to which emotions are rational, writers such as de-Sousa (1987), Oatley (1992), Elster (1999) and Ben-Ze'ev (2000) all argue that emotions are rational in the normative sense of being appropriate in a given set of circumstances: that is they trigger evaluative appraisals of what is salient and worth a response<sup>113</sup>. However, emotions are not rational in the descriptive sense as they are not the product of intellectual deliberation where we consciously and deliberately calculate our emotional response, at least they are not always so. We can induce emotions by calculating their social worth, for example, such as feigning anger to show our allegiance to our 'Dear Leader', or happiness to put our customers at ease. But the initial calculation is a deliberative one. Our emotional responses are best seen as rule-described behaviour, acting in accordance with non-intentional forms of lawful connection<sup>114</sup>. Nevertheless, and

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<sup>113</sup>Though de-Sousa (1987) does not stress the evaluative aspect of emotions, adopting instead an axiological apprehension of value.

<sup>114</sup>See Ben-Ze'ev (2000:162-164) for the difference between rule-following behaviour and rule-described behaviour. For a criticism of over-rationality in emotions, see Elster (1999:290) who says of the accounts by de-Sousa (1987) and Johnson-Laird and Oatley (1992) that they put up strawmen of rational choice theory where agents always take into account 'all possible outcomes of all possible options' and are 'addicted to

bearing the preceding comments in mind, emotions, because they are urgent signals of changes in our environment, act like ‘tie-breakers in situations of indeterminacy, and, more generally improve the quality of decision making by enabling us to focus on salient features of the environment’ (Elster, 1999:284). Emotions, then, have an important indicative, mobilising and communicative function (Ben-Ze’ev, 2000:168). Antonio Damasio (1994) and LeDoux (1999) describe cases in which a decline of rationality is accompanied by a decline in emotion: the power of reason declines, says Damasio (p.54) with the emotional experience<sup>115</sup>. Brain damaged patients tend to be emotionally flat and display defective decision-making capacities, leading to irrational behaviour.

Perhaps a fruitful approach is to consider the appropriacy of emotions in terms of whether their judgements, beliefs or appraisals are correct. To develop the point further, and following philosophers such as Pitcher (1966), Ben-Ze’ev (2000) and Nussbaum (2001), we do not speak of false grief, but we do speak of false propositional (she believed that P) content. If Nancy is told that her father is dying because he has terminal cancer, she will experience grief at the thought of his impending death. If, however, she comes to believe her father is dying because he has cracked his wrist, it would be fair to conclude that Nancy’s grief is unfounded and her belief the result of false premises leading to an erroneous conclusion. We do not say of headaches that they are reasonable or unreasonable; we do not have sensible headaches. Only what we do can be assessed, according to Solomon (1993). We can be mistaken about our emotions and their causes, but not about bodily states such as a sore stomach or a racing heart. A judgement or belief will make truth-claims about its own evaluations: it asserts the real value of the object, which of course may be wrong. Pitcher’s (1965:331) analysis of unreasonable fear is illuminating. He cites five cases of unreasonable fear: groundless fear (falling of a safe bridge), irrational fear (there is no chance whatever of falling off the bridge), superstitious fear (fear of falling off the bridge because a magpie has flown by), vain or neurotic fear (fear of lambs), abnormal or inordinate fear (fainting at the sight of snakes in a cage at the zoo). What counts is the degree of evaluation of danger; the belief, false or otherwise, that there is danger; a perceptual/cognitive capacity to see the real, perceived or imaginary danger which arouse the characteristic feelings associated with danger, whether or not the propositional content is warranted or not. However, intellectual judgements can be wrong: they do go wrong, and catastrophically so.

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reason’. A person who waited to calculate all possible outcomes of all possible options would be irrational and severely impaired by the burden of decision-making or dead, if she were confronted by a gunman pointing a gun at her head. I think it fair to say that this criticism is justified in cases of immediate danger where our emotions have the adaptive function of preserving our lives by making us act without thinking.

<sup>115</sup>The significance of this point becomes clear in Chapter 6.

One final comment in defence of the rationality of emotions and their role in moral life is that emotions, as I argued at the start of this discussion, can act as our moral compass and serve as strong barriers to immoral conduct. So, too, can non-emotional reasoning when it does not conflict with a desire not sanctioned by the authority of ethical reason. The deaths of Jews, vagrants, disabled people, homosexuals and anyone who did not conform to the Nazi Teutonic ideal resulted from loathing, hatred, fear and contempt. This much is true. The minds, however, that organised the logistics of deaths, the transport to the death camps, that calculated the resources needed to keep the inmates barely alive and the quantity of gas to optimally kill them, the minds at the Wannsee Conference of 1942 that dreamed up the Final Solution, were cold, calculating, remorseless and utterly indifferent<sup>116</sup> to the inhumane suffering they had unleashed and would further intensify as that war progressed. The Nazis are morally culpable for their actions because they preferred to substitute the authority of morality that regards all humans of being of equal worth to one which views only an ideal of a human being as of worth: the rest can be disposed of or used to serve the ends of the superior human.

## 2.7 Concluding Chapter Two.

I am assuming an acceptance of a certain kind of moral theory in which we intuitively accept that the basis of morality is to have a sense of one's own intrinsic and equal value as a human being<sup>117</sup>. The examples I used here of jealousy, grief, shame and anger, demonstrate the importance of self-esteem, social standing and the value of external goods to us. Emotions also demonstrate our capacity to be and to do in order to be able to flourish in truly human ways, an important constituent of moral theory. Our emotions, because of their complex intentionality, sensitivity and perception, provide us with a sense of what

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<sup>116</sup>In this case, they could be excused moral culpability because they were amoral in their attitudes to human dignity and human life. Being amoral, such people do not see themselves as participants of moral imperatives and so remain outside the moral laws. However, there is a distinction to be made here. Even if agents are amoral but know and understand the directives of morality and why they are important to social cohesion and human wellbeing, but ignore them anyway, they are defiant (in Hampton's terms). If amoral agents do not know about moral authority, they are either responsible for this ignorance and are thus culpable for their immoral acts (because they chose acts which made the agent increasingly insensitive to reason's directives over time); or some other force or circumstance, brain damage or a neglected childhood, is responsible for the ignorance. See Hampton (2007:96-97).

<sup>117</sup>For fine arguments on these points, see Rawls (1971); Hursthouse (1991); Hampton (2007); Herman (2008).

one needs, as a particular and distinct person, in order to flourish as that person. Our emotions, too, provide us with a sense of what others' might need as particular and distinct persons. Finally, and relatedly, our emotions can develop our capacity to recognise our own and other's neediness and vulnerability, and to understand that these can be satisfied with the help and support of others. In accepting this kind of moral theory, I am also asking how we can act well in ways that are sustainable, sensitive to the particulars, and go down deep into our personalities. Support for this kind of moral theory will be made throughout this thesis as I ask how we can act well in difficult situations. I shall make the case for the cultivation of a form of moralised compassion that will stabilise forms of ethical reasoning which yield, in turn, ethical acts that in themselves realise human functioning in truly human ways. And so, I will consider the cluster of emotions that comprise what I regard as the family of emotions that are other-regarding: namely, compassion, empathy and sympathy<sup>118</sup>. An account of these emotions, of compassion in particular, helps us to understand obstacles to flourishing. For compassion, as I will present it here, says that while Nancy may do wrong in some way, it is not entirely her fault. Instead, compassion will help us see, for example, that the concatenation of natural, social and familial circumstances each have a strong bearing on the formation of Nancy's character. The aim is to cultivate an understanding of compassion that is morally relevant and discerning. Following Nussbaum (2001:401-454), our aim is to provide compassion with an understanding of agency and fault, a theory of the worth of basic goods that are linked to actions and institutions. For what good are our institutions or our actions, Nussbaum (p.404) asks, if they are governed by dutiful but dead and empty acts? And what good is it if we follow the rules but fail to act in compassionate defiance and with empathy in our souls?

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<sup>118</sup>Oatley (1992:196) regards these as complex emotions which correspond to Adam Smith's (1759) moral sentiments. That is, they are contextual emotions that have propositional content involving the evaluation of the self in relation to another. Oddly, Solomon (1993) does not have any of the three emotions in his register of emotions. To be fair, this is an exploratory effort on Solomon's part and he acknowledged the compilation of the register would be controversial. Ortony et al. (1998:69) refer to this group of emotions as the fortune of others emotions where the events in question concern what is happening to others. Ben-Ze'ev (2000) follows closely the classification of the emotions set out by Ortony et al. (1998).

### Chapter Three: Compassion.

*Black shapes crouched, lay, sat between the trees, leaning against the trunks, clinging to the earth, half coming out, half effaced within the dim light, in all the attitudes of pain, abandonment, and despair... nothing but black shadows of disease and starvation, lying confusedly in the greenish gloom.* (Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, 1995:35)

#### Compassion<sup>119</sup>

Intentional components:

- |                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| a] cognitive evaluation:    | negative, evaluation of seriousness, empathic projection of similar possibilities                   |
| b] belief about the object: | undeserved or excessive suffering   |
| c] value or eudaimonia:     | other-concern, desire to alleviate suffering, overcoming social barriers, promoting ethical concern |
| d] object:                  | anyone subject to serious misfortune. This includes animals.  |
| Link to other emotions:     | love, grief, anger, disgust. May be prompted by hate or anger at perceived injustice.               |

### 3.1 Introduction.

In this chapter, I shall argue the need to cultivate moralised compassion as a route to nurturing and stabilizing the appropriate moral attitude to perceptions of suffering and harm. In the first section, I use two novels: Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (hereafter *HD*) and Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*, both of which powerfully and movingly illustrate how human life fares when compassion, pity and justice are absent, and the normal rules and conventions of civil society barely exist or have been destroyed. Injustice prevails in the contrasting environments of these novels: in the rich and fertile jungle of Conrad's *HD* and in the world of post apocalyptic devastation in *The Road*. The external goods are abundant in the former world, and ruthlessly exploited, while close to eternal extinction in the latter. The choices the characters make darken their moral souls because compassion, as 'guardian'<sup>120</sup> of the realm of suffering and harm, has fled their souls, though not souls of the father and son in *The Road* who hold steadfastly to their values. The novels also exemplify the themes I wish to explore here and, indeed, to develop in subsequent

<sup>119</sup>I have provided this summary of compassion in order to remind the reader of what the constituents of an emotion and to indicate the emotions to which compassion is related. I provide a similar summary of fear in the concluding chapter.

<sup>120</sup>Recall this phrase comes from Haidt (2009:859) who speaks of emotions such as shame, disgust or compassions, as 'guardians of morality'.

chapters: the consequences to human dignity and respect when humans are treated as objects to be exploited for the wellbeing and flourishing of others. In the epigraph from *HD*, the objects are the black shapes that are ‘half effaced within the dim light, in all the attitudes of pain, abandonment, and despair... nothing but black shadows of disease and starvation.’ The identities of the “shapes” have been erased, their humanity a matter of contempt.

In this chapter I discuss, in relation to those two novels, what are commonly termed in cognitive science as ‘other regarding’, prosocial emotions of compassion, pity, and sympathy, though the primary focus is on compassion. As with other emotions, such as jealousy in Chapter 2, here I continue to delineate the main appraisal features and components of this family of other regarding emotions. I contrast compassion with pity and, though to a lesser extent, with sympathy, in order to show how they are related but distinct, mainly because our appraisals in these emotions are different. In feeling pity, for example, onlookers may judge that there is suffering, but that it is the fault of the sufferer and that there is nothing the onlooker can do. In feeling sympathy, we may judge, again, that there is suffering, but feel no compulsion to act in any way to alleviate the sufferer. The evaluation of sympathy lacks attentive vigour, unlike compassion which rivets our attention to the object. I suggest that all of these emotions are important for seeing how people are faring, and for imagining things from their perspective. This, in turn, links to the imaginative complexes that emotions permit us to construct for which empathy<sup>121</sup>, as a protean emotion, is essential. These emotions are important because they extend the boundaries of our immediate and local concern to take account of people who are remotely or differently situated from us.

I will argue that we need moralised compassion if we are to have just relations and just institutions. Initially I construct moralised compassion to entail having regard for others as ends in themselves, as people who ought to be accorded dignity and respect. Second, and relatedly, I construct moralised compassion to entail cultivating appropriate evaluations of what merits our compassionate regard. In order to provide examples for this account of moralised compassion, I begin the first section with a description of the moral themes of the two novels that I judge to be illuminative of the concerns that interest me here. As noted in the introduction, the style I adopt is not committed to a single disciplinary

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<sup>121</sup>I will reserve a close analysis of empathy for Chapter 4 in which I argue that empathy, on some accounts, is not enough to ensure that ‘caring-for’ or ‘caring-about’ are carried out with the correct motives.

conception of discourse, and my task is not simply to adhere to the rather economic language of philosophical argument. I draw upon these novels, and those that follow, to both exemplify points I make and to introduce the possibilities of using such literature in schools as part of a cultivation of appropriate emotions. There is evidence that young people who can identify with a character or situation may be likely to remember the story and the emotions it evoked when they were imaginatively engaged (see Harrison, 1989; Batson 2011), and so the ways in which we preface literature can set the scene for imaginative engagement. Vivid presentations, such as those provided here, may arouse empathic projection and a willingness to transcend the self to become immersed in another world, to simulate, in some degree, the life of the characters in those circumstances. For these reasons, I begin the next section with two detailed accounts from a *HD* and *The Road*.

In that first section, too, I will start to develop the argument that education can play a crucial part in the process of shaping our moral emotional development. Children and young people, and I include Nancy here, must not only discern their own plans and goals, they must be educated to respect the plans of others, to cultivate the virtues of respect and tolerance, and to nurture judgements that allow them to enjoy a healthy emotional repertoire that includes appropriate compassion, pity and anger. Schools are one of the major arenas in which fair procedures are institutionalised and in which individual rights, capabilities and mutual respect can be honoured and developed, and so the moves I pursue here have, as their rationale, the desire to argue that schools should fulfill these important aims. The novel, as I suggest here, and in Chapter 7, is an excellent educative resource for inculcating moral regard for others. The novels I use in this chapter depict the debasement and exploitation that will likely result if we fail to value fully compassion in our institutions and political life and if we host, instead, unethical emotional responses when we are confronted with people we have come to regard to as ‘other’ and not quite human. In order to retain my focus on the importance of dignity and self-respect, in the second section here, I outline a Kantian conception of personhood. Human beings, Kant asserted, should never be used instrumentally, but should be treated as ends in themselves, and compassion, which he acknowledged as a ‘painful feeling’ (*DV*.6:457), may ground duty to accomplish what it ought: namely the happiness and moral well being of others<sup>122</sup>. In

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<sup>122</sup>See the *Doctrine of Virtue* (6:393-394) (here and hereafter *DV*). Since it is difficult to do good by others without love, it is our duty to make ourselves ends for others, and to make others our ends in order to secure happiness (wellbeing). We must respect the wellbeing of others and do nothing to cause them harm whilst, of course, avoiding self-sacrificial behaviours.



feeling compassion for others, we record and respect their value as dignified beings worthy of respect. In combining these two moral conceptions of compassion and Kantian personhood, we have, I propose, moralised compassion.

Following this outline, I will sketch the morphology of compassion and the related emotion of pity to show their common features and distinct value appraisals. Contrary to the view that compassion is too unreliable to ground justice, I argue that compassion need not be, necessarily, an unreliable source of moral judgement that is antithetical to personal achievement. Moralised compassion, cultivated to an appropriate degree should enable us to feel compassion for the right objects, in the right way and in the right circumstances, acting as a powerful guide in our ethical endeavours. I suggest, following Nussbaum's (2001) account, that compassion has three cognitive elements: that the suffering is not trivial, that it has 'size', and that we are all susceptible to ill fortune. The eudaimonistic judgement in compassion, Nussbaum's fourth element, is that the wellbeing of others is important to my own wellbeing, because I value their goals, plans and aspirations as I do my own. This conception links us back to the claims of moral theory elucidated in Chapter 2, and which I will develop further in this chapter in my later discussion of Kantian and Rawlsian ethics. In addition, I will illustrate and exemplify the discussion on compassion by reference to Nancy and to Christopher Crisp's (2008) criticisms of Nussbaum's articulation of this emotion. Crisp presents three scenarios in an attempt to argue that compassion is a feeling rather than a cognitive experience. I take two of his examples to demonstrate why his non-cognitive analysis cannot take us very far.

This exposition leads on to a more detailed discussion of other-regarding emotions in the fourth section, where I move to contrast the appraisal structures of compassion, pity and sympathy, while constructing in more detail the case for moralised compassion. In the final section, I argue that we should aim for just institutions if emotions, in particular moralized compassion, are to be realised in the ways I propose here. Returning to the theme of education, I will argue that schools should be considered as important loci for thinking about just institutions and for cultivating moralised concern in children<sup>123</sup>. To make my case, I follow Rawls' (1971) assertion that in just societies, and within just institutions, individuals acquire the desire to act justly<sup>124</sup>. Individuals will be accorded respect to have the freedom to choose their life plans, provided they conform to just actions and the

<sup>123</sup> And again, my focus is on schools but that is not to suggest that all institutions would not benefit from similar attention.

<sup>124</sup> Cf. Aristotle: Legislators make their citizens good by habituation. *NE*.1103b-5.

legitimate claims of others. By agreeing to follow the principles of justice, citizens in a well ordered society will be motivated to ensure that everyone's good is included in a scheme of mutual benefit. Such a conception accords closely with Kant's assertion that we should include others' ends in our own scheme of ends (*DV.II*) and it develops the Aristotelian themes of virtue and practical reason introduced in Chapter 1. Now we can add a Rawlsian analysis that enriches and adds layers to the argument for compassion and compassionate institutions. I then draw briefly on empirical research to demonstrate that compassion can reduce the likelihood of derogation and blaming victims of injustice, all too important if we are avoid the injustices depicted in *HD* and in *The Road* in real life.

The chapter's argument is extensive because I endeavour to show how easy it is, without the support of well cultivated emotions, and compassion in particular, to revile human dignity and autonomy and to revile, above all, the morality inherent in humans as rational beings. Additionally, the chapter forms a theoretical prelude to Chapter 4, introducing key threads that will be rewoven in subsequent chapters on gender, the novel and domestic violence. Reason, as rational activity, as I have shown, is fundamental to all that we do and aims at some ultimate end or good: eudaimonia. As we will see in Conrad's novel, contempt and loathing for the 'black figures' of the jungle kept the European's boundaries tight to their own self-interested concerns, driving to disease and death the victims they chose to see as brutish and primeval. In *The Road*, it is starvation that is corrupting the cannibals' souls as they attempt to delay their inevitable death by preying on human survivors. The choice the cannibals make, though grim, is not inevitable as the boy and his father show: they choose to succumb to slow death as a more honourable alternative to a life of predation, depravity and torture. *The Road* arouses our deep compassion and sorrow because its fictional inhabitants failed to cherish the world when it was living and abundant. Eudaimonia is nowhere to be found in a *HD* or *The Road*. In these fictional worlds it is debased action issuing from deformed reasoning that is sovereign, yet moralised compassion can persist against all the odds.

### **3.1a Dark Souls in a *Heart of Darkness*.**

In Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* neither compassion nor justice exists. No one possesses, or can possess, an inviolability founded on justice<sup>125</sup>. Neither is there, nor can there be, pity. The black shadows that wander, march or sit silently in the green gloom of *HD* do not

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<sup>125</sup>These concepts come from Rawls (1971). I will return to these later in this chapter.

elicit pity or compassion, at least not from their exploiters, though they might from a reader such as Nancy (and I return to Nancy as a reader in the final chapter). We cannot be stirred beyond ourselves, to reach out to the suffering of another<sup>126</sup> if we see only the surface of black skin and flattened noses of creatures who are simulacra of humans, so deformed that they can be ruthlessly exploited without conscience or restraint. Neither compassion nor pity can take hold here while the colonizers remain free from all moral restraint to murder and plunder for the debased aggrandizement of an immorally privileged 'race' of Europeans. No creature is inviolable while there is money to be made, by whatever means, or while human dignity is seen as an affront to economic efficiency and an impediment to unfettered profit. The peoples of the Central African Region are as fungible as the primary goods the Europeans extract and export abroad. The principles of inviolability, liberty and equality, the enlightenment ideals of a progressive society that enshrine the constitutions of modern European countries today, are absent in Conrad's tale of Central Africa's conquest. What I am so far suggesting is that the forces of debasement and exploitation are never too far from the surface if we fail to nurture, and to value fully in our institutions and political life, the emotions of compassion, as well as empathy and sympathy, in moralised forms, that is, to cultivate moralised compassion so as to see the value and worth of all human beings whoever and wherever they happen to be. If we do not cultivate our emotions in this moralised way, we may fail to provide the conditions in which human flourishing can occur, and that is not compatible with anyone's wellbeing, whether material, moral or both.

Conrad's novel comments directly and unambiguously on the pitiless, immoral acts of the European enterprise in the Belgian Congo<sup>127</sup>. The barbarity and rapacious greed of the European, here exemplified as Kurt, his indescribable inefficiency in exploiting the region and its peoples until they are diseased, starved and dying, is an instructive moral lesson on what goes wrong when pity or compassion are absent from our regard for the 'other', whomsoever that 'other' might be. Of moral significance are Conrad's frequent references to the 'darkness' that shrouds this 'prehistoric continent', on which Marlow and the Europeans travel as if 'phantoms ... in the night of first ages, of those ages that are gone, leaving hardly a sign – and no memories' (p.62). Conrad's darkness hums in the humid fecundity of the impenetrable forest, a vast and hellacious unknown. While Europe's own

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<sup>126</sup>See Rousseau (1993).

<sup>127</sup>The region in which Marlow is travelling is never actually named but because the fictional character, echoing Conrad's own real life career, goes to Belgium to receive his commission, it is assumed to be King Leopold's Belgian Congo.

first ages are enshrouded and lost to time, they are imagined here in Africa where all drones with unearthly brutality, savagery and the primitive, drawing the European back in time to his beastly self. The pervasive darkness speaks of the Europeans' own internal darkness, the truth of who and what we are when compassion and fellow feeling become rarer than ivory: brute, savage and primitive when our conceptions of human worth and dignity are released from their moral anchors. This is a region, which, because it is not yet quite human, humanity can be forfeited.

In a *HD* truths are reversed. Darkness, because it reveals our true nature, is truth; while white is evil and falsehood. The trade in ivory is degrading. It corrodes the souls of the hunters, and is merciless towards the creatures that are slaughtered to yield the dentine. When moral sentiments are overthrown by immoral attitudes or by situations we have not confronted before, humanity itself can disappear into something akin to the metaphorical dark gloom that Conrad so vividly evokes. The consequences for human wellbeing and dignity can be as dire as the silently dying shadows of disease and starvation the excerpt avers. Failing to recognize that we are that 'other', meaning African and human, as the travelers head upstream towards the physical heart of darkness of the forest, their psychological and emotional hearts of darkness fuse in a symbiosis of racial prejudice and lust for cruelty. This is the moral horror at the heart of this complex tale. Whilst emotions may serve as our moral compass, that compass can be skewed by the cultivation of immoral beliefs that incite unethical emotional responses when we are confronted with a people we have come to regard to as 'other' and not quite human. Emotions express our deepest values, though here, these values are corrupted into contempt for the appraised primitiveness and supposed animality<sup>128</sup> of the black figures. If we justify a corrupted emotional repertoire, we support that justification, as we saw in Chapter 1, by recourse to deficient intellectual deliberations, creating, in the process, societies that are cruel and barbaric to some, while privileging others for no good moral reason. This is in contrast to compassion, for, as I shall presently argue, compassion, tethered to a moral conception of the worth and value of all, would help inhibit these dehumanizing tendencies. We can see the effects of European beliefs of superiority in the colonization of Africa (around the world, indeed), the industrial scale murder in Nazi Germany, the near total suppression of the individual under Communism and in gender based violence, a phenomenon which has universal expression. Our emotional evaluation of, and resistance to, a bad state of affairs signals that there is a problem that ought to be addressed. As I react with compassion, pity

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<sup>128</sup>See Nussbaum's (2004a) account of our abhorrence of animality and our primitive shame.

and horror at the treatment of the Africans, I am aware that my reactions stem from my beliefs that such treatment can never be justified on any grounds.

### 3.1b *The Road.*

I experience similar reactions to McCarthy's *The Road*, but for very different reasons. This is a post-apocalyptic narrative of complete and irreversible devastation. Here the forests are dead and dying, the cold unceasing, each day unremittingly grey and wet, a landscape everywhere covered in the ash of all that once lived and thrived before the earth was destroyed by a mysterious catastrophic event. Life's fecundity has been erased. Here the gloom never lifts, and is too dense for shafts of sunlight to penetrate. There are few humans left alive, and those that remain are either 'bad' or ambiguously 'good': save for the boy who is unremittingly good.

While the man and his son travel the road south in the hope of reaching the sea and a chance of survival, their journey is dangerous and likely to end their lives if they are caught by the cannibals that lie in wait to trap and devour human flesh, a devourment of a different kind from that depicted by Conrad. Human flesh is all there is left on which to survive. Despite the pitiless landscape that yields nothing but what the man and his son can scavenge from the dead cities and countryside, the values they carry from the old world remain alive and strong. The bond of love between father and son never diminishes. Their love for each other, and the love the man still feels for his dead wife and lost life, is an essential part of their morality, as well as of their capacity to be other-regarding when they encounter living creatures on their journey south. The bonds of affection, compassion, empathy and pity are deeply embedded in their natures, evident in the sparse dialogue between them, and in the thoughts of the man while he worries about his son's health and their survival. The boy, despite his years of grueling hardship, remains sensitive and compassionate, optimistic that the fire within will guide them to the right people and to a place of survival. One senses that if humans can somehow survive then they will need the values this child embodies if they are to prosper. The boy and the father have retained their dignity, refusing to trade it in for immoral goods, here, human flesh, or what is left of any survivors' goods. The compassionate person is usually sensitive to suffering, vulnerability, and other harm-related concerns<sup>129</sup>. Like the boy in the *The Road*, she is motivated to

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<sup>129</sup>Goetz et al. (2010:366) assert that the research on compassion's role in alleviating suffering and reducing harm is unequivocal. Batson (2011) takes a similar view.

remedy unjustified suffering or need. For these reasons, and as I have already emphasized, compassion can be viewed as the ‘guardian’ (Haidt, 2009) of the moral domain of suffering and harm, and the virtue required for justice. Schopenhauer (1999) takes justice and loving kindness to be the ‘cardinal virtues’<sup>130</sup> (p.148) so described because from these all other virtues follow. As justice and loving kindness are rooted in compassion then compassion, for Schopenhauer, is the foundation of all morality.

In *The Road*, there is a reversal of a different kind from that in *HD*. In the permanent gloom, a world ineluctably dimmed as if by ‘glaucoma’ (p.1), the protagonists carry ‘the fire’, as the boy calls it, within them. This fire guides their decision-making and consequent conduct, helping them adhere to their values and dignity, despite unimaginable adversity and their pointless quest. Unlike the cannibals who farm human flesh, harvesting limbs while their owners are still alive, or eating babies as soon as they are born, the man and his son eat nothing that is alive. They pursue neither the dog that will soon be killed, nor the boy sighted in a window. They do not pursue Old Ely, whom they chance upon on the road, and to whom they offer, on the boy’s insistence, a tin of fruit from their meager stores. As the boy is suffering terribly for not saving another child, his father knows that he will suffer even more were he to refuse his son’s request to give Ely a tin of fruit, even though this source of rare sweet sustenance is a few tins away from being forever absent. In giving the fruit away, they know they hasten their death. The glaucoma that settles on the *HD* has a different texture and substance: here we see the compassionless, frenzied pillaging of Africa’s rich resources by men who have abandoned all moral scruples for wealth and adventure. In *The Road*, humans have come to the end of what they can exploit. Memory will soon cease, abandoned to extinction, which is why, perhaps, the characters, apart from Ely, have no names: there will be no-one to record or honour their existence.

Justice, of course, is alien and pointless in *The Road*. If there is justice, one might reason that humans have received their just deserts if the environmental catastrophe has come about because of their reckless activity. There is no justice, of course, for the other creatures that inhabited the earth ‘cannot be put back’ or ‘made right again’ (p.307). In what sense, then, can we talk here of the inviolability of the person? Even in this glaucomic world, the man and the boy embody the inviolability that Rawls (1971) believed

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<sup>130</sup> As Schopenhauer observes, while justice was recognised as a virtue in the writings of classical antiquity, loving-kindness was not so regarded. Kindness was formulated as the greatest of all virtues in Christianity which Schopenhauer regards as Christianity’s greatest ‘merit’ (p.164). The maxim of ‘caritas’ (charity) is to ‘help everyone as much as you can’ (p.167).

underpinned the principles of justice and the well-ordered society, though, in these narratives, society either does not exist or is being destroyed. Advancing the good of others is not possible, and there is no Rawlsian (1971:397) public conception of justice to regulate the activities of either humans or institutions. However, unlike in a *HD*, there is, in *The Road*, a concept of the moral worth of persons and of self-respect in the hearts of the man and his son, strained to the limits of physical, psychological and emotional endurance though they may be. Both narratives also illustrate how human life fares when the concept of good disappears from our personal interactions and from society. A good human life, as conceived by Aristotle, will be one in which humans will be free to plan their life as they please, realizing their capacities and talents to the fullest degree possible, provided that these plans do not infringe the plans and, hence, the dignity and self-respect of others<sup>131</sup>. Our plans are chosen by deliberative reason<sup>132</sup> and plans, ideally, give us pleasure in their pursuit and realization. The desire to pursue a life plan that enables us to train and educate our capacities to a satisfactory, if complex degree, is a deep psychological feature of human nature (Rawls, 1971:379). The extent to which we can pursue our rational life plans is an important constituent of our flourishing or eudaimonia and a crucial part of the process of realizing our latent capacities will be shaping our moral emotional development. Education has a key role to play here. Children must not only be able to discern and to realize their own plans and goals, they must be educated to respect those of others, to cultivate the virtues of respect and tolerance, and to nurture judgements that allow them to enjoy a healthy emotional repertoire that includes, for example, moralised compassion, appropriate shame and anger. Schools are a major site in which fair procedures can be institutionalised and individual rights, capabilities and mutual respect honoured and developed. And of course, given the context of Scotland's curricular reform, Curriculum

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<sup>131</sup>NE.VII and X. I am not, here, suggesting that Aristotle is an egalitarian. The account here is about the realisation of an individual's goals and plans, and exercising one's powers in order to effect a good life, a project which Aristotle endorsed and commended in achieving eudaimonia. The idea is also captured by 'eudaimonia'. At 1098b21-2, Aristotle says, 'our definition is also supported by the belief that the happy man lives and fares well; because what we have described is virtually a kind of good life or prosperity'. If a man is 'eudaimon' we know something about how well he lives, what he does, and how he makes a success of his life. Rawls (1971) developed his moral theory from that of Aristotle, as well as from Kant, Rousseau and JS Mill. As I am discussing Rawls and his conception of the good society, it seems reasonable to discuss such a society in terms of realising 'a good life', since the basic institutions of society are amongst the primary means by which we can realise such a life. Moral persons, with morally cultivated emotions, are important to realising a just society.

<sup>132</sup>Following Rawls (1971:366-367), deliberative rationality entails choosing a plan after careful reflection on all known facts, imagining all the possible outcomes and selecting a course of action that would best realize one's desires. It also entails knowing one's desires, beliefs and capacities. Of course, no-one has perfect information, but the point is that a rational person will have a good idea of what she wants to achieve and how best to achieve it given her particular set of circumstances. The processes of reflection can go wrong for many complex reasons, but the plan is still a rational one if the agent does her best with what is available to her at the time.

for Excellence, pursuing and nurturing in children the values I emphasized above, ought to be commensurate with, and embedded in, achieving academic excellence and excellent character. These values are inclusive and are critical to developing not only good citizens who can contribute to the maintenance of a healthy liberal democracy, but also moral citizens who are concerned for the wellbeing and flourishing of all. One way in which we can show respect for others, to value others as ends-in-themselves because they have intrinsic worth, is to cultivate in young people an appropriate emotional repertoire and I turn now, in particular, to the cultivation of moralized compassion by briefly exploring some elements of Kantian ethics that relate to dignity and human worth; and secondly, by discussing the morphology of compassion.

### **3.2 Kantian Dignity, Compassionate Individuals.**

Each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override. (Rawls, 1971:3)

In Kantian ethics, human beings, as rational beings, have dignity. To have dignity means to have supreme value, incomparable quality, and unconditional worth, and having dignity is an end in itself. In the *Groundwork* (4:435, hereafter *GW*), Kant claims that everything has a price or dignity. What has price can be replaced by an equivalent item. Human interests and skills have a market price or a ‘fancy’ price. So artistic talent might command a market price whilst wit and imagination will have a ‘fancy’ price. Dignity, however, has no price. Further, morality and humanity expressed as, for example, benevolence arising from duty, have an inner worth. On this account rational beings are ends in themselves who ought not to be used as a mere means by others but whose value we acknowledge by respecting their intrinsic worth<sup>133</sup>. One of the most profound questions in ethics is how is what is good related to what is right or what we ought morally to do. There are good things which should be promoted, such as the relief or prevention of suffering and good health, such goods being good ends in their own right, and so providing reasons to wish to acquire them. Our attitudes towards achieving good ends, and preventing bad ones, are also important and so, fearing illness or premature death, we take steps to promote good health.

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<sup>133</sup>For a fine discussion of the mere means argument see Parfit (2011) who calls possible acts and events good ends when they have intrinsic properties or features that give us reasons to want them to be actual (p.236). However, good things do not have to be an act or event to be valued and actualized: books, works of art and people can be good and can command our respect, admiration, feelings of wonder and awe. Knowing which attitudes and acts are called for in a given situation is partly about knowing how to value something.



If we regret our part in an act that caused suffering, we try to ensure that such an act does not occur again. What is important to my thesis is not to apply a full account of Kantian ethics, for example with respect to how we ought to behave in terms of our duty and the maxims of the categorical imperative, but to take his conception of personhood and relate that to a moral account of emotions, and to compassion in particular.

### 3.3 The Morphology of Compassion.

Compassion has three cognitive elements<sup>134</sup>. The first element is the belief that the suffering is serious. In Aristotelian terms, it has ‘size’<sup>135</sup>. The situation occasioning our compassion threatens the flourishing of another individual through events such as death, illness, disability, disfigurement, loneliness or abuse and neglect. Nancy has recently made a pernicious claim about her teacher, one that, if she persists in saying it is true, could certainly see her teacher suspended for inappropriate conduct towards a minor. Her accusation may be an occasion for alarm, fear, even anger. At the same time, we may pity her for seeking status amongst her peers by accusing her teacher of a sexual act. However, we might also be moved by compassion when we learn that Nancy has witnessed her mother being abused again the previous evening. Nancy’s aggressive behaviour, her inability to flourish academically, socially and emotionally, may stem from years of watching her mother abused by her father, and, knowing no other way of interacting with her peers and adults, having internalized the behaviour as normal and appropriate. As a secondary school teacher of some years, I have watched boys and girls behave like this many times. The reasons are often a lack of discipline, parental indulgence, or violence, neglect and abuse in the home<sup>136</sup>. Such behaviour undoubtedly meets the criterion of ‘size’, the necessity for what is happening to be judged ‘serious’ and so it matches this first cognitive element of compassion. Nancy’s acceptance of brutality as a normal fact of life may also be accepted by her mother who is unable or unwilling to resist her treatment. Additionally, ill-treatment of young people by their carers is not, of course, unknown.

A study carried out by the NSPCC and Bristol University in 2009<sup>137</sup> reported that 25 percent of girls and 18 percent of boys reported some form of physical partner violence,

<sup>134</sup>In setting out this account of compassion, I draw predominantly on Nussbaum’s (2001) analysis.

<sup>135</sup>NE.1386a6-7.

<sup>136</sup>See Okin (1989, 1994, 2004, 2005); Charlesworth et al. (1991); Estlund and Nussbaum (1997); Minnow (1997); Nussbaum (1999a); Charlesworth and Chinkin (2000); MacKinnon (2005,2006).

<sup>137</sup>A follow-up to this report was discussed on BBC Radio 4’s *All in the Mind*, 1<sup>st</sup> June 2011. It focused on children not in school who were in foster or residential care. Like the first report in 2009, Christine Barter,

and that experiences of family violence and wider peer intimidation were risk factors associated with physical partner violence for both girls and boys (pp.54-55). The researchers noted that violence has serious consequences for the wellbeing of victims and their future life prospects, and is associated with a range of adverse outcomes for young people, including poor mental health, depression and suicide (p.8). This is clearly a child welfare issue, and one that is differentiated by gender (pp.179-178). This is a theme I return to in Chapters 4 and 7 but it has implications for teachers who might be, understandably perhaps, too quick to dismiss or punish bad behaviour without due consideration of the nature of and ‘seriousness of any surfing that may have occasioned that behaviour. Importantly, too, if young children are not acculturated to the importance and value of self-respect and dignity, and are not habituated to compassion’s other-regarding force, we can see how the judgement of size can go seriously wrong. Many of the girls in the NSPCC (2009) report acquiesce to the controlling behaviours that underpin their boyfriends’ violence, handing over their mobile phones, for example, to be checked and locked away overnight. While the girls do not like the behaviour or the control, they judge it as ‘normal’. When girls as young as 11 accept this level of control and violence, having in many cases been brought up witnessing the same treatment of their mothers (and fathers, though violence against men by their partners is under-reported), the size of the problem gets lost in the struggle to cope. The boys and girls report adaptive responses<sup>138</sup> to their suffering that is neither educative nor ennobling, reinforcing coercive and oppressive practices that perpetuate inequalities by gender and age (the bigger the age gap, the more abusive the relationship is likely to be). I shall return to the importance of compassionate institutions shortly and in the final chapter where I shall demonstrate that abuse disfigures the development of the child in so many pernicious ways<sup>139</sup>. For the moment, my point is that it is important that we can see the ‘size’ of the event, to judge its importance with sensitivity, insight, and with a concern for eudaimonia. Nancy needs fair and reasoned judgement from her teachers, as well as admonishments that will encourage her to modify her behaviour. What she also needs, but is less likely to receive, is for her peers and teachers to accord her dignity and respect, to acknowledge that her life is difficult and that

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the lead researcher, commented that the most worrying thing was the normality of violence and control, though victims may not like it, and that the victims were as young as 11 or 12.

<sup>138</sup>See Nussbaum (2000a, 2006) for an account of adaptive preferences.

<sup>139</sup>See also the Marmot Review (2010) of health inequalities in England and its conclusion that inequalities in educational outcomes are as persistent as those for health despite many decades of policies aimed at equalising educational opportunities. Evidence on the factors influencing educational attainment suggests that it is families, rather than schools, that have the most influence on a child’s wellbeing (p.18). That does not, of course, mean schools should stand back and do nothing to ameliorate this, and other, situations.

she needs to be cared-for and cared-about<sup>140</sup>. I doubt she would want our pity but she is more likely to get pity than compassion because she is so often regarded as inferior to her class mates or, at best, beyond their help.

The second cognitive element of compassion is non-desert or blamelessness and this is a more controversial claim, over which there has been some dispute<sup>141</sup>. However, I shall suggest that the subtleties and complexities of compassion are much greater than, for example, Crisp's (2008) critique of Nussbaum's (2001) version of compassion suggests. On Nussbaum's (2001) analysis of compassion we take into account the particulars of the situation, the narratives that cluster around the event, along with a variety of judgements and beliefs about salience, fault, responsibility and the event's 'size'. These will all affect the judgement of [non-] desert and blameworthiness. We also bring to bear our own values, cultural norms, personal history, and our dispositional and occurrent emotion states. Emotions, as I suggested in Chapter 1, rarely consist of a single judgement of a single event. Crisp (2008) rejects the non-desert requirement and provides three examples, two of which I discuss here, that, he argues, counter Nussbaum's claims about non-desert and blamelessness. The Old Testament God (p.282) punishes ill-doing while feeling compassion as great as the mercies he has the power to grant: desert can, therefore, form part of the compassionate evaluation, according to Crisp. I am not sure how this example shows that non-desert is not required for the belief component of compassion. There are different evaluations involved because, importantly, there are at least two emotions which are being felt: compassion and love. God may, firstly, judge that ill-doing has to be punished (desert), while also, secondly, judging at the same time, that sinners deserve his compassion because they do not understand or do not have the wisdom to understand what God requires of them: they are weak. Thirdly, God also loves those he has created and, in loving them, is moved by compassion, despite their sins, to set them on an honourable path. Sin deserves righteous punishment in order to cleanse the sinner of his sins. Recall that Man is born into sin because Adam and Eve found sin in the Garden of Eden, for which all subsequent human beings must be punished. There is, in a sense, an element of non-desert, of non-blame, as Nussbaum (2001) suggests. Of course, God's creatures have a

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<sup>140</sup>CfE Health & Wellbeing Outcomes, and the various documents that have been written about CfE since 2004, yield numerous references to care, confirming its importance in fostering good relationships in school communities, with the expectation that the 'mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing of everyone within a learning community should be positively developed by fostering a safe, caring, supportive, purposeful environment that enables the development of relationships based on mutual respect' ([http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/Images/health\\_wellbeing\\_experiences\\_outcomes\\_tcm4-540031.pdf](http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/Images/health_wellbeing_experiences_outcomes_tcm4-540031.pdf)).

<sup>141</sup>See, for example, Deigh (2004), and Nussbaum's response (2004c) to Deigh; Crisp (2008).

will and they are rational: they can make choices about good and bad actions, and they must take responsibility for those actions. God exacts punishment as something that ought to be done, as being deserved. It is in the gift of those with power to grant mercy. Mercy is not an emotion, and so not the same as compassion, but it is an intended and deliberated course of action. Mercy is an act that grants reprieve or help to the sufferer or victim by a person with the power to provide this. It is an act of leniency. Seneca, the renowned Stoic, urged cultivating clemency, as he called mercy, as a good and expedient thing for humans to do (1-2), but especially for a Prince (in this case, Nero) as a virtue of willing restraint exercised by the freedom of judgement. Clemency ‘makes its determinations not according to a set formula but according to what is fair and good’ (2.4.3). The opposite of clemency is cruelty. Does God, in Crisp’s example, wish to be cruel? The Old Testament God is already wrathful and revengeful. Pity, which is often confused with clemency, Seneca condemns as a vice of the mind that blunts rationality with gloominess (2.4.4-6.4).

God may therefore, taking a fourth option, grant mercy because he is inclined, perhaps, towards leniency, given the innate weakness of his fallen creatures, so taking account of their human nature. Mercy, and the compassion which guides his act of mercy, is expressive of his love for his creation, as well as his own greatness and dignity. Perhaps in this case, the emotion which respects the element of desert may be the evaluation we make because of love, rather than compassion. It might also be God’s pity that moves him to grant mercy. Mercy, as an act of leniency, may call upon love, compassion, pity or sympathy or no emotion at all if one acts in the fashion of a Stoic. There are occasions when ‘non-desert’ may seem appropriate depending on the ‘size’ or weight of the act, or the level of punishment to be meted out. If we believe that punishment is merited, and no other facts can be brought into consideration, compassion will be blocked and without compassion as a guide, deserved punishment may become cruel.

Crisp (2008:236) gives a second example of a kindly but misguided woman who defrauded a company. Such a person, he argues, can elicit our compassion even while we attribute responsibility to her. I agree, but if we are neither vindictive nor vengeful, we might also want to ask some questions that take us beyond the mere fact that she committed fraud. Might she have had a seriously ill child in need of unaffordable health care? Did she defraud because she enjoys a lavish lifestyle? Did she defraud to wreak revenge on her boss who failed to fulfil his promise of promotion? If they are known to us, the motivations and intentions that lie behind bad actions will influence how we feel towards

the individual. As I proposed for the first of Crisp's examples, the Old Testament God, the evaluation of compassion may, following Nussbaum (2001:311), attend to the 'non blameworthy increment'. A close family friend killed his children while driving under the influence of alcohol. I instantly felt deep compassion for him while berating him for being so foolish. To wake up from a coma to be told that you are responsible for the death of your own children must be a torment to one's conscience, and one that will likely endure until death. It was not that the friend was undeserving of punishment, or that he was not culpably negligent: he was but, nonetheless, I felt compassion. That compassion was aroused by the thought of the pain that would probably always oppress him, by the knowledge he was a good father, a generally decent person, who made a fatally bad decision that day. The shame, regret, disgust and sorrow at the pain he caused his family was surely punishment enough. That he felt such deep remorse aided my compassionate concern. Had he been indifferent, his callousness would have aroused my contempt. As with the other examples, the important point here, again, is the different evaluations that are taking place, because different aspects of the situation are being assessed, at least by those who seek to avoid simplistic and precipitous judgements. Accordingly, a number of emotions with different intensity come into play. There may be reproach and anger at the decision to drive; pity and contempt at the loss of reason; compassion at the magnitude of the event, and the grief and despair that will ensue; and compassion for a friend who would go on to become afflicted by depression, ill-health and alcoholism. His family will suffer in similar ways, but without the effects of guilt and remorse.

To sum up this part of the discussion, whilst compassion does suggest non-desert it need not be devoid of the judgements of fault and responsibility, as Crisp (2008) proposes. The thought content of the emotion is that bad people, as well as good people for whom we are more likely to feel compassion, can elicit our concerned regard even when they are culpable. It is the size of the ill-fortune and the consequent punishment that need to be set side-by-side to see how just the outcomes are. Bad characters may themselves be the product of malign forces, such as a poor upbringing or entrapment into sexual slavery or drugs misuse. For anyone concerned to be compassionate and discerning, well-reasoned rather than judgmental and harsh, these are important moral considerations that should temper our judgements and beliefs about fault and desert.

The third cognitive element of compassion is that of 'similar possibilities', an awareness and an acceptance of one's own weakness and vulnerabilities, without which we will be immune to the hardships of others. Rousseau (1993) expresses this well in *Emile* where he

exhorts Emile's teacher to make him aware that all the misfortunes of the world can be equally his and that there is no need to rely on birth, health or wealth to avoid hardship. Wisely, Rousseau also warns that, though we are inclined to inure ourselves, or avert our eyes from, classes of people we either do not like or pity, we should not cut ourselves off from people who are not similar to us. Showing compassion only for those who are superficially like us limits social cohesion and is iniquitous to the development of compassionate institutions. Nussbaum (2001:315-322) extends Aristotle's account of similar possibilities to include not just those we love, but also people distant from us in terms of class, race, religion, ethnicity, custom and sexual orientation. However, even this important requirement is not enough for compassion. Similar possibilities have to be placed within the eudaimonistic judgement. That is, in taking the vulnerability of another as an important part of one's own flourishing, we are more likely to be compassionate because we take the other further into our own circle of concern. If we are prepared to accept that hunger, disease, disability, death, infringement of rights, are as likely to happen to us as to another or that, had we been in a different place and different circumstances we may have been similarly placed, then we have something in common: vulnerability to the vicissitudes of life. So as to lessen the effects of life's hardships we need to think about how we share resources, to ask questions about policy and social arrangements, to examine whether our schools, and other public institutions such as the courts, the police, Social Services, and so on, are just and fair, concerned with wellbeing and flourishing. How we might tackle these hard questions is the subject of the next section on just institutions.

Finally, following Nussbaum, compassion has a fourth element: it contains complex beliefs about the object that will be evaluative and eudaimonistic, expressive of our goals and plans, as well as of things that have value for us. Compassion entails the cognitive evaluation that an event has occurred that is negative in some respect, that is serious and that has some weight. In experiencing compassion, we will have an empathic projection of similar possibilities, meaning that we will recognize that another person's vulnerability is a possibility for us, acknowledging that we could find ourselves in similar circumstances. Compassion, further, is elicited when there is a judgement, or belief, that the suffering of the 'object' (as in the object of the emotion, here the person for whom we feel compassion) is undeserved or excessive. The eudaimonistic value is concern for the other, that is 'other-concern', a desire to alleviate suffering. Compassion is an acknowledgment that anyone, however situated, is vulnerable to misfortune and it is linked to other emotions such as love and sympathy, hate or anger, when these are aroused by perceived injustices. In

compassion we recognize others as distinct, autonomous beings whose welfare we value as one of our own important ends, just as we might in love, but compassion results from our perception that the other person is in need, suffering in some way. This, I suggest, is moralised compassion. In perceiving another's need we are motivated to alleviate the suffering, not for egoistic reasons, but because we value the other person's wellbeing and capacity to flourish as an end in itself. Nurturing moralized compassion, understood in this way, can aid us in acting well, in promoting the right attitude so that we have an attitude of respect towards others. A person's life, argues Kant, has a kind of value we ought to respect in ways that do not conflict with wellbeing and autonomy and our capacity to act morally gives us dignity. In valuing our own *and* other's dignity, we treat others in ways to which they could rationally consent. As the opening excerpt for this chapter suggests, the acts that have degraded the natives to black shadows of disease and starvation in Conrad's HD revile human dignity and autonomy, and revile above all the morality inherent in humans as rational beings.

I argued in Chapters 1 and 2 that, contrary to some views, both ancient and contemporary, emotions can be rational and reliable forces upon which to make judgements and to act. I argued the case there that we could rely on emotions for ethical deliberation and for choosing the right course of action. This applies to compassion although I shall acknowledge that advocating compassion as an ethical guide is controversial (Nussbaum, 2001; Goetz et al. 2010). While there are strong advocates<sup>142</sup> of compassion as a good foundation for ethical deliberation and treating others as ends in themselves, there are equally vociferous opponents<sup>143</sup> who regard compassion as an unreliable source of moral judgement, believing it is fickle and antithetical to personal achievement because of our propensity to care for our own close kin and those close to us in class, rank or position. However, as I will presently show, compassion, as an other-regarding emotion, need not be fickle. As Nussbaum (2001:405) has suggested, our ability to be other-regarding, to empathise in a morally appropriate way, is influenced by how we are situated in relation to others. Sharp separations, as in hierarchies, or with favoured and less favoured groups, impede morally appropriate concern, as Conrad perceptively observes in HD. Whites appropriate all the privileges deemed to be their natural entitlement as a result of their superior 'race', while the blacks are treated with brutality and savagery. Compassion, the

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<sup>142</sup>Rousseau (1993); Schopenhauer (1995); Smith (2007); Nussbaum (2001); Scheler (2009); Batson (2011), for example. Compassion is a central theme in Buddhism and Christianity, with adherents to those faiths seeking a way of life that promotes meaningful and coherent existence in community with others.

<sup>143</sup>Nietzsche (2003,2008) and, on some accounts, Kant, although he is not entirely dismissive of compassion, as we shall see shortly.

guardian of the moral domain of suffering and harm, has fled from the souls of the white men, for they feel no compunction to alleviate the suffering that they inflict and neither do they seem to feel pity or sympathy for the blacks.

### 3.4 Other-regarding Emotions.

‘Other-regarding’ emotions are emotions concerned with the good or bad fortunes of others, and may be classified as ‘happy-for’ or ‘sorry-for’. They may also be understood as ‘pro-social’ emotions. Major emotions in this group include joy, delight, compassion, pity and sympathy. Another group of emotions in the ‘happy-for’ class are those classified as ‘ill-will’ emotions such as gloating, schadenfreude and variants of pity. The family of emotions that are considered to be other-regarding<sup>144</sup> and negative with respect to the bad fortune of others are invariably subject to lexical interchange, there being no settled agreement on how the terms are to be defined and subsequently used. One emotion term is frequently substituted for, or elided with, another, as in compassion for and with pity, sympathy or empathy. The pre-eminent enlightenment thinkers on ‘empathy’ are Adam Smith, David Hume and, later, Arthur Schopenhauer and Max Scheler. It is important to note that empathy was variously described as compassion, pity or sympathy with empathy emerging at the beginning of the 20th century from the psychological literature<sup>145</sup>. These philosophers understand that ‘empathy’, as a mechanism of imaginative reconstruction, disposes us to altruistic concern which contemporary social and moral psychology has now amply demonstrated (see Batson, 2011, especially his appendices which summarise the range and kinds of experiments that have empirically tested the empathy-altruism connection). Some of the ambiguity in the terms that Smith and Hume use may result, as Sherman (1998:83) suggests, from the lack of technical terms to mark the distinction between empathy and sympathy and empathy and pity. Smith suggests that in ‘empathy’ we are ‘bringing the case home to our own breast’ (2010:12). However, despite his astute account of empathy, Smith seems to compromise it with a judgement of credit-worthiness or ‘propriety’ of emotional response. The guiding terms are ‘reasonableness’ rather than empathic understanding for its own sake. The focus is on how the emotion seems to be from the perspective of the spectator.

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<sup>144</sup>See Ben-Ze’ev (2000).

<sup>145</sup>Kant referred to compassion as ‘sympathy’.



Rather than use these emotion terms generally to denote a class of emotions, and in preference to assuming a generalised understanding of what I mean when I refer to compassion or pity, I will apply the general framework for what an emotion is to the specific emotions, compassion, pity, and sympathy, that are the object of my interest here. Each emotion has a complex narrative structure, elicited by perceptions of value that may or may not propel us to act. The evaluation common to all of these other-regarding emotional states is that there is suffering that arouses feelings of concern or distress in the onlooker, who, depending on her perception of a threat to the other's wellbeing, may be moved to act in some way. If, how and to what degree the onlooker acts will be qualitatively different depending on whether the onlooker feels pity, sympathy, empathy or compassion. If the onlooker feels pity for the sufferer, for example, she is likely to judge that there is little to be done, or that help can only be given in limited or restricted ways. Pity often contains evaluations that the sufferer's position is unalterably inferior, she is responsible for the position she is in, or there are limited resources available to alleviate the suffering which, in any case, would probably not make much difference to the welfare of the individual (Ben-Ze'ev, 2000:329). For example, giving money to beggars might seem a lost cause, even while we pity their plight. We may pity too, the exhausted creatures in a *HD*, and, for different reasons, the father and son in *The Road*. When father and son come across an underground store of food, clothes, gas and clean water, one can feel their joy and relief at finding such rare goods: they can feel clean, warm, well-fed and well-dressed humans who are, for a while, safe from the hunters. There is some relief from the permanent gloom and cold but it also seems so pointless, putting their life in danger because their store might attract unwanted attention and it prolongs, too, their existence in a dead world. We feel pity because their situation is hopeless: short of a miracle (and the father asks God where he is now) their situation is irredeemably unalterable and they are bound to die from pollution and starvation. We may also, however, feel compassion because this is a calamitous misfortune that neither the father nor his son brought about. And we may feel both compassion and horror because the planet's ecology, eons in its evolution, has been unalterably changed in mere moments, and will slowly cease to exist. So, we may feel compassion brought about from our judgement of undue, undeserved and excessive suffering and pity at the hopelessness of the situation.

So these other-regarding emotions are not always mutually exclusive. I can feel sympathy, pity and compassion for the father and his son in *The Road* but in being aroused by compassion, we judge that the suffering is undeserved or brought about by ill-luck; it is

serious rather than trivial<sup>146</sup>. Sympathy might attract our attention, drawing us closer to the other, but without compelling us to act or hold our attention for long. We might need another, stronger, emotion, such as compassion. In compassion, we are frequently compelled to act because of the pain we feel at another's misfortune or vulnerability. Compassion rivets our attention onto the person's unfortunate situation and draws from us a deeper commitment to help than sympathy or pity might elicit. Unlike compassion, pity can take up an egoistic perspective when it judges that the other's situation is not one that it would like to share, shrinking the boundaries between self and the other so as to avoid the fear of imagining a similar possibility. Compassion and sympathy, by contrast with pity, push the boundaries of the self out towards the person, extending those boundaries beyond one's own immediate circle and interests (Nussbaum, 2001:300). Blum (1980) suggests that compassion involves a sense of shared humanity, promoting the experience of equality because '... it forbids regarding social inequality as establishing human inequality ... by transcending the recognition of social inequality' (p.512). This is a key element in the moral force of compassion. Properly cultivated as an element of our moral repertoire, compassion can have the strength, stability and reliability that Kant thought could only be guaranteed by a sense of duty and compliance with the categorical imperative. However, this needs to be qualified. Because humans are endowed with reason, Kant asserts, we have an indirect duty to cultivate the natural feelings, such as sympathy and pity, and a duty to sympathise actively in the fate of other's sufferings (*DV*:6:457). Importantly, too, compassion, if cultivated as a moral force within our emotional repertoire, can compel us to act contrary to our moods and inclinations, to become a guiding condition for other-regarding, non-instrumental, beneficent acts.

I am now starting to anticipate some of the arguments of the following chapter. Emotions, their evaluations, appraisals, beliefs, and ties to objects of value, may be moral if they are cultivated to connect to the interests or welfare of others. To be appropriately compassionate requires that we be contextually attuned, reasonably well informed, able to judge issues of moral salience and to be responsibly concerned<sup>147</sup>. It requires, in addition, being discerning of, and sensitive to, the other person's understanding and interpretation of events, and her special vulnerabilities, anxieties and fears. It entails having respect for the

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<sup>146</sup>Aristotle, *Rh*.1385b13ff.

<sup>147</sup>Carse (2005) raises similar concerns with respect to care-giving that should be morally contoured. Morally contoured empathy, on Carse's account, is a form of 'reasonable partiality' (p.169) which is necessary for determining proper moral regard.

other's dignity, and treating her personhood with a comparable degree of respect as we would our own. To be appropriately compassionate, we need imaginative insight and empathic attunement, what Blum (1980) speaks of as 'imaginative reconstruction ... imagining what the other person, given his character, beliefs, and values, is undergoing (p.50). Acting towards others appropriately, treating as irrelevant their appealing or unattractive qualities, and avoiding self-absorption, incuriosity or vicarious possession are a demanding set of tasks. And, assuming we have all these qualities and talents, we need to be able to regulate and fine tune our compassionate concerns: to have, and to cultivate, good habits in this regard, and to avoid our own prejudices. This, I suggest, is a picture of morally structured compassion. This is moralised compassion informed by practical wisdom (See Sherman, 1997:chapters 6-8).

There may be immediate objections. These are demanding tasks and require moral discipline. Few could always sustain such moralised compassion. We are easily swayed by other concerns, selfishness, ill-temper, pressure and obtuseness. We are apt to console ourselves with 'wishes and dreams which prevents one from seeing what is there outside one' (Murdoch, 1971:57). It assumes that we have proper respect for our own personhood: what if we do not? What if we happen to be self-sacrificing, self-effacing, fragmented, timid, easily aversive to unappealing people, or people who hold ourselves in very high self-esteem? A further problem, as highlighted by Sherman (1998:110), is ensuring that we do not simply endorse 'another's self-conception or self-conceived means' of justification or amelioration. Such are the contingencies of ordinary human life: we will all have to contend with lapses in character and less than desirable actions.

Supported with a normative and defined conception of the teacher's role, however, the principles entailed in moralised compassion may act as guides towards appropriate concern and action. A teacher confronted with an angry Nancy, a cheeky Charlie, or a shy Janet, might differentiate between them with respect to present or general circumstances, their character and particular needs. She might sensitively and respectfully discern the reasons for Nancy's anger, Charlie's cheek and Janet's shyness, interacting with them accordingly in felt compassion that is conveyed to the pupils. Circumspect acknowledgment of these pupils' concerns can help build mutual trust and respect. The content of Nancy's angry outbursts at Charlie, or her sneering remarks about Janet's studiousness, and the reasons why she makes them, could be re-directed to a general discussion of the harms of such remarks. Such remarks could be challenged on the grounds that anger or sneering, as Nancy's self-conceived means for ameliorating her status at the expense of Charlie's or

Janet's, is ill-conceived. This is the usual practice, but such behavior could also be examined and explored by means of an aptly chosen literary analogy.

The moral principles inherent in compassion accord well with both Aristotelian<sup>148</sup> eudaimonistic and Kantian ethics (Annas, 1993; Sherman, 1997). Ancient ethics, according to Annas (1993), specified that the final good included virtues that were other-regarding in non-instrumental ways. To fulfil the goal of a happy life entails helping loved-ones, friends and distant others for their own sake as an intrinsic good, out of genuine altruistic regard<sup>149</sup> and independent of one's own interests<sup>150</sup>. This differs from Kantian ethics on the question of how one takes into account the interests of others. The general formula of the Categorical Imperative is that we should act on maxims to which all could rationally assent, perspicuously emphasising our standing with others in terms of our actions (*GW*:4:432; Sherman, 1997:8). What motivates us to act is the end we have in mind: these can be personal ends or ends we share with others, but they must be in conformity with the law of humanity (*GW*:4:431). The kingdom of ends, as a system of all good ends, and as a 'commonwealth of reason' (Sherman, 1998) constitutes the laws of freedom because free citizens make their own (self-legislating) laws, and because the content of those laws enjoins us to respect each citizen's free use of her own reason (*GW*:4:433). What Kantian morality seems to tell us is that we ought to promote others' agency for its own sake and to beware actions that limit the agent's capacity to act autonomously with dignity intact. Kantian morality also tells us that the shared reason of persons takes into account the interests of others. Misfortune can limit the agent's autonomy to act when, for example, she is depressed or grieving. Misfortune can inhibit reason when she is ill, hungry or diseased, or limit opportunities for rational deliberation when her plans are thwarted by, for example, considerations of gender or by domestic violence. We begin to see how moralised compassion, in a commonwealth of reason, might start to provide us with the capacities to evaluate the salience and size of another's misfortune. Moralised compassion enables us to act on our judgement that another's wellbeing, and her capacity to exercise her rational faculties, matters to everyone's flourishing in our shared humanity.

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<sup>148</sup>Aristotle does not use 'compassion' but speaks instead of 'pity'. We are good or bad on the basis of our virtues, rather than on our emotions (*NE*.1105b29-31). Pity is an emotion along with anger, fear and friendly feeling (*NE*. 1105b21) while virtues are states of character (*NE*.1106a11). However, virtue lies in the way an emotion is felt (*NE*.1105b31-1106a2). The virtue of an emotion is in the extent to which we 'feel them at the right times, with reference to the right objects, towards the right people, with right motive, and in the right way' (*NE*.1106b15-25). Yet there are emotions for which there is no mean such as spite and malice (*NE*.1107a9-14). That is, one cannot feel spite or malice at the right time, towards the right people, with the right motive and in the right way.

<sup>149</sup>See, too, Batson (2011).

<sup>150</sup>Though personal and other-regarding concerns can be combined in a final scheme of ends.

Some might immediately charge that Kant was a philosopher who eschewed the emotions as capricious, partial and unable to ground moral practice for all persons in all circumstances (Sherman, 1997:32) but this is not so clear cut. In the *DV*, Kant acknowledges that emotions are important sources of information on urgency and moral salience, providing a kind of moral ‘play-ground’ in which to discern how to translate our judgements into moral practice. Kant’s concern is that emotions such as compassion are concerned with ‘feelings, impulses and inclinations’ (*GW*:4:434). While Kant does not provide a systematic analysis of the emotions in his moral philosophy, he does not, however, forfeit emotions’ epistemological function. What Kant desires is to place morality safely outside the bounds of human contingency, shifting it into the metaphysical realm of abstract *a priori* laws that cannot borrow from the specific circumstances of anthropology and become corrupt doing battle with duty (*GW*:4:390). Kant, with Aristotle, requires that emotions be subject to slow and steady cultivation or habituation, engaging practical reason at all stages. Kant distinguishes between emotions on impulse and emotions cultivated as supports for duty, shaped by reason (Sherman, 1997:33). For Aristotle, not only are emotions varied and complex, they can also be subject to a considerable degree of control and consent, being ways of assenting to beliefs and construals (and see Nussbaum, 2001). Sherman (1997:145 referring to *GW*:4:394) proposes that Kant’s list of qualities that are conducive to the goodwill, such as wit, courage or perseverance, can be expanded to include cultivated emotions. Emotions can, accordingly, serve Kantian ethics well by directing modes of attention to circumstances that elicit our response and motivate us to act. Of our duty to humanity to cultivate the sympathetic natural sentiments to give us a richly varied response to need and misfortune, Kant tells us that:

It is therefore a duty not to avoid places where the poor who lack the most basic necessities are to be found but rather seek them out, and not to shun sick-rooms or debtors’ prisons and so forth in to avoid the sharing the painful feelings one may not be able to resist. For this is still one of the impulses that nature has implanted in us to do what the representation of duty alone might not accomplish.  
(*DV*:4:457)<sup>151</sup>

Compassion, as I have argued following Nussbaum (2001:19), is the ‘hook’ by which we can think and act morally. The discussion of compassion should now pave the way for a discussion on how public institutions can tap into and develop this important emotion so as

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<sup>151</sup>Kant, of course, does not analyse the emotions, stating neither their cognitive components nor accepting the importance of external goods to wellbeing. See Nussbaum (2001:378-383) for tensions in Kant’s ethics stemming from his Stoic and non Stoic interests.

to contribute to the creation of well-rounded, other-regarding moral individuals. Here I will draw on the work of Rawls, particularly his *Theory of Justice*, in order to place compassion within an enriched account of moral philosophy in public life. I will also refer back to *HD* and *The Road* as relevant themes emerge. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of empirical research on the benefits of cultivating compassion enhanced by habit and practical reason<sup>152</sup>.

### 3.5 Just Institutions.

Political institutions are human, and they are only good if they are alive in a human way. If we produced an excellent social welfare system and yet dead, obedient, authority focused citizens, that would be a failure no matter how well the system worked. (Nussbaum, 2001:404)

Institutions, including schools, and societies that permit individuals the freedom to pursue their life plans, are just to the extent that they do not uphold a single conception of what a good plan or a good life is, but support a rich plurality of interests or an ‘overlapping consensus’ (Rawls, 1971:340)<sup>153</sup>. As human beings are as varied in their capacities and interests as they are in their realization, just institutions are those that embody the principles of equality and liberty, and celebrate diversity when that enables their members to flourish. That is, individuals are accorded the respect to have the freedom to choose their life plans and all are equally entitled to do so<sup>154</sup>, provided they conform to just actions and the legitimate claims of others. In just societies and within just institutions, individuals acquire the desire to act justly, argues Rawls (1971:399), and acting justly is part of our good because it is regulative of our rational plan of life. By agreeing to follow the principles of justice, citizens in a well-ordered society ensure that everyone’s good is included in a scheme of mutual benefit (p.156). Publicly expressing respect for one another, recognizing the value of all citizens and their endeavours, ensures that self-esteem is supported and enhanced. What emerges from these considerations is that citizens desire to treat one another not merely as a means to a desired end, but as ends in themselves<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>152</sup>NE.1103a25; 1144b30-32.

<sup>153</sup>Whilst citizens will have different conceptions of justice, they will agree to common political principles as well as to the principles of justice.

<sup>154</sup>Though for obvious reasons children have less freedom than adults.

<sup>155</sup>Aristotle, *NE*. See also Kant’s *GW* (4:429) in which he introduces the second formulation of the categorical imperative, The Formula of Humanity: *So act that you use your humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means*. Given that Rawls is influenced by Kant’s moral philosophy, there will be a consonance with Kant’s conception of the person. See *TJ* ‘Main Grounds for Two Principles’, for example, ‘The contract view as such defines a sense

and, in so doing, a desire to resist the temptation to gain at the expense of others for that would lower not only their prospects and aspirations, but also their self-respect and confidence in their own worth. If citizens (pupils, private individuals) are less favoured, exploited for the good of others while their own life plans are subverted, then the principles of justice will be undermined. Such a diminution in self-esteem and in the worth of one's goals and aspirations has moral implications for emotional and psychological wellbeing. The implications for educators are clear. The moral psychology, including the emotional wellbeing, of those we teach should be one of the aspirations at the heart of the educative enterprise.

Following Kant, Rawls stressed the central importance of self-respect to morality, in particular to just institutions in the well-ordered society. Following Aristotle, he also argued that just institutions were those that developed the class of goods defined as the human excellences<sup>156</sup>. Self-respect is a primary good in that it expresses our value and confidence in what we can do and what is worth pursuing. Without it:

... nothing may seem worth doing, or if some things have value for us, we lack the will to strive for them. All desire and activity becomes empty and vain, and we sink into apathy and cynicism. (Rawls, 1971:386).

Lacking self-respect, it becomes very difficult to cultivate and express our moral emotions in the right way, to the right extent, at the right time. We must have a rational plan that satisfies the Aristotelian Principle<sup>157</sup> and which others can affirm and enjoy as being of value in some way (beautiful, intricate, intelligent, altruistic, charitable, and so on<sup>158</sup>). A companion effect of the Aristotelian Principle, and one which has important moral worth, is that the more we are able to experience our own way of life, that is fulfilling and expressive of our desires, goals and talents, the more we are likely to enjoy and encourage the attainment of others (p.387). The goods that constitute the excellences, such as imagination, beauty and the pursuit of knowledge are characteristics and abilities that it is

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in which men are to be treated as end and not as means only' (1971:57). It is Rawls' argument that the two principles of justice, equality and fairness, can convey the idea of 'ends in themselves'. Because the difference principle 'interprets the distinction' between treating men as a means only and treating them as ends in themselves, members of a just society will 'forgo those gains which do not contribute to everyone's expectations' (p.57). To fail to regard persons as ends in themselves is to impose a greater burden on those already less favoured. See in addition Part Three 'Ends' and 'The Good of Justice' (p.460; p.458).

<sup>156</sup>CfE includes in its curriculum 'Health and Wellbeing'.

<sup>157</sup>See Rawls (1971:374-5; p.379). This is the exercise of realised capacities which are enjoyed more as their complexity increases, satisfying novelty and variety of experience that includes room for ingenuity, personal expression and individual style. Motivation is a very important component of this principle in moving us to excellence and in attracting the esteem and respect of others who appreciate and enjoy our efforts. These psychological events help account for our judgements of value.

<sup>158</sup>The virtues, in other words.

rational for everyone to want to have, since they are goods that enable us to realize satisfying plans of life (p.389). These are goods that others can appreciate and participate in to some extent (music, say, or a work of art). The excellences, activated by meaningful activity, support self-esteem and are a prerequisite to the conditions of human flourishing. Stunt a person's capacities and we stunt their prospects to flourish. Taken more broadly, stunting the capacities of anyone for the benefit of a few, or a group of people for the majority group, a continent for a country, is inimical to society and human wellbeing. This is one reason why I would argue that references to the kind of literature I mentioned above, singling out apposite excerpts that reveal the effects of thoughtless or calculated inhumanity, can strengthen moral reasoning and act as a valuable means of enhancing and sensitizing moral emotional capacity<sup>159</sup>. Promoting and supporting our human goods or excellences, along with self-respect and emotional health, is a vital task of schools and my project here is to argue why this is so, and to do so propose ways in which schools can complement and, as necessary, ameliorate the moral life of a child that has begun at home.

In order to ensure that institutions are secure with respect to justice, it is necessary to cultivate the moral sentiments as I have sought to show. Cultivating our emotions limits our egoistic impulses. It also helps us to act in accordance with the just claims of others to become, in effect, other-regarding, concerned with their welfare. All this depends, of course, on how we cultivate our emotions. Kupperman (1999<sup>160</sup>), for example, discusses what is needed for good character, including pleasure and pain, the formation of habit, and the development of moral imagination. Speicker (1999) makes the well-understood point that parent-child relationships are crucial from the start of a child's life, and that the acquisition of 'multi-track habits', which he defines as the capacity for 'appropriate rule observance in different circumstances' (p.213), will aid in the formation of good character. We understand from these two contributions what is generally required for the cultivation of good character, and how, in general and in widely accepted terms, character is to be achieved via parental and other social relations. In educational settings later in a child's life, for example in secondary schools, many aspects of character will be well formed and so the task of shaping character becomes more challenging. But one way in which we might shape character, as I have suggested and will develop further, is to use the 'suggestive capacities' of literature (Zamir, 2007:11) to [re] imagine or [re]conceive certain beliefs or attitudes, to cultivate perception, discernment and responsiveness.

<sup>159</sup>I shall be arguing, in the concluding chapter, for the importance of literature in this regard.

<sup>160</sup>In Carr and Steutel (1999), 'Virtue Ethics and Moral Education', Part 6: Educating the Virtues: Means and Methods.



Reading to cultivate such habits of perception, discernment and responsiveness would need to be an active task, a form of practical learning in which we might engage in 'vigorous conversation' (Booth, 1988a:136). One might see the extracts from a *HD* and *The Road* as examples of texts we could use for such a task as well as examples of the philosophical arguments that I am seeking to make.

The argument I am pursuing rests on the assumption<sup>161</sup> that compassion and pity are natural dispositions but that they require cultivation and nurturing over time through moral education. Smith (2006), Mill (2006) and Rawls (1971) focus on shame and guilt as moral forces that stabilise our dispositions to act justly. In experiencing moral shame we acknowledge that we have not lived up to our excellences in some way, thereby reducing our value and esteem in the eyes of those whose regard is important to us. In feeling guilt, we acknowledge that we have acted contrary to our sense of justice, transgressing the right claims of others (p.391)<sup>162</sup>. While I will discuss the moral importance of these emotions on our attitude and conduct in Chapter 6, I will follow Rousseau (1993), Nussbaum (2001) and Batson (2011) on focusing on compassion and empathy as powerful, motivating forces to act for the good of others. When we fail to perceive the needs of others and consequently fail to alleviate their suffering; when we fail, indeed, to accord them dignity and respect, paying scant regard for their self-esteem and sense of worth, we are in some metaphorical sense reducing them to mere shadows wandering, sitting or marching in some glaucomic gloom of apathy, listlessness or drudgery, as if in a *HD*. In these perceptions and in our emotional responses we need to get the judgments right and to view them with appropriate size. It is not everyone and everything that should elicit feelings of compassion as that would be indiscriminate and obtuse, liable to cause harm if it effaces concern for self, becomes overridden by self-concern, produces immoral action or becomes a threat to the common good (Batson, 2011).

Having now set up the philosophical argument for compassion, I will turn briefly to empirical evidence that suggests compassion is worth pursuing and cultivating. Batson's latest work (2011) provides a wealth of data and experiments that demonstrate the importance of compassion to flourishing and wellbeing. Batson and his colleagues have conducted over thirty experiments to test empathy, the term used by these researchers to

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<sup>161</sup>Though there is plenty of empirical evidence to show that the capacity for compassion/altruism (as it is termed in psychology and biology) is a very strong feature of human psychology. Humans value the welfare of others as an end in itself, and act to alleviate suffering for its own sake, not necessarily for egoistic gain. See Batson (2011).

<sup>162</sup>See also Wollheim (1991); Ben-Ze'ev (2000); Nussbaum (2001); Smith (2007).

denote altruism. Empathy is other-concerned in the way compassion has been defined here and Batson (2011) acknowledges that he is in close agreement with Nussbaum's (2001) analysis of compassion in humans. The basic experimental design is one in which randomly assigned participants are induced to feel either high or low empathic concern for someone in need with conditions varied to test the participants' motivation to help<sup>163</sup>. Empathic concern for someone in need was either manipulated, measured or both (2011:110). While there are, of course, limitations to laboratory research, the results demonstrating altruism, Batson claims, are 'consistent and clear' (2011:109).

Further, citing the meta-analyses of Miller and Eisenberg (1988:167), Batson argues that compassion may lead to less aggression towards the person for whom empathic concern is felt. What Batson calls empathic concern, in which compassion dominates, may be an important antidote to child abuse and neglect, as well as to sexual assault. Clinical interventions aimed at increasing empathy have been found to reduce the reported likelihood of abuse, rape and sexual harassment by men identified as being at high risk (Schewe and O'Donohue, 1993; Schewe 2002;). Compassion, further, has been seen to reduce the likelihood of derogation and blaming victims of injustice. Batson (2011:168) suggests that people who believe in a just world are more likely to derogate a victim, motivated by a desire to maintain a belief in a just world. By blaming victims of poverty and injustice, derogators can reassure themselves that they deserve their relative advantage, as did the Europeans who 'believed' they were saving the savages from their own brute existence in a *HD*.

### 3.6 Concluding Chapter Three.

Compassion, as I have argued, characteristically involves imaginative dwelling on the condition of the other person, an active regard for her good, a view of her as a fellow human being, and an emotional response of a certain degree of intensity (Blum, 1980:509). What is the correct moral response to the baby on the spit or to a scene as grim as the one depicted in the excerpt that follows? In exposing young readers such as Nancy to scenes such as the baby on a spit who was, perhaps, fathered to provide food, and to the many scenes of awful destruction in the *HD*, we can use compassion to act as our ethical guide in matters of valuing.

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<sup>163</sup>See Batson (2011), Part II and appendices B-G which summarise the procedures and results.

Huddled against the back wall were naked people, male and female, all trying to hide, shielding their faces with their hands. On the mattress lay a man with his legs gone to the hip and the stumps of them blackened and burnt... In the night he heard hideous shrieks ... (Cormac McCarthy, 2006:116)

The response would be one of horror, surely, at the idea of harvesting human flesh for consumption. Hunting, harvesting and predating human flesh, albeit *in extremis*, is not simply the breaking of a taboo, it is the extreme expression of instrumental use: cannibalism. These are the kinds of questions that can be explored with Nancy and I shall do so in the subsequent chapters and, especially, in the concluding chapter.

From compassion, I now turn to the ethics of care and to a more focused examination of how emotions are gendered. Care ethics have been seen as a feminine ethic because care and caring tends to fall to women, sustaining the traditional view that women are more caring and compassionate than men, and are more emotional than men because of their close attachments to those they care for. This traditional function has not served women well in the sense that it is a role that has kept women at home, interrupted or curtailed their careers, and it has commanded far less respect than professional activities, traditionally dominated by men in the public sphere. This traditional function too, and the emotions associated with the caring role is, I suggest, where the asymmetries of power between men and women begin. Further, many prominent care theorists such as Noddings<sup>164</sup>, Gilligan (1982) and Slote (1997) base their ethics of care on empathy and sympathy, rather than on compassion. While empathy can be an important route to compassion, it is problematic on the construction that I will offer. Batson (2011) argues that empathy, or perspective taking, is not enough because it, empathy, need not induce compassion or sympathy because no value is placed on the other's welfare. When we argue for care in schools, as in Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence, there is also the danger that we might 'care' by 'perspective taking' and by following procedures that lack a genuine regard for the value and dignity of our pupils. On some accounts, care, as I shall argue next, is not enough and neither is empathy, the main emotion that is advanced to support the calls for care. An action, as I have tried to show here, is morally virtuous only if it is guided by the correct motives. Actions that are begrudging, as can occur in caring, are likely to be indifferent or callous to need and I shall pursue this line in the next chapter.

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<sup>164</sup>See References for numerous dates.

## Chapter Four: Why an Ethic of Care Needs Moral Theory.

*... the world is split in two, between those who are handed power at birth, at gestation, encoded with a seemingly random chromosome determinate that says yes for ever and ever, and those like... all of us who fall into the uncoded otherness in which the power to assert ourselves and claim our lives has been displaced by the compulsion to shut down our bodies and seal our mouths.*  
(Carol Shields, *Unless*, 2002:270.)

### 4.1 Introduction.

Aristotle sagely perceived that external goods are essential for happiness, for realizing eudaimonia, because we cannot do ‘fine deeds without any resources’ (*NE*.1099a34). As a basic need, and as an external good, care is instrumental to our emotional development, wellbeing and happiness. If we accept that care in a ‘real society’ is care-giving and care-receiving (Nussbaum, 2004b:105) then good care is a basic need: we cannot survive or flourish without it<sup>165</sup>. We all need care. The emotional and material care we receive as children and adolescents helps to form our personalities and habituate our moral and intellectual virtues over time. Care is also a feature of all our lives, all of the time, though how much care we will need will vary depending on our circumstances and health<sup>166</sup>. Taking care of others, while respecting their status as persons with dignity and agency and interacting with them in morally appropriate ways, is a virtue. As dependents, receiving care that is loving, compassionate and respectful is essential to our development and wellbeing.

Care, then, is important and if, following Nussbaum (2001:1), emotions ‘shape the landscape of our mental and social lives’ then the emotions involved in care and caring, receiving or providing care, merit attention. Because emotions such as empathy, sympathy and compassion are so deeply implicated in care, my claim, here, is that a theory of care is important to an understanding of the emotions and any theory of care will require an adequate understanding of the emotions. Deferring a detailed consideration of these emotions to the following chapter, I focus here on the philosophical constructs of care to prepare the ground for subsequent work on the emotions and gender. I seek to defend the claim that an ethic of care ought to combine the *human* capacities for reason and emotions, and that care should be grounded in justice. That defence, as we shall see, is important if

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<sup>165</sup>Parts of this chapter are now published in a paper on care (Hedge and MacKenzie, 2012a). I wrote the text that appears in both this chapter and that paper.

<sup>166</sup>Kittay has written extensively on care and dependency, (1999,2002, for example). See also Fisher and Tronto (1990); Tronto (1993,2010); Held (1995,2006); Houston (1990); Nussbaum (20004b, 2006).

we are to uncouple emotions from gender and to locate the cultivation of healthy emotions in a view of personhood that affords each individual dignity and respect. Held (1995:131) maintains that, without care ‘there would be no persons to respect, either in the public system of rights...or in the family’. But who should do the caring? And, given its ubiquity, what does caring mean for emotional wellbeing and the cultivation of morally appropriate emotions?

In the vast majority of cases, it is still women who do the caring work. Despite the fact that increasing numbers of women participate in the public sphere of work, and have achieved greater equality in law with men, women have retained the burden of care in the private sphere of the home. Carol Gilligan (1982), in her much cited work on how men and women reason differently, presented us with two opposing voices: one of inclusivity and other-regarding values (Amy) and one of autonomy and self-regarding values (Jake). The thinkers of those voices, Gilligan concluded, reasoned differently. Here we had empirical evidence, from an eminent psychologist, that women think differently from men. Certainly women are often raised to be other-regarding, to be carers and to express the range of emotions stereotypically associated with caring work. The still prevalent belief that women are different from men probably accounts for why they are still expected to do the caring at home and, to a large extent, in the public sphere too. Women, after all, are more emotional. Not surprisingly then, women care and feel more, certainly differently, from men. Men, because they reason autonomously and self-interestedly in order to assert their independence, are perhaps less able to do the work caring requires. Men seek justice: women seek to care. It has been claimed too, that care does not need justice; it does not need to be fair but needs only to be imbued with good moral ‘feeling’ (Noddings, 1984<sup>167</sup>). But as Kittay (1999:19) has observed, the ‘simple opposition between care and justice is inadequate to the needs of our moral and political lives’. So, too, is the simple dichotomy between men and women’s reasoning and emotional natures, a dichotomy that is fixed ‘beforehand on some general presumption, that certain persons are not fit to do certain things’ (Mill, 2006:151) and then fixed again, as Shields (1992:270) would say, at ‘gestation’. The dichotomy is perilously effective in sustaining ‘innate’ sex and gender difference. Also skeptical about the division of justice and care, Okin (1989) suggests society regards the ‘innate characteristics of sex as one of the clearest legitimisers of different rights and restrictions, both formal and informal’ (p.5). Whilst I will re-thread

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<sup>167</sup>Noddings (1992,1999,2010) asserts this about care throughout the body of her work, emphasising ‘receptivity’ and ‘engrossment’, though she now uses the term ‘receptive’ instead of engrossment.

these themes together again in Chapter 5, they reveal, for the moment, reasons to deliberate on care.

On any account, care is ubiquitous. Care is reliant on and revealing of the emotions it entails and so, as noted above, care merits investigation to further understanding of emotions. But because care can be so gendered, it also provides an opportunity to start interrogating emotions as gendered constructs. Importantly, too, care reveals ways of looking at emotions and personhood, at the relationships between individuals and those who care for them and for whom they care. On some accounts, however, care raises issues of personhood and justice that sit uncomfortably with my arguments to date on emotions as rational and cognitive. I argued, in the last chapter, that we should seek to cultivate moralised compassion as a route to nurturing and stabilizing the appropriate moral attitude to perceptions of suffering and harm. I might, just as well, argue that we should seek to cultivate moralised compassion as a route to nurturing and stabilizing the appropriate moral attitude to care. But, on some accounts of care, my argument will not hold. Nel Noddings' seminal work on the ethics of care continues to be influential and widely admired<sup>168</sup> but her theoretical postulations raise substantial issues of concern for my account of emotions<sup>169</sup>. Contrary to Noddings' assertions, I argue, in accord with previous chapters, that moral and abstract reasoning is a necessary component of good moral judgement and consequent action and that *both* sexes should exercise these capacities. I will suggest, too, that unless an ethics of care is carefully formulated and supported by moral theory, it cannot prevent the exploitation of women as carers, empathisers and self-sacrificers, let alone discourage asymmetries of power in close relationships. I focus on Kant and Rawls defending, contra Noddings and some other feminist critics, the rationality, abstract processes, universal principles and the importance of the individual. Drawing on the work of Onora O'Neil, Jean Hampton, Marilyn Friedman and Barbara Herman, I contend that Kant's and Rawls' work offers us a more useful and nuanced approach to concepts important to cultivating the emotions than is sometimes perceived.

The argument here is complex and, in addition to this introduction and a conclusion, comprises eight sections. Initially, I examine Noddings' arguments on care, moral reasoning and universals. I then, contra Noddings, support the ideals of liberalism,

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<sup>168</sup>Noddings continues to be, arguably, the most frequently cited theorist with respect to care in education. Halstead (2010:266) claims that moral education programmes focussed on caring are becoming more widespread in the USA, and Engster (2004:114) goes so far as to suggest that Noddings provides the 'landmark work on care ethics'.

particularly its defence of reason, its focus on the individual as a person of dignity worthy of respect, and the importance of emotions in moral behaviour, arguing that these ideals are important to upholding women's equality. In the third section, I add another layer to my argument by drawing upon Kantian and Rawlsian ethics, putting these to work in a version of care that does respect the role of moral principles and reason. I argue for a care ethic that promotes dignity, emotional, physical and mental health, all of which support agency and autonomy, allowing an individual to be caring but, simultaneously, separate and unique with a sense of her own legitimate entitlements<sup>170</sup>.

From this discussion, I am then in a position to defend a view of the individual which is not, by definition, a 'masculine' construct but one that ensures caring does not erase who an individual is or subsume her into others' needs and claims. If we wish to support equality and justice for women, we ought, I assert, to base our theoretical arguments on a further important principle of liberalism: namely, human entitlement, and that entitlement begins with a conception of a person as a separate and unique being, whose emotions are an integral part of her being. In section five I return to Rawlsian ethics to add a further layer to my defence of a liberal view of personhood suggesting that some feminists, including some care ethicists, have ignored his focus on the moral, social and emotional development of the child and that they have, mistakenly, sought to distinguish care from justice. This leads me to section seven and further consideration of Rawls' moral theory and the importance of emotions in moral development and, consequently, good care. Finally, in section 8, having undertaken the philosophical groundwork summarised above, I consider gendered morality, applying Herman's (1993, 2008) articulation of moral theory to care, and using Nancy as an illustration of those principles in practice. My argument is, in sum, that if women are socially and culturally moralised to be the primary carers, and to express or repress certain emotions, it will be hard not to conform to that role, thus perpetuating the belief (and its effects) that women are different from men. I end this section by suggesting why we should embrace moral reasoning and principles of judgements in order that our choice of action will be influenced by our commitment to principles, values and moral rules. To care well, I shall suggest, requires being sensitive to what is morally salient in our environment and being able to reason well on what to do next.

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<sup>170</sup>Jean Hampton writes very well on this issue. Selfless people, having 'few ends of their own' (2007:54), are in danger of losing themselves and indirectly harming those for whom they care (p.40). Hampton also advocates Kantian and Rawlsian contractarian principles for feminism because their ethical procedures have an inbuilt respect for the intrinsic worth of the person.

An ethics of care that repudiates the value of reason, rationality, autonomy or individualism, and fails to see the fertility of liberal ideals, surrenders, on the account provided here, some important tools by which to judge the quality and justice of care relations and the cultivation of morally appropriate emotions. The consequence to women may be that they:

...fall into the uncoded otherness in which the power to assert ourselves and claim our lives has been displaced by the compulsion to shut down our bodies and seal our mouths and be as nothing... . (Shields, *Unless*, 2002:270)

I shall now ask how we can prevent women falling into uncoded otherness.

#### **4.2 Care, Moral Reasoning and Universal Principles.**

Here, I indicate ways in which Noddings' work on care deviates from the account of emotions offered to date, focussing on ways in which her theory fails to respond to my call for the cultivation of morally appropriate compassion across the sexes. Noddings maintains that moral reasoning is masculine, dominated by the father, promoting individualism, autonomy and independence. By contrast, she claims, feminine reasoning embodies relatedness and receptiveness, attitudes which an ethics of care should embrace. Rather than start with moral reason, Noddings would have us begin with ethical 'feeling' so as to sustain moral relationships. The ethic of 'feeling' she advocates is similar to that of the non-cognitivist theorists on emotion we encountered in the previous chapters and means I have difficulty following her arguments. She does not specify what an emotion is other than to say that we can understand it as 'attention, empathy and motivational displacement' (2010:9-10) but sometimes the order is reversed, as when a 'dramatic hurt' occurs. Ethical caring can occur 'as if' natural caring were 'active' because there is a 'deontological' element to caring. Further, and against Michael Slote (2007), with whose work she is generally sympathetic, we might not feel empathy for a person who has aroused our disgust but we will still 'feel' for this person. In other cases, we can be 'prepared to care' if the carer feels 'sympathy' for the other. I am unclear how such an approach could help us with abusive relationships and how a carer could move a relationship in a 'healthier' direction. Women continue to care for their partners, suffering years of abuse, in the belief they can alter their behaviour. On Noddings' (2010) account, we could ask whether we can 'sustain' the relationship. Very many women do, at great cost to themselves and their



children. I am not suggesting that Noddings would endorse abusive relationships, but I am suggesting that her analysis does not help us understand how to rectify inequalities and does not move us very far with respect to cultivating emotions, the single most important capacity in relations. Whilst I shall say more about this in the next chapter, I will argue here, as previously, that it is difficult to have relationships without thought. But now I will go further: an ethic of care without reason and thought is inimical to women's emotional wellbeing.

If emotions are, as Nodding (1984:34) suggests, but 'degradations of consciousness'<sup>171</sup> lacking reason, judgement or appraisal, then women, being emotional creatures, are no better than the sheep that graze contentedly on grass and flowers. Noddings asserts that we should not include moral principles in caring because they necessitate the application of universal judgements which disdain the particularity of local context. Following, O'Neill, I reject Noddings' account of Kantian and Rawlsian ethics and her take on universalism, which I regard as simplistic. Noddings (1984:2) has argued that ethics has been dominated by the 'father' with its 'principles and propositions' rendered into terms such as 'justification, fairness and justice'. The nature of ethics, further, has a 'mathematical appearance', proceeding as if governed by the 'logic of geometry'<sup>172</sup>. Ethical decisions are made on the basis of logico-mathematical reasons (2007:223) and in 'solitude' (p.2). Here Noddings is attacking Kant and his abstract complex system of moral thought, which, she claims, is individualistic, autonomous, and independent<sup>173</sup>. Masculine moral reasoning is seen as being a solitary endeavour, requiring no input from other reasoning beings. This contrasts with women's forms of reasoning which are completed, following Noddings, in relation to others. Because moral reasoning is masculine, the mother's voice has been silent but is required in an ethics of care because it will provide 'receptivity, relatedness and responsiveness' to concrete situations (1984:2). Noddings does not want to say that logic has no place in reasoning, that women cannot embrace it, or that men cannot adopt a more feminine form of ethics. Rather, she wishes to present an alternative that does not begin with moral reasoning, but an ethic of care which 'long[s] for goodness' (p.2) or the

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<sup>171</sup>Noddings citing Sartre.

<sup>172</sup>This claim is reminiscent of Carol Gilligan's (1982:37) analysis of moral reasoning as a mathematical equation. It is Jake's view, one of the participants in her research, that if one has to choose between oneself and others, 'three-quarters goes to oneself'.

<sup>173</sup>See also Noddings (2002a,b; 2005) for her criticisms of Kantian ethics. For defences against charges that Kant ignored the role of emotions, relationships in favour of reason, detachment and impartiality, see Guyer (1996) who argues that by the 1790s Kant had made some essential modifications to his moral epistemology and psychology to include the role of 'feeling' in the motivation of duty and to virtuous acts. See also Sherman (1995,1997); Baron (1997); Herman (2002,2008); Johnston (2007) and Wike (2011).

‘moral attitude’ and in which what matters is the preservation and sustenance of relationships and connectedness to others. Noddings (1984:3) eschews so-called masculine moral reasoning because we understand ‘ethical feeling’ without needing to ‘prove’ anything, and without, she continues, seeking ‘moral truth or knowledge’. I shall return to these issues throughout this chapter, but, for the moment, Noddings compares this ethical feeling to a child learning to ride a bike. The child does so without ‘propositional knowledge’ (which Noddings does not explain), relying initially on a supportive hand, until she gradually acquires the skill to ride the bike alone. The child simply comes to know, presumably, by practice and without deliberation.

There is a problem with this analogy. Learning to ride a bike is not an ethical act. That much is clear. But learning to ride a bike is not necessarily without critical thought, reflection, or emotional response, and the child needs much more than the steady parental hand. One learns to ride a bike in a series of steps, becoming skilled in the act through trial and error and by learning to read the environment in which one cycles. Contrary to Noddings’ child rider, and following Aristotle’s ethics of character habituation, a novice cyclist would have a goal in mind towards which she must work, to learn to ride, to have fun and to avoid accidents. She will need some critical conception of the need to vary her trials and learn from her errors (see Sherman, 1989:177-181). Being aware of the goal requires critical capacities and cognitive processes: taking instructions, making mistakes and learning from them, estimating distance and slope, adjusting the gears to take account of these, adopting the right posture, and so on. A beginner cyclist is, in some rudimentary ways, similar to a beginner in ethical and moral life and, I suggest, that virtuous action and moral development, which require the kinds of actions discussed, are complex activities combining critical judgement with sensitivity to context and to the appropriate emotional responses on how best to act<sup>174</sup>. The child is not an empty jug. She has a character, a set of dispositions and the capacity to reason, all of which need to be stimulated, educated, and habituated to be sensitive to the particular and the general. How she reacts, why, and to what extent, will depend on the maturity of her deliberative capacities, and her ability to weigh up and choose among competing possibilities. The role of the parent or educator is to help prepare the child for the choices and judgements she will make<sup>175</sup>.

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<sup>174</sup>The line of argument I follow here continues to be influenced by Aristotle’s analysis of the critical habituation of character for which the cultivation of the emotions is prerequisite. See the *NE*.I and II, and also Sherman (1989) and Hursthouse (1999).

<sup>175</sup>On this point, see for example, *Pol.*1253a12, *NE*.1143b11-13.

Noddings (1984:5)<sup>176</sup> claims that we want to be moral because we wish to remain in caring relations and ‘to enhance the ideal of ourselves as caring’. Everything in the caring relation depends on the ‘nature and strength’ of that relationship since ‘absolute principles’ are not there to guide us in our actions. Noddings rejects the need for moral principles, arguing that these could dilute or obliterate care because they imply exceptions which, one presumes, might weaken the relation of carer to cared-for and might act to ‘separate us from each other’. Presumably, separation might occur because the abstract reasoning demanded for moral principles will be a solitary process that could isolate us from our intimate relations. Moreover, in being guided by principles, she avows, ‘we may become dangerously self-righteous when we perceive ourselves holding a precious principle not held by the other’. However, an awareness that we hold a ‘precious principle’ that is not shared by the carer, or the cared-for, need not lead to self-righteousness, especially if our moral principles hold to respect for the other. Noddings also rejects the ‘universal’ (1984:7) in moral judgements and the Kantian injunction that all acts be universalised so that all in similar circumstances can accept them. Noddings is sceptical of such judgements for two reasons. First, she claims, the attention of the one-caring should not be on the judgement or the particular act, but on how ‘we meet each morally’ (p.5). Secondly, each encounter is unique with cultural and personal differences resulting in different forms of care that will not lend themselves to universal judgements (2007:223). This latter point is a familiar concern amongst particularists and those sceptical of universal principles. However, the application of universal judgements or principles to ‘all’ is not, as has been traditionally understood, an ‘all’ that is necessarily standard, homogenised and rigid over place, culture and time. It is an ‘all’ that, following O’Neill (1996:52), will vary with context and so be potentially applicable to each different caring encounter.

Particularist reasoning is, itself, a form of ‘insider’ reasoning (O’Neill, 1996:53) which does not allow for reasoning that includes differing and multiple audiences. Particularist reasoning, O’Neill argues, may be ‘ethnocentric’ or ‘egocentric’, confined to one’s group or community, or to oneself. The point is that while some reasoning may, of course, be restricted to those we know intimately or well, contra Noddings, I suggest that there are forms of reasoning which should be extended to groups beyond our intimate circles, drawing us away from insider to more universal reasoning. Each caring encounter is universal and human, reflecting our sociability, our vulnerability, our need for care and to care, our desire for intimacy, as well as our propensity to exploit, abuse and neglect from

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<sup>176</sup>The short quotations in this chapter are all from Noddings (1984:5) unless I indicate otherwise indicated.

self-interest or ignorance of human value. Universal reasoning, on such a view, can be both insider (what are the goals and plans of the individual or the community, how can I live with others?) and inclusive (how can different groups cooperate to follow principles and actions that are reasonable and respectful of norms and values taken generally and specifically?) so that we can ask what are to count as reasons for action and, for the purposes of this argument, what are to count as reasons to care. Caring, I contend, is a moral act because of the judgements it entails, because of the moral principles we draw upon and the reasons we give for acting.

However, there remain three major objections to universal judgements that pertain to (and beyond) care. First, such judgements, some feminists suppose<sup>177</sup>, may be dangerous to individuality and difference. Secondly, they may incline us to self-righteousness, as Noddings supposes and, thirdly, we, perforce, may reason atomistically, as many anti-universalists suppose<sup>178</sup>. The assumption is that universal prescriptions, proscriptions, recommendations or rejections are uniform in character. However, whether a principle is uniform or not is a matter of its content rather than of its range or form (O'Neill, 1996:75). A universal principle, as noted above, can be differentiated to take account of differences in circumstances or experience. All parents should care for their children in loving and compassionate ways, but that care will inevitably differ depending on the age, circumstances and needs of each child. The second rebuttal against anti-universalist fears is that even if the prescription, proscription, recommendation or rejection calls for some degree of uniformity of action or treatment, these are underdetermined (O'Neill, 1996:76) leaving agents or institutions free to decide the content of their universal principles<sup>179</sup>. Finally, universal principles need only apply in certain domains (O'Neill, 1996:75) or within restricted time periods. Within the domain of education, that all children must be taught to read, write and count is, today, a universal requirement but quite how teachers are to achieve literacy or numeracy will vary according to policy, custom, regional authority or country, as well as the needs of the individual pupil<sup>180</sup>. In sum, universal principles, such as those I draw on for a discussion of moral compassion and those upon which I argue

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<sup>177</sup>Gilligan (1982).

<sup>178</sup>See, for example, McIntyre (1981); Sandel (1982); Taylor (1985); Butler (1999).

<sup>179</sup>An example of a universal approach which is general and underdetermined is Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach. Governments should provide threshold levels of functioning but what that threshold is will be determined by the economic, social and political development of that country. This approach, which I return to later, can be applied universally and it is a 'species' of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Nussbaum, 2006:7).

<sup>180</sup>In Scotland, CfE specifies the outcomes and experiences for achieving literacy and numeracy at certain levels, but schools are free to adopt the approaches they think would best realise the aims of the curriculum.

good caring must rest, do not suppose the erasure of difference, individual need or context. Neither do they suggest treating people as atoms in an impersonal world, blithely reasoning in solitary confinement. Issues still remain, however, with Noddings' version of care and so I turn now to a defence of the ideals that are critical to a theory of care if it is to protect women against stereotypical beliefs, abuse or oppression; and if a theory of care is to support the cultivation of morally appropriate emotions for both men and women.

### 4.3 In Defence of Liberal Ideals

Here I defend the ideals of liberalism<sup>181</sup>, with particular respect to reason and the individual, critical elements of the liberal platform necessary to uphold my claims for the role and importance of emotions in moral behaviour. I shall suggest, too, that these ideals are important to feminism and to upholding women's equality, including their dignity and self-respect. Of course, liberalism, along with two of its key figures, Kant and Rawls has often been the target of feminist, postmodernist and communitarian attacks. These attacks are misguided. Despite their abstract theorizing (and I will return to this shortly), Kant and Rawls, for example, insist on placing the individual at the centre of their philosophies in order to reason on the best principles and practices that protect agency, dignity, freedom and equality. Further, and contrary to widespread and prevalent interpretations of liberalism, a focus on the individual does not preclude loving, caring, compassionate relationships. Taking their cue from Aristotle, human beings are social animals and the ethical formulations of Kant and Rawls make it very clear that human beings cannot be

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<sup>181</sup>Please note that I am not defending neo-liberalism which gives many of us cause for concern, not least because of its impoverished conception of the person, her interests, motives and relations to others. My interest is in justice, fairness, respect for the individual, social, political and economic equality and responsibility, opportunities to be and to do, according to one's own plan of life. In the tradition of Locke and Kant, I am interested in the moral sovereignty of the individual. Whilst Taylor (1989), McIntyre (1994) and Sandel (1998) have tried to evade the communitarian label, aspects of a communitarian line cause concern with respect to subsuming the individual and scant regard to issues of feminism and gender (see Friedman, 1989). Communitarianism and postmodernism also makes the error of tending to assume that liberalism, of the Rawlsian kind, constructs individuals as fundamentally self-interested and radically separate. This is a caricature. Individuals belong in communities, and communities make up society (Rawls, 1971, Chapter VIII). The theories of Hayek (1974) and Nozick (1974) which were adopted so enthusiastically in the UK, first by Thatcher and then by subsequent governments including Blair's Labour government, may have tarred all forms of liberalism with a neo-liberal brush. Taylor and McIntyre's critique of Rawls' 'asocial' individualism did not help, and neither did Sandel's (and McIntyre's) charge that such an individual was detached from her community and so devoid of community influences (see also Mulhall and Swift, 2003). However, Rawls was very clear about the importance of the community. In a *TJ*, the 'sociability of human beings must not be understood in a trivial fashion' and it was a truism that 'social life is a condition of developing the ability to think and speak, and to take part in the common activities of society'. Human beings, in fact, 'have shared final ends and they value their common institutions and activities as good in themselves' (1971:458 and see p79 also). Please see pps.137-9 here for a related consideration of Rawls' attention to individual as rational calculators of their own interest in the Original Position.

moral without close connection to others. As we saw in the previous chapter, to be moral is to take others' ends as our own, respecting the plans, aspirations and ends of other people, regarding people as ends in their own dignified right. That we have a moral duty to respect and promote the wellbeing of others is indicative of the importance of human relations to eudaimonia. Kant and Rawls, as I will demonstrate, value the unique individual in her many ties to others by contrast with an ethics of care, as formulated by Noddings, which may not provide such a platform and may not protect women against perniciously gendered emotions and the need to care, not least because Noddings' ethic demotes reason. Neither will such an ethic promote the equal standing of the 'feminine voice' with that of the 'masculine' (Gilligan, 1982<sup>182</sup>), nor end the gendering of emotions.

Noddings' preferred term for 'feeling with' someone was 'engrossment' which could be defined as empathy. However, she is reluctant to make such a link because the dictionary definition of empathy as a projection into another's situation is too 'rational, western and masculine' (1984:30). In the caring relation, one receives the other into oneself, temporarily, as if this receptivity of feeling and seeing were 'on loan' (p.30). While an ethic of care involves judgements about fact and feeling, it nevertheless allows for 'situations and conditions in which judgement (in the impersonal logical sense) may properly be put aside in favour of faith and commitment' (p.25). This is because 'caring is essentially non-rational' and 'one of the greatest dangers to caring may be premature switching to a rational-objective mode. Objective thinking is of limited and particular use', natural caring requires 'no moral effort' (1984:26).

The concern with abstract, masculine forms of reasoning, and concerns for principles of justice rather than an ethic of care and the role of emotions in women's lives is also a feature of Carol Gilligan's (1982) work. Like Noddings, Gilligan argues that women, being concerned with caring relationships and emotion in their lives, have a different moral perspective from men. Men, according to the male voices in Gilligan's data, have a 'justice' perspective, reasoning impartially and acting on universal principles without the messy distractions and distortions of emotions. Already, we begin to see the gendering of rationality and emotions. As emotions belong in the domestic domain, where much caring and nurturing occur, this is the woman's realm where she may reign as Queen of the particular and the concrete. Men, because they reason impartially, with reflection and

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<sup>182</sup>Gilligan's work was influenced by feminist neo-Freudian psychoanalytic theorists such as Nancy Chodorow (1978).

without emotion, are rational. On such an argument, the logic of this particular critique of masculine reasoning seems to be that women are too partial and too emotional to be rational. If we follow Noddings' (1984) articulation of the emotion of joy, for example, we may see why emotions are not conducive to rational thought (or conduct). Noddings tells us that while emotions may be 'facilitative in a non reflective way' and may restore one to a 'less stressful state', neither effect raises emotions to an 'exalted state': the emotional state remains a 'degradation, a necessary evil in a world too difficult for constant rationality' (p.143). Joy need not contain either 'belief' or 'conscious assessment' (p.137). This kind of thinking, along with Gilligan's analyses, gives theoretical and empirical, and hence apparently authoritative, support to beliefs that the differences between men and women are real. Women are irrational because emotional, men are rational because intellectual. Our differences are sexed and gendered<sup>183</sup>. The other logical outcome of this kind of feminist criticism<sup>184</sup> is that if women are not rational, and if rationality is the stuff and essence of morality, then women are not capable of morality. This is clearly absurd<sup>185</sup>. Criticisms of this aspect of liberalism, by ethicists such as Noddings and Slote (2007), are based on the belief that liberalism relies too much on autonomous, rational agents and traits which men prize and exhibit, and which women lack. However, this is to misunderstand the overall goal of the liberal tradition.

I am inclined, following Hampton (2007:154-55), to think of the liberal tradition as an umbrella for a variety of philosophies which derive from such diverse thinkers as John Locke (1988) and his political descendants concerned with protecting private property, free markets and liberty, while limiting the power of the state, and Jean Jacques Rousseau (1993) and his descendants concerned with inequality and injustice. John Stuart Mill (2006) tried to unify both strands of liberalism in *On Liberty*. John Rawls (1971) in *A Theory of Justice* sought to reconcile equal basic liberties with reasonable social and economic inequalities, provided these were to the greatest benefit of the least well-off<sup>186</sup>. There are, as a consequence of these different positions, differences of opinion on how we

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<sup>183</sup>I shall have more to say about sex differences in Chapter 5.

<sup>184</sup>And I am here talking of a feminist ethic of care that derives some of its influences from the ethics of Hume's (1985) moral sentimentalism which took into account intimate, involuntary and unequal relations and regarded justice as an important constituent of good relations. Hume also denied the pre-eminent role of rationality in morality: it was certainly not superior to passion and the role of reason was to direct our judgements concerning cause and effect with emotion motivating us to action (Book II, section III). Hume's Treatise influenced Kant's thinking (Guyer, 2006:12-13) and Kant, as noted, concluded that reason could not work unaided by emotion but reason was not subservient to passion as in Hume's ethics (1985:462). For an excellent critique of Hume's interpretation of the emotions and their causes see Pitcher (1965).

<sup>185</sup>Blum (1980); Homiak (2002); Wollstonecraft (2004) and Mill (2006) reach these same conclusions.

<sup>186</sup>Other important philosophers in this tradition include Hume (1985) and Adam Smith (2007).

are to conceive morality and how we are to understand reason but uniting liberal theories, according to Hampton, are five fundamental commitments.

1. Freedom of all citizens.
2. Equality of all citizens.
3. State protection of freedom and equality in a) democracy; b) toleration and freedom of conscience for all citizens and c) freedom of individuals to choose their own life plans.
4. Legitimate existence of the state.
5. Reason. (adapted from Hampton, 2007:158-159)

These commitments are important to women's equality and to my analysis of gendered emotions. By virtue of our capacity to reason we can eventually understand normative matters through reasoning with each other, or with ourselves in private: a fundamental tenet of liberalism<sup>187</sup>. Having different points of views, beliefs, and conceptions of what a good life means, is to respect difference, the individual and the autonomy of the individual, to oppose practices which deny freedom and equality and, in turn, the dignity of the person. For these reasons, the moral philosophies of Kant and Rawls, with their desire to place the individual at the centre of their contract philosophies so as to reason on how to protect their agency, dignity, freedom and equality, are important to any consideration of care ethics and the emotions. This is especially so in opposition to the view that women lack reason or have diminished powers because of their emotional natures. The implication of diminished reasoning capacity is that we do not need to take the concerns, perceptions, and experiences of women into account, since they are likely to result from defective understanding. Such a view implicitly supports the stereotype that women need to be guided and influenced by men. Indeed, in extreme cases of control by men, there is a tendency to erase a woman's identity so that she is subsumed into her partner, having sufficient form to meet his needs and supply that to which he is entitled<sup>188</sup>.

The ideals of liberalism, Kantian, Millian or Rawlsian, are important to feminist concerns, despite some critics' claims that liberalism subverts feminist aims<sup>189</sup>. Liberalism is important to how we conceive of women because it treats every person with respect. In Kant's conception of the kingdom of ends<sup>190</sup>, human beings are sociable, dependent, needy

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<sup>187</sup>Hampton (2007:160) and see Nussbaum (1999a,b).

<sup>188</sup>See Chapter 6.

<sup>189</sup>See for example, Jagger (1983); Benhabib (1987); Held (2006). For supporters of Feminist Liberalism see Friedman (1993:221-230); Nussbaum (2000b); Hampton (2007). See too the collection of essays in 'Varieties of Feminist Liberalism' (Baehr, 2004) which defend liberalism's importance to feminist concerns.

<sup>190</sup>Put simply, a community of rational beings who act on maxims accepted as part of a moral social order. See *GW*:4:433 and Herman (2008). The kingdom, 'a systematic union of rational beings through common



and have limited resources, even while we are autonomous (Nussbaum, 1996; Herman 2008). We are self-legislating to the extent that we can follow our own will (practical reason) and set our own ends and this applies to both sexes, albeit that one sex usually has greater freedom to set ends. The importance of Rawls' Original Position (OP) is to be seen in a similar light: how can we reason so as to create a community of moral beings who have respect and regard for dignity and personhood, without, as far as is possible, being diverted off course by the usual array of human contingencies, selfish self-interested projects and vices? The common fear expressed by feminists, namely that Kantian, Rawlsian and other liberals aim at reasoning in isolation and self-sufficiency, has rather missed the point. Women do desire some forms of self-sufficiency in order to be free from complete dependence on men for their income and status<sup>191</sup>, even while some accept the burden of responsibility for caring for children and relatives. Selfless women, however, who sacrifice themselves in caring for others, lose their identity and their self, harming not only themselves, but also potentially those for whom they care<sup>192</sup>. Women and children continue to be objectified because of persistent beliefs that they are deficient in important domains of reasoning (women are more intuitive) and emotional capacity, particularly with respect to emotions such as love, compassion and sympathy. That emotions are irrational and that rationality is to be passed over in favour of 'feeling', compassion and altruism, is a further consequence of such criticisms of liberalism. I have already argued that emotions are not irrational, but I will briefly reiterate the arguments against this commonplace opinion. On the view that emotions are a form of 'degradation of conscience' (Noddings, 1984:34), and that rationality has no place in emotional life, following Nussbaum (2001), I assert, to the contrary, that an emotional life without rationality, without, that is, thought and discernment, may become unhealthy, oppressive and destructive<sup>193</sup>. Noddings' theory of care, as I have suggested, does not seem to be cognisant of the extent to which her formulation could degrade into abusive or neglectful forms that would render moralised emotions, on my account, impossible. We need, and as I suggest below, a view of care premised on Kantian and Rawlsian ethics, put to work in support of a care ethic that does respect the role of moral principles and reason whilst promoting dignity, emotional, physical and mental health, all of which support agency and autonomy.

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laws', is a metaphor for an ideal state and archetype as a standard for judgement of common values (Herman, 2008:69).

<sup>191</sup>See Nussbaum and Glover (1995); Nussbaum (2000a); Sen (2009) for accounts of women in the developing world who have established organisations and self-help groups to achieve forms of self-sufficiency. Nussbaum (1999a:61) suggests women take care of others best when they can take care of themselves. See also Hampton (2007).

<sup>192</sup>This point becomes more salient in Chapter 7.

<sup>193</sup>Card (1988,1990); Houston (1990); Homiak (2002:5).

#### 4.4 The Importance of Care.

In criticising some conceptions of ethics of care, I do not wish to disparage the importance of care in our lives. Care, understood as a ‘labor, an attitude and a virtue’ (Kittay, 2002: 259-60), is a feature of all of our lives, all of the time. If caring includes all we do ‘to maintain, continue, and repair our “world” so that we can live in it as well as possible’ (Fisher and Tronto, 1990:40) and society cannot be just if it fails to recognise that there will be times when all of us will experience, to some degree, asymmetrical dependency through ill health, incapacitation, grief. But we must be careful. Given care’s importance to a healthy and flourishing live, the capacity and responsibility for care should not attach only to women. Neither can care make its way unaided by reason or discernment: to think so would be revelatory of a degraded conscience imprisoned in a cave of flickering shadows<sup>194</sup>. However, beliefs and opinions persist with the obstinate tenacity of knotweed, despite assaults by spade and weedkiller<sup>195</sup>. Good caring requires support from moralised emotions such as compassion, sympathy and appropriate forms of love.

While it is right to value the care we invest in our relationships, and while it is true that women have historically valued their labours in this regard while men have underestimated care’s importance, there is a need to think very carefully about what some feminists are actually saying when they criticise a liberal version of the person. Philosophers such as Aristotle, Rousseau, Kant, Adam Smith, Mill, Rawls and Nussbaum proclaim personhood, autonomy, rights, dignity and self-respect as belonging to everyone, everywhere, but many women have been denied, and continue to experience the denial of, these fundamental entitlements. These philosophers do not argue for the kind of radical individualism and self-interested motivations of Thomas Hobbes’ contract theory in which, contra Kant, the value of the person is his ‘price’ (1985:151). Individuals have intrinsic worth as human beings. Being social creatures we have emotion based connections to others, and we ‘cooperate’ with those with whom we need not, such as the elderly, the disabled, the young, or people from other cultures and societies (Hampton, 2007:12).

Models of healthy dependency and respect for caring relations are not absent from ‘masculine’ liberal philosophies: they are present in deep, interweaving ways. In having and exercising entitlements to fairness, justice, comes the power of moral choice, the

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<sup>194</sup>This, of course, is from Plato’s simile of the cave. I will return to the value of metaphors later in this chapter.

<sup>195</sup>I developed this from Proust (2003/4:25): ‘the man woman will have found the means of attaching himself to a man, just as the convolvulus throws out its tendrils where ever a rake or hoe is to be found’.

power to choose one's plans and goals to achieve a rewarding and flourishing life. Women are entirely capable of making such plans and goals. But how many women have been denied, and continue to be denied, the power of moral choice? And how can they exercise moral choice if they are by nature irrational, because emotions are irrational? Any critique of reason must be carefully considered. We all have the capacity to reason. The Western philosophical tradition holds that our ability to reason, properly cultivated, confers dignity upon us, and is a source of equal human worth. The kind of reasoning that philosophers such as Aristotle, the Stoics, and Kant valued was practical reasoning, the capacity to understand moral distinctions, evaluate options, to be able to select the means by which to realise our goals (Nussbaum, 1999:71). Theoretical reasoning also has its place when we engage in abstract thinking on what it means to have a decent and just life, a topic I shall consider shortly. But women have been denied, and continue to be denied, the opportunity to exercise practical reason<sup>196</sup>.

On a liberal view, whilst healthy dependency is a relationship with 'another me', that other me remains a 'separate self' distinct and different from me (Sherman 1989:138)<sup>197</sup>.

Friedman argues that Aristotle's analysis of friendship provides us with a model for healthy relationships in general.

Friendship is a close relationship in which trust, intimacy, and disclosure open up for us whole standpoints other than our own. Through seeing what my friends count as a harm done to her, for example, and seeing how she suffers from it and what she does in response, I can try on, as it were, her interpretive claim and its implications for moral practice'. (Friedman 1993:198)

Friendships can help us examine the nature and quality of our intimate relationships, if we are so minded. The explicit point I am re-iterating here is that models of healthy dependency and respect for caring relations are not absent from 'masculine' philosophies but are, instead, the very bases of these philosophies. However, these powers were, and still are, associated with men because only men, and men of a certain class, were permitted to pursue a life of rational activity and freedom. The passions, emotions, feelings, along with bodily care and functionings, were associated with women, and so valued less. Aristotle and his successors (Rousseau, for example) were able to justify the lower status

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<sup>196</sup> A notable exception might be Plato, who, in *The Republic*, had Socrates reasoning that women could be among the philosophical rulers in the ideal state if they were educated and trained equally to men. In *Meno*, Socrates asserts that virtue is of the same quality in women as in men. Yet women nowhere participate in the dialogues, and women are deprecatingly spoken of prior to the dialogues on women's equal participation in the revolutionary Republic. For further discussion see, for example, Moller-Okin (1979).

<sup>197</sup> See also Homiak (2002:13-16). In *NE.1170b7* a friend is a 'second self'.

of women and to deny that either their emotions or intellect could be educated to any great degree. The function of women (and inferior classes) was to serve men (Okin, 1979:89-93) and their virtue laid in their capacity to serve well and to run the household efficiently, rather narrow activities that did not demand great intellectual powers<sup>198</sup>. If some feminists continue to eschew reason in favour of sentimentalism, it is my view that women will not be respected for having an equal faculty for reason as men, but may continue to be encouraged to stop ‘reasoning’ and to accept extant power structures without thought. The belief in a ‘maleness’ of reason and in the ‘emotion, perception and intuition’ of women simply perpetuates sex and gender difference and stereotypes, eradicating or diminishing in the process, the individuality of women.

#### **4.5 The Intrinsic Worth of the Individual.**

The attack on individualism inherent in ‘masculine morality’ and the liberal tradition might be credible if it could be shown that individualism referred to people concerned only with self-interest and gain at the expense of others. The liberal tradition’s insistence that no person was to be the instrument to achieving another’s ends, that each person had equal dignity and inviolable worth, would repudiate the crudely conceived individual of neo-liberal conceptions of the self-seeking and self-maximising individual. Systems which subsume the individual to the community, collective or state, as in the totalitarian regimes of the former USSR or North Korea now, have had disastrous consequences for large numbers of their populations, almost obliterating individuals’ rights to exist as individuals, as well as their right to exist if they refused to conform to ‘creedal unanimity and uniform standards of behaviour’ (Shklar, 1984:4). Shklar repudiates the accusation by clerical and military critics (of the 18th century) that liberalism promotes selfishness because it lacks the discipline of faith and military virtue.

Nothing could be more remote from the truth. The very refusal to use public coercion to impose creedal unanimity and uniform standards of behaviour demands an enormous degree of self-control. Tolerance consistently applied is a more difficult and morally more demanding than repression. (Shklar, 1984:4-5)

The common cruelties against women and children by tyrannical or bullying husbands, partners and fathers, the attacks against Liberal Democracy by fundamentalist terrorists, or

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<sup>198</sup>In *NE*.1158b14 and 19-20, the wife is subordinate to her husband on account of her ‘different excellence and function’.

a return to the nuclear family to save Britain from moral decay<sup>199</sup> testify to Shklar's insight. Societies and men who do not see women as separate entities, entitled to their own personhood and use of their capacities to choose and reason, do them great harm. If care ethics, following Noddings, assumes a naïve perspective on how women can overcome violence by engrossment or caring role models, it will do very little to diminish the control that some men, families, community, religious and political institutions, exercise over women. A 1989 UN report on the global violence against women stated that:

The risk of violence and violation within the household is one thing women, irrespective of their social position, creed, colour or culture share in common... by men to whom they have committed themselves. (cited in MacKinnon, 2005:30)

For Charlesworth and Chinkin (2000:12), to be a woman is to be universally vulnerable to all forms of physical and psychological violence, resulting directly from the manifest imbalance in power between men and women (p.13). In every region of the world, abuse issues most frequently from a husband or partner. We can see how urgent it is that we see all human beings, including women, as rational, separate but connected to others, capable of reasoning practically and theoretically, engaged in care that is ethical and just, respectful of all as beings of dignity to desire to pursue ends that are of value. Bad thinking, unreflective and unquestioning thinking where moral discernment and judgement is absent, is inimical to decent human relationships. Where we have defective thinking, we often encounter cruelty. And with cruelty stalks inequality in malign companionship. Accordingly, an ethic of care should combine capacities for reason and emotions and be grounded in, not bifurcated from, justice if, as noted in my introduction, we are to uncouple emotions from gender and to locate the cultivation of healthy emotions in a view of personhood that affords each individual dignity and respect. In the next section, I return to Rawlsian ethics to add a further layer to my argument, suggesting that some feminists have focused too much on Rawls' abstract formulations on how to reason for a just society, ignoring his extensive and detailed analysis of the moral, social and emotional development of the child in Part Three of *A Theory of Justice*.

#### **4.6 Metaphors of Reason and Justice.**

Just citizens will probably have been nurtured on compassionate and loving care. Part one of Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* develops the theory of a just society, including the Veil of

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<sup>199</sup>This is much in the news currently because of the riots and looting in London, Manchester, and other English cities in August 2011.

Ignorance, the device Rawls constructed so as to have the citizens of a well ordered society deliberate on how best to achieve good ends. The Veil is abstract and metaphorical, as theory must be if we are to extract important information from the world in order to ruminate on how to understand and interpret that world. Put another way, metaphors and ideals are pictures of the world in which we live, embodying what we desire while permitting us the conceptual space to explore how we might achieve an ideally just state of affairs. However, like Noddings, Susan Moller Okin (1989a, 1989b, 2005) is critical of Kantian and Rawlsian ethics for being unnecessarily rationalist, individualistic and remote from real human beings and contingency. Nonetheless, whilst Okin (1989b:247) is critical of how Rawls' rules<sup>200</sup> have been derived, she does not reject moral rules in favour of contextual caring. As moral agents deliberate behind the Veil, they must take account of permissible inequalities and consider the position of the least well-off (Rawls, 1971:151-154). In order to do so, the deliberating agents need to have powers of empathy and compassion to formulate principles that ensure justice and equality, particularly if they are agents accustomed to power and privilege (p.176). To attack Rawls' theoretical processes on the grounds that they are remote from real human beings, subject to the vagaries of fortune, and too concerned with individualism and rationality, is to misrepresent or to misunderstand Rawls' philosophical purpose.

Rawls was acutely interested in the moral and emotional development of the child, development which occurs best in positive affiliations with the child's parents, siblings, friends and, later, in the child's membership of organisations and institutions<sup>201</sup>. Embedded in Rawls' theory of moral development is a concern that moral agents act benevolently to each other, showing care and concern for those who are different and least advantaged (Rawls, 1971:VIII). In this respect, the Veil is an excellent tool by which to exercise moral impartial judgement on the lives of women<sup>202</sup>. Noddings' (1984) argument that justice is not essential to care and is overly masculine seems ill founded on this account. If principles of justice include empathy and concern for others, then, following Okin

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<sup>200</sup>While respectful of Rawls' theory, Nussbaum (2006) is concerned that those in the OP are to be rough equals with regard to powers of rationality. Asymmetrical power relations are a fact of life: we will all be needy and dependent at some points in our lives but those impaired by mental or physical disability will not be able to enter Rawls' bargaining process. See also Kittay (1999,2002).

<sup>201</sup>Cf. Aristotle's model of friendship as an ideal for healthy moral development and flourishing.

<sup>202</sup>Okin (1989a, 1994,2005) was critical of Rawls for assuming that the parties to the OP would be 'heads of households' acting on behalf of the interests of their households, for his unquestioning acceptance that families were just and because he ignored the deeply gendered structure of society. Rawls (1975) revised his theory slightly to say that sex was a morally irrelevant feature and gender should not affect one's entitlement to justice. In *Political Liberalism* (1993:xxviii) he notes that gender is one of the basic problems of society which his theory can accommodate.

(1989b:247) we need not be concerned that arid moral rules could lead to tragic consequences for those for whom we care and love for ‘...to love means not only to be concerned for [a child’s] wants and needs, but to affirm his sense of worth of his own person’ (Rawls, 1971:406). Further, and against the charge that Rawls’ version of social contract philosophy is indifferent to particularity, for the child to grow up as a decent moral person, parents should provide and explain clear (justified) rules, which they themselves exemplify, to arouse ‘not only the child’s inclination to accept these principles, but also to convey how they are to be interpreted in particular cases’ (Rawls, 1971:408).

Noddings and other critics of social contract theory also target the process of deliberation and the hyper-rationality of the agents who are not in fact real people (2007:180). Seyla Benhabib (1987:89) fears that otherness and difference is made to disappear for a generalised, universal other who is ‘everyone and no-one’. Sara Ruddick (1989), in her criticism of contract theory and the Veil of Ignorance, argues against the device for its abstraction from real bodies and detachment from feelings, and for seeking protection (by means of the Veil) from difference and dependency which it can only partially hide. If we begin the analysis by suggesting that the Original Position (OP) and the Veil of Ignorance (VoI) are devices by which to imagine a just society, and how agents might deliberate about how to arrive at principles of justice and equality, we might begin to see the value of this method of deliberation which incorporates social and moral values. Of course, the OP and the VoI are metaphors for an ideal person deliberating for an ideally just society but the criticisms here miss important points.

Metaphors and ideals can reveal what we desire most while permitting us the conceptual space to explore how we might achieve an ideally just state of affairs. So, too, metaphors, as Murdoch (1970:75) claims, are not mere ‘peripheral decorations’ but ‘fundamental forms of our awareness of our condition’. Philosophy often resorts to metaphorical image play, using the metaphors of the social contract<sup>203</sup>, the categorical imperative<sup>204</sup>, Plato’s

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<sup>203</sup>Classical theorists of the social contract tradition include Hobbes (1985); Rousseau (1993); Locke (1988) and Kant. Modern exponents include Rawls (1971); Gauthier (1986) and Scanlon (1999). The principle idea of the contract is that people come together to agree on how society should be organized.

<sup>204</sup>The categorical imperative is a metaphor for how we reason. The theoretical structure that underpins the categorical imperative is complex but, briefly, Kant has a supreme principle of morality: the categorical imperative (CI). The CI is to be applied universally to all human beings and, in its most basic formulation, states that we should act only as we would wish others to act towards us, or ‘act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law’ (*GW*:4:421). On Herman’s (1996:43-44) analysis, the CI is a higher-order deliberative principle, a principle of judgement, that assesses maxims (motives).

cave<sup>205</sup>, for example, to explain intricate, dense concepts which themselves ‘cannot be analysed into non-metaphorical components without a loss of substance’ (Murdoch, 1970:75). Contra Noddings (1984), if care relations are better because those who care eschew mathematical formulae, propositional and moral truth in favour of intuition, receptivity and engrossment, then such a carer might be like the prisoner of Plato’s cave gazing at flickering shadows rather than at the reality behind them. Acts done out of unthinking love may harm and all the ordinary vices that stalk human relations may go unchecked. So, if judgement and reflection have no place in the caring relation, and unappraised joy is allowed to consume all rational thought, then:

Any shadowy notion such a man gets hold of is the product of opinion rather than knowledge, and he’s living in a dream from which he will not awake on this side of the world, where he will finally sleep for ever<sup>206</sup>. (Plato, 534a)

We may also be confined to the cave if we avoid or deny the exercise of abstract thinking because we think it too difficult. The process and purpose of abstraction, so criticised by care ethicists such as Noddings, and the paucity of particularity that abstraction implies, is ethically important because we abstract from known facts of human existence such as inequality, injustice and misogyny. Straightforward abstraction, as O’Neill alerts us, ‘is a matter of bracketing, but not of denying, predicates that are true of the matter under discussion’ (1996:40). It is not the purpose of moral theory to abstract principles from particles residing in thin air, to be reasoned over by an esoteric gendered mind and applied to one half of the population, or class, ethnic group or geographical region. Such an exercise would be fruitless for it would yield little that could be meaningfully applied to real human lives. Rawls’ purpose was to construct a moral theory to give answers to deep and persistent ethical problems of common and individual life, taking contract theory to a high level of abstraction, using a minimum number of assumptions, whereby agents could work out how justice was to be achieved<sup>207</sup>. Particularists remain unconvinced, believing that abstract conceptions of human relations or actions lead only to ‘abstract ethical principles and to impoverished ethical vision that concentrates on rights, obligations and

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<sup>205</sup>The allegory of the cave comes from Plato’s *The Republic* (2007, VII:VI) in which the prisoner escapes from illusion (the flickering shadows of reality on the caves’ walls) to see the world as it is really is. Moving from the shadows to the light, from illusion to understanding, to seeing things for what they really are, is a painful process, which many do not wish to undertake, finding ignorance preferable and easier. Educating the mind is not merely about implanting knowledge. It is about training the mind to have a vision of the good, one such vision being the well-governed state. The metaphor of the Sun and The Divided Mind (both Book VI), which precede the metaphor of the cave, may be understood as metaphors for intellectual development.

<sup>206</sup>Nussbaum wittily cites Nietzsche (from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*) to critique Noddings: ‘*Blessed are the sleepy ones – for they shall soon drop off*’. Nussbaum substitutes ‘drop off’ for ‘nod off’ (see fn.88).

<sup>207</sup>Rawls’ theory can be criticized for his idealization of agents and their conditions of action, but without the idealizations, his theory could be paralysed. See O’Neill (1996).



blame' (O'Neill, 1996:40). However, arguably all reasoning is abstract, as are our concepts of language, our use of metaphors and mathematics (as I have tried to show above) the Arts (consider Cubism, Joyce's *Ulysses*, Philip Glass' music) and so on. Reasoning about the 'good' and what the good is will also be abstract, including the 'good relational care' that care ethicists seek to understand and recommend. Reasoning and imagining in abstract ways tie us to the world: they are not escape routes taking us beyond human territory, but to (sometimes) difficult conceptual or metaphorical realms so as to gift us with new vision.

While Rawls used the language of rational choice<sup>208</sup> and idealised the individual as rational and mutually disinterested, with no knowledge of his individual characteristics, he saw the dangers for his theory if critics focussed only on single assumptions about the parties in the OP, rather than considering the device as a whole (*TJ*, 1971:129)<sup>209</sup>. The combination of mutual disinterest and the VoI achieves benevolence because each person in the OP must take the good of others into account. The parties are not egoistic or atomistic, as has been suggested by Noddings, but (metaphorical) representatives engaged in thinking and reasoning on how to achieve a minimally just society. The problem with a Rawlsian view is not, as has been supposed, that it stems from primary consideration of one's own good or prospects, or that it is primarily about individual rational calculation of one's own interests. One's own good and the rational calculation of one's own interests pertain only to the initial situation in order to arrive at principles of justice and to 'avoid introducing controversial ethical elements' (*TJ*:12). Further, while they are rational, in a narrowly conceived sense, in order to take the 'most effective means to given ends' (*TJ*: 25), individual persons do not know their conception of the good, the details of their plan of life, or their particular ends and interests. What they do know is that 'they prefer more primary social goods rather than less' (p.123). While persons in the OP rank their preferences according to how well they further their interests, Rawls makes a 'special assumption': they do not 'suffer from envy' (p.124) so long as differences do not exceed certain limits and are not based on injustice. Rawls is clear that the OP is a proposition for a theory of justice. In real life, humans will be guided by their practical reason. Further, the two principles of justice and the principles of obligation and natural duty, 'require us to consider the rights and claims of others' (p.128). In having a sense of justice, one cannot solely be moved by a consideration of one's own good. Part three of a *TJ* makes very clear

<sup>208</sup>In *Justice as Fairness* (2001), Rawls considers rational choice to be a serious error if it is taken as the only normative idea.

<sup>209</sup>See, too, Okin (1989b).

the congruence of fairness, goodness, and justice to social values and the good of the community.

Further, if particularists charge that universal theories such as those of Rawls' begin with assumptions of ideal humans, they too must face the charge that they themselves may idealise the caring relationship, or the local context, community, norms, values and practices. The gritty reality of many women's and children's lives is that they are in anything but an ideal relationship. Their capacities for love and care are routinely exploited. Customs which subordinate women, practices which mutilate their bodies, and attitudes that deem it acceptable for women to sacrifice their abilities and skills in favour of the family, are far from ideal<sup>210</sup>. Ordinary social vices such as selfishness, cruelty, bullying, torture, and so on, can have devastating emotional consequences that impact seriously on people's capacity to function and flourish, as we have seen, and will continue to see with Nancy. The same social structures of family and community can, of course, sustain positive social virtues of care, love, respect and friendship, allowing individuals' capacities to develop and function, and lessening their vulnerabilities to misfortune and ill health. But we must be alert to these social structures' corrosive powers when they are, or become, deformed and inhere negative attitudes, beliefs and practices towards or about those who less powerful.

#### **4.7 Rawls' Moral Theory: Emotions and Moral Development.**

Rawls constructed part three of a Theory of Justice in order that the OP and VoI could work successfully, by developing, firstly, a theory of the good to characterise primary goods and the interests of the person in the OP; and, secondly, by considering how the sentiment of justice could be acquired so as to stabilise justice as fairness in a well-ordered society, and to link these sentiments to social values and the good of the community (p.347). If families can be taken as akin to 'miniature social systems' (Friedman, 1993:129), with their complex relations of interdependency, distribution of moral, emotional and material resources, the extent to which each individual becomes a healthy, well-rounded individual, willing and able to contribute to and respect the agency and dignity of others, will be reflected in society. Rawls claimed that being a good person is a good, and the cultivation of moral sentiment as well as instruction in moral rules is

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<sup>210</sup>See for example, Patemen (1988); Okin (1989a,b, 1994, 2004); Houston (1990); O'Neill (1996); Minnow (1997); Kittay (1999, 2002); Nussbaum (1999a,b); Charlesworth and Chinkin (2000); Homiak (2002); Hampton (2007); MacKinnon (2006, 2006). Recent reports, as discussed in Chapters 3 and 7, (NSPCC, 2009, 2011) reveal how young girls are routinely abused by their boyfriends.

important to a just society and for cooperation. This is the first stage of moral development. According to Rawls, the second stage concerns the morality of association of which there are many types: school, clubs, organisations, institutions of various kinds, the neighbourhood and so on. Here the child learns the standards of social conduct from parental approval and disapproval, as well as from friends and people in authority. This is important preparatory work for the ideals that the child will have as an adult and citizen. In her many associations with many different types of people, the child, as she grows, learns that other people have different goals and plans, they come from different circumstances and backgrounds. The morality of association means that the child and young adult learns to take up the perspective of others, developing the intellectual skills to see things from a variety of points of view in a complex process culled from speech, conduct, and countenance (Rawls, 1971:410). Knowing the beliefs, opinions, desires and motives of others helps the young adult to understand and assess the actions and intentions of others, and to take up others' perspective. Of course, being able to take up the perspective of another does not necessarily lead to good moral conduct but can, instead, be manipulative and exploitative, as we have seen with Nancy. For Rawls, we can acquire moral fellow-feeling through our attachments to others, through bonds of friendship and trust. These are the bases for affiliating well with others<sup>211</sup> and the moral motivation becomes that of living up to the expectations of one's family, friends and colleagues, to fair rules and the bonds of friendship, sustained by feelings of shame or guilt at the thought of betrayal and sub-standard behaviour, and feelings of love and affection. Certain emotions, when properly cultivated and nourished, act as important constraints to bad conduct such as shame. Other emotions, such as love, indignation (a form of anger) and resentment, and attitudes of respect, act as positive forces for good moral behaviour. Affection for particular persons plays an essential role in the acquisition of morality, and in developing an appropriate ethic of care. When care goes wrong, as in Nancy's situation where there is domestic violence and abuse, the orientating role of emotions can go awry because the emotions themselves must undergo some transformation if the abused are to cope (they may develop maladaptive emotional responses) or the abuser is to justify his actions (by switching off compassion, and relying on righteous anger). I will examine these effects in greater detail in Chapter 7.

If, however, the care the child receives is morally appropriate and she is able to affiliate with others in healthy and respectful ways, we may suppose that there is a 'morality of

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<sup>211</sup>I shall revisit the concept of affiliation, one of Nussbaum's 10 central capabilities, in Chapter 7.

association ... a system cooperation known to be for the advantage of all (Rawls 1971:413). In order to achieve this state of cooperation, one needs to understand and apply rules of moral salience, to engage in some form of deliberative judgement, not always consciously or with effort, but lightly sometimes because our sense of what is morally appropriate will be so deeply embedded in our natures, provided we have been brought up in the right environment. Noddings, recall, does not judge such rules and deliberative processes as necessary to her care ethics but the preceding argument has advanced reasons why a theory of care should contain moral judgements and deliberative reasoning. Quite apart from the danger of Noddings' own reasoning to women's wellbeing and entitlements to equality and respect, there are situations in which those who have responsibility for care cannot reason morally or deliberate on issues of moral salience. Women and children who live in adverse conditions, in fear of violence or abuse, will, over time, have reduced capacity to reason well and act well in morally appropriate ways. Forced to be hyper-vigilant around the abuser in order to pre-empt or prepare for potential harm, such women and children will develop a capacity for anger and fear, and an underdeveloped or stunted capacity for compassion, sympathy or empathy. We have begun to see this in the case of Nancy. A study by Tull et al. (2007:581) on the impact of the negative effects on victims of childhood violence, found that they had poor emotional regulation as a result of a limited awareness of their emotional responses, non-acceptance, and/or negative evaluation of and reaction to responses. The study also demonstrated that psychological problems can result from unhealthy emotional responses, such as avoiding emotional experiences. Reduced functional emotional processing reduces the capacity to read the environment for emotional clues (p.584).

Ideally, however, and in complete contrast to the lives of abused women and children, when citizens enter Rawls' OP they have fully defined moral principles and emotions, and are sensitive to the feelings and wants of others (p.419): they are neither emotionless nor abstract, hyper-rational beings, but beings rooted in relationships and communities, socialised so as to have developed moral sentiments and attitudes. Further, having moral sentiments, 'presupposes an understanding and an acceptance of certain principles and an ability to judge in accordance with them' (Rawls, 1972:427). However, that is not to say that well brought up, highly socialised children who are emotionally literate have not been nurtured to have certain beliefs about the sexes.

#### 4.8 Gendered Morality.

A perspective on morality that uses sound judgement in caring for and nurturing the wellbeing of others will be richer and more fulfilling of individual ends if those who care have a sense of entitlement to their own legitimate concerns and goals (Hampton, 2007)<sup>212</sup>. How we come to see ourselves, how our expectations are formed over time, are shaped by gendered assumptions about our supposed innate natures and hardwired differences which begin before birth (Fine 2010)<sup>213</sup>. Citing studies on preferences and expectations of parents about their children, motivations to have a boy or a girl were different. A boy was good for playing sport with dad whilst girls were often wanted because of the emotional content and intimacy they could offer, and for remembering things like birthdays, leaving Fine to comment ‘not yet conceived, and already sons were off the hook for remembering to call or send birthday flowers’ (2010:192). Parents, even gender sensitive parents, socialise their children into gender roles before they are born. The problem, as Fine sees it, is that our actions and judgements do not always stem from ‘reflected, consciously endorsed beliefs and values’ (p.193).

If women are socially and culturally moralised to care, to be concerned for relationships and to express their emotions, they will likely conform to that behaviour. Men likewise will exhibit and conform to behaviours associated with agency, self-assertion and independence. So while the reasoning processes of the sexes is more about ‘how we think we reason than of how we actually reason’ (Friedman, 1993:125), children will be nurtured to develop the skills and capacities that conform to gender stereotypes. But agency need not mean that it is masculine, remote from our contingent ends, and free from our personal histories, relationships or culture. The ‘fundamental moral equality of agents requires that we attend to *difference* when it affects the capacity for effective agency’ (Herman, 1993: 206). So a mother’s agency is limited when she has to meet the needs of her family while displacing her own, or when she has to appear in public in modest attire, or when she limits her interests to what the community deems acceptable. Her autonomy is thus circumscribed. Although agency is a condition of both sexes and that is context dependent, we can deliberate abstractly and concretely about how much is available to whom and why. The focus then, for moral enquiry, becomes how far I acknowledge the agency of

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<sup>212</sup>See also Homiak (2001).

<sup>213</sup>See for example, Chodorow (1978); Fausto-Sterling (1992, 2000); Friedman (1993); Fine (2008, 2010a,b) and Jordan-Young (2010) on the persistent belief that men and women are different, now aided by what Fine (2010) describes as ‘neuro-sexism’: old-fashioned stereotyping given a sheen of scientific credibility. Fine suggests that it is not biology that is implacably resistant to equality between the sexes, ‘but our culturally attuned minds’ (p.xxix). I return to these themes in Chapter 5.

others, how willing I am to allow others to express their agency, and this will reveal the extent of my respect for others as ends in themselves. Kant's categorical imperative procedure (CI-p), far from being a device remote from human contingency and real life grit, helps us to formulate principles by which to act for the wellbeing for others. According to one formula of the CI, to act permissibly is to act on maxims (motives) that others, similarly circumstanced, could endorse. Making this claim might seem controversial given how the CI is traditionally understood. The CI is *apriori*, an abstract formal principle of an 'unconditioned ought' (Herman, 1993:134) that formally assesses the permissibility of our actions. The traditional view, based largely on the arguments laid out in the GW, is that the CI-procedure is the source of 'absolute, exceptionless prohibitions' (Herman, 1993:133). However, while Kant asserts, in the GW, that the imperatives of duty can be derived from the CI, he does not use the CI-p in the DV (and see Herman, 1993, chapter 7). In the Critique of Practical Reason, Kant presents a variant of the CI, the 'Typic of pure practical judgement' (2003: 5:67), as the formal statement by which we can ask if our actions are morally permissible or not, as a rule of deliberation. Kant's purpose in the GW, following Herman (1993:134), sought to demonstrate that the 'formal principle derived from analysis of the unconditional ought of morality (the CI) is a moral principle' because it can explain the 'judgements we take to be incontrovertibly moral'. The canonic cases of the GW (lying, acting from sympathy, suicide) can be viewed as 'generic' maxims (Herman, 1993) against which we can test specific examples and ask about our motives. Lying for personal gain is universally rejected. Lying to save lives might not be so rejected if the motive is respect for the dignity of those to be saved and to defy evil in the process. Here we need to know more about the form of the maxim (the act and the end for whose sake the act is done).

As a deliberative procedure then (see O'Neill, 1975 and Herman, 1993) we can apply the CI to our situation (Rawls, 2000:167). When we test the permissibility of an action, we do so taking the details and textures of our particular situation into account (and see Herman, 1993:135). Kant, in the second Critique, tells us to ask 'yourself whether, if the action which you propose should take place by a law of nature of which you yourself were a part, you could regard it as possible through your will ...' (70). In asking about our action, we deliberate about the novel situation and special features of the particular circumstance. We ask, further, during the assessment procedure, whether others could endorse what we propose to universalise.

Kant's categorical imperative (CI) and the CI-p, far from being remote from human contingency and real life grit, help us to formulate principles by which to act for the wellbeing for others. According to one formula of the CI, to act permissibly is to act on maxims (motives) that others, similarly circumstanced, could endorse (the law of nature). According to another, it is to act in such a way that those who are the recipients of your actions could endorse your ends (the law of autonomy) and, according to yet another, it is to act in such a way that those who are the recipients of your actions could endorse your ends. Could Nancy endorse her ill-treatment by her father? Could anyone endorse this treatment? If they were moral beings, they could not.

#### **4.9 Concluding Chapter Four.**

Literature abounds with the consequences of gender stereotyping for women. In *Unless*, Reta Winters, a mother confounded by her daughter's retreat from the world to sit behind a placard proclaiming 'Goodness', muses that women are either destined to say 'yes for ever, or to lack the power to assert themselves because they are mere incidentals of nature' (Shields, 2002:70). Having introduced the necessary layers of philosophical consideration for an alternative version of care, let us return to Gilligan's (1982) Amy and Jake. Amy seems to exhibit a form of moral immaturity that reveals her uncertainty about her own legitimate entitlement to plans and goals if they conflict with others' plans and goals. Where Amy is sensitive to the needs of others, Jake is more confident about his right to act independently and to afford himself more time and resources when these conflict with the demands of others. Both Amy and Jake exemplify gendered expectations of roles. Amy will probably grow up to be a carer, a member of the dominated group; Jake will most likely become a member of the dominant group, taking for granted that his interests will predominate (Hampton, 2007:8).

Noddings' (1984) use of the feminine pronoun 'she' for the one-caring, and the masculine pronoun 'he' for the one who is cared-for, describes too well the status quo that exists between the sexes. While other-regardingness can have a strong moral component in emotions such as compassion and sympathy, and while care is important to a flourishing life, concern for others that results in self-abnegation is not a good moral outcome for anyone concerned. Noddings' frequent reference to the 'she' who cares for the 'he' who is cared-for may encourage the belief that this gendered division is acceptable, desirable and natural. We can see the effect of this kind of thinking and reasoning in another of

Gilligan's interviewees. This time we have a divorced middle-aged woman, with two teenage daughters:

As a woman, I feel I never understood that I was a person, that I could make decisions and I had a right to make decisions. I always felt that that belonged to my father or my husband in some way, or church, which was always represented by a male clergyman ... and they had much more to say on what I should or shouldn't do. They were really authority figures that I accepted... I still let things happen to me rather than make them happen, than make choices, although I know all about choices... I think in one sense there is less responsibility involved... if you don't grow up feeling that you ever have any choices, you don't have the sense that you have *emotional responsibility*. (1982:67, italics mine)

What I read from this is a woman who has grown up to be dependent on men for her choices, a dependency that has infantilised her in some important respects. If the capacity for moral reasoning is one of the essences of morality, so too is taking responsibility for the choices one makes. However, we do not have to look too far to find ingenious arguments that modern educated women still have restricted choices, adhering to their traditional roles of care and motherhood<sup>214</sup>. The danger inherent in some conceptions of care, what Card (1988) and Houston (1989) might describe as 'contingently' dangerous, and Hoagland (1988:104) as 'necessarily' dangerous, is that they continue to keep women in situations of inferiority. Care, as Gilligan acknowledged, has not been 'sufficiently noted and valued' (1982:xix). Women take care of men, children and relationships: they act as nurturers and caretakers. But men tend to devalue care while depending on it to pursue their plans and goals. Concern for relationships is seen as a weakness (Gilligan, 1982:17) because it may mean that women lack objectivity, warping their judgments through sympathies and antipathies, as we saw earlier. So, the private world of the home is the appropriate domain of women. By contrast, argue Charlesworth et al. (1991:626), the workplace is the natural province of men, a distinction maintained primarily by arguments about what is innate to the sexes. The two domains are asymmetrical in power and status, generating a distinction in the division of labour. The realm of work has greater value, as it is the realm of ambition, success, autonomy and earning potential. The home is where routine and dull tasks prevail, demanding very little by way of intellect or the exercise of rational faculties.

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<sup>214</sup>See Bloom (1988) in which he attacks feminism and women's resistance to sex roles as unnatural, emasculating men and eroding of the family. For a sustained critique of the book see Nussbaum (1987) at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1987/nov/05/undemocratic-vistas/?page=1>, Okin (1989) and Faludi (1993).



Noddings (2007:225) insists that, contra Houston (1989) and Hoagland (1989), an ethic of care does not promote the exploitation of women because it constrains the parties to care. The carer is a cared-for and the cared-for does not enjoy unconditional respect. But Noddings' assertions do not seem adequately robust to guard against women's exploitation and abuse. It is women's dependency and vulnerability, allied with beliefs about sex differences and what is it is natural to do and be, that ensures their exploitation. If the parties to care are infested with misogynistic, stereotypical views of the sexes' innate capacities, the constraints to care will be easily overcome, if they could stand at all. Noddings claims that natural caring requires no moral effort. I have argued that it does, and urgently so.

There is a danger, too, in asserting that women speak in a different moral voice from men. Perhaps, as MacKinnon (1989:51) argues, women's moral reasoning is different because it is convenient for men to believe that it is. Women are how they are, and think as they do, because that is what they have been permitted and encouraged to be and think. Their emotional natures too reflect the norms and values of their societies<sup>215</sup>. Friedman (1993:126) persuasively suggests that moralised gender differences persist, in part, because of the separation of an ethic of care from an ethic of justice, and because of the conceptual limitations of each. One can care for someone without having any feeling for the cared-for, caring for a loved one while routinely engaging in cruel practices 'for her own good'. One can care-for someone while suffocating them through excess fear and anxiety for their wellbeing. One can care for the family so much that one's legitimate claims to personhood and agency are renounced (or suppressed) for the good of that family. In each case, an ethic of justice is important for correcting the moral and ethical imbalances that exist in care. If we follow Friedman's<sup>216</sup> view that close relationships are akin to 'miniature social systems' (p.129), providing, ideally, care and affection, moral, social and emotional development, and so on, we can apply the constraints of justice to limit imbalances of power, care or distribution of resources. This is of considerable importance in families where there are likely to be children of different ages, abilities and capacities, with the consequent conflicts of demand and attention, as well as of resources, that differently maturing individuals require. Good care is of monumental importance, impacting as it does on the life chances of the children within each miniature society. Considerations of each

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<sup>215</sup>See Syed (2008).

<sup>216</sup>I have reservations about Friedman's analyses of Rawls' OP and her criticism that it may not disclose special duties of justice in close relationships. I understand her doubts but she does not adequately take into account Rawls' (1971) moral development of the child in Part III.

member's fair and equal entitlement, the development of individual capability and functioning, take place in a morally complex environment. This environment requires the moral practitioners, the parents (and each member depending on age and maturity), to be morally discerning, capable of ethical caring and of applying principles of justice both impartially and partially, depending on the context and particulars of the case.

There is, as I have shown, some considerable debate as to whether we should apply abstract, universal moral principles or an ethic of caring towards a particular person or persons that eschews abstraction and universality. Noddings, as noted, dispenses with abstract principles, Benhabib prefers particularity, and Gilligan hears gendered division between forms of moral reasoning. Both particularity and universality are necessary to reasoning about morality, and both impartiality and partiality are required. If my sibling engages in practices that demean and hurt my parents, and I challenge her, I do so because I 'consult', so to speak, the high court of my moral principles asking, impartially if my sibling's conduct is fair or right, and what I should do about it. With principles guiding action, the judgement I make will be sensitive to the character of my parents and sister, their relational history, and the context in which the negative practices arose if I am sensitive to the 'rules of moral salience' (Herman, 1996:77). Critics of Kant who argue that his philosophy cannot register the importance of caring because of its highly abstract and universal nature miss (understandably) the point that moralised rules are 'neither memorised rules nor are they present as mere habits of responses' (Herman, 1993:26). Rather, as Herman (1993:26) argues, 'moral action can be an arena for self-expression' being constitutive of the particular person and her unique, perhaps even idiosyncratic, nature. Respect is due to persons because of their dignity, personhood, vulnerability, worth and need, wherever they are situated.

Care ethicists who reject Kantian and Rawlsian forms of reasoning do so from a fear that personal attachments will somehow diminish what is good and natural about them if we subject them to critical analysis and assess them by impartial moral considerations (Noddings, 1982; Slote, 2007). However, as I have argued here, personal relationships can be the sites of cruelty, exploitation and other vices. What morality can do for us, as Herman (1993:198) suggests, is to 'detect the fault in a relationship and give reasons not to accept the bad relationship'. There is a 'moral core', Herman (1993) argues, that individuals learn as they as they mature into adulthood, allowing them to 'identify morally significant elements in the situation[s] ... [they] ... encounter' (p.82). This 'moral core' is

what Herman terms the 'rules of moral salience' mentioned above. When situations lack complexity or ambiguity we may not always be aware that we are relying on moral principles or rules: we simply apply them without much thought because they have been so deeply inculcated and internalized (as in the example of the bicycle rider). These are commonplace situations requiring common sense action. When there is a situation of some complexity, however, moral reasoning can be taken up. This is crucial. If education is about helping individuals develop autonomy, then education is also about providing the moral foundations that can be drawn upon and modified as the challenges of adulthood are encountered.

Nancy, recall, is an abused and neglected child. She cares for her siblings. Her parents are incapable of doing so because of violence, drug and alcohol addiction. Her father abuses her mother. So far as we know, neither Nancy nor her siblings have been sexually abused. However, suppose she tells me, because she trusts me, that she and her sisters have been abused, and that the previous evening her uncle made his first move on her. She pleads with me to tell nobody because she knows that Social Services will place her and her sisters into care, possibly splitting them up. She does not want her mother to be exposed to further beatings and she fears what her father might do to all of them if the police and Social Services get involved. Nancy is also ashamed, embarrassed and angry, not wanting the further stigma of social derision or pity. She has had her fill of both.

How do I react? Am I 'better', as Noddings (1984) suggests, to use my 'intuitive or receptive modes' because this is a situation that is new and 'baffling'? Do I forego abstractions of moral complexity because I prefer, as a woman, to place myself in a concrete situation, employing modes of receptivity that are 'mysterious, internal and nonsequential' (1984:7). Recall that, for Noddings, caring is a form of displacement of interest from my own reality to the reality of Nancy. To feel or to see Nancy's reality is to accept that reality as a possibility for me so that I can be moved to help Nancy in some way. Recall, too, that while an ethic of care involves judgements about fact and feeling, it nevertheless allows for 'situations and conditions in which judgement (in the impersonal logical sense) may properly be put aside in favour of faith and commitment' (Noddings, 1984:25). This is because 'caring is essentially non-rational' and 'one of the greatest dangers to caring may be premature switching to a rational-objective mode ... of limited and particular use': natural caring requires 'no moral effort' (p.26). If I follow Noddings' reasoning and ethic, it is possible that I will cause Nancy harm. Nancy does not need my

engrossment. She needs me to act wisely, judiciously and in a reasoned manner. Despite the suspicion that Kant would have us consult the rules each time we act, we must appeal to an act of judgement for which no rule can be given, ‘for otherwise we would be doomed to an infinite regress of rules, never reaching any concrete application of our principles’ (Guyer, 1993:8). I doubt Nancy would want me to ‘feel’ to the extent that I am unable to take in what I have been told and to assess it carefully (cognitive processes), think rationally about what to do with her revelation (next steps, who to contact, what to say to Nancy, what justifications can I offer her, how to advise her) or engage in mysterious and nonsequential receptive modes, because these could either lead to inaction, or aimless or thoughtless action. Consulting abstract moral principles will not add to the dangers that Nancy finds herself in but may, in fact, help get her out of, or deal with, a dangerous situation. The depth and urgency of Nancy’s needs in her particular situation mean that there are no rules to follow but, following Kant, what moral rules can do is to describe what our duties are, ‘directing that, in certain circumstances, actions of a certain sort are to be done’ (Herman, 1993:27). In Kantian parlance, engaging in acts such as causing harm or using someone to further one’s self-interest is impermissible. The motive of duty does not mean, as is usually assumed, that we cannot have personal commitments or that we cannot prefer those closest to us. We can and we must. Most of our moral obligations arise from the relationships we have with our family, friends and acquaintances. I care for Nancy, but my care is moral and the actions I eventually take will have moral consequences. I will be guided by abstract conceptions of values, right conduct, human worth, dignity and respect, the inviolability of the person as an end in her own right. And I will be guided by my particular experiences, and/or the experience of fellow professionals, to find solutions for a vulnerable young person whose emotional and physical integrity is being violated.

In sum, sentiment is not, as Noddings would have it, prior to ethical principles. Neither should it be for it would be unstable, crude, and indiscriminate. Sentiment alone, as Sherman (1997:134) tells us, can lead to evil, the suppression of agency and to an abdication from judgement on what it is morally right to do. Our sentiments, our emotions, must be educated as we develop and, in turn, educate our moral character. Emotions are important for virtue, but are posterior to morality. Emotions require morality, and are secondary to morality. Morality cannot, however, function well without the cultivation of emotions (Kant, *DV*.484-5). Whilst I can empathise with Nancy, I will not be moved to action simply because I imagine her reality as a possibility for me. I will be moved to act

from moral indignation and respect, as well as from compassion and sympathy, though not necessarily empathy which can be morally neutral. Empathy can also find us sympathising with the wrong kind of people and the wrong kind of acts, or be overridden by self concern when the demands and needs of another person exhaust the motive to help (Batson, 2011:191). Empathy can be erased, too, by an egoistic impulse (p.191) to avoid the feelings of pity or compassion when we see vulnerable people like Nancy, victims of war or famine, hear stories of calculated rape<sup>217</sup> or read the statistics and effects of poverty.

What can I do for a girl like Nancy? I can care but care, on Noddings' account, is not enough and can take us only a short distance. Care without attention to moral principles and the regulative power of reason, without attention to moralised compassion, and a view of personhood endorsed by Rawls and Kant, and as outlined here, is not an ethic we should endorse. Care, as developed by Noddings, endorses gender stereotypes and supports arguments for innate sex differences and these become my central focus in the next chapter.

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<sup>217</sup>See for example <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-11819732> for one of the most serious cases of sexual abuse in recent times with nine men found guilty of raping or harassing a total of 27 girls.

## Chapter Five: Gendered Emotions.

*I see that there's a whole world of girls and their doings that has been unknown to me, and that I can be part of it without making any effort at all. I don't have to keep up with anyone, run as fast, aim as well, make loud explosive noises, decode messages, die on cue. I don't have to think about whether I've done these things well, as well as a boy. All I have to do is sit on the floor and cut frying pans out of the Eaton's catalogue with embroidery scissors, and say I've done it badly. It's partly a relief. (Margaret Atwood, *Cat's Eye*, 1990:54)*

### 5.1 Introduction.

Gender, as a social construct, endures. Surmount a long-held conviction about sex difference and gender capacity, and both the difference and the capacity gap regroup in another field or in another guise. Brain science, and genetics, the modern frontiers of science, provide new territories in which to explore and find 'evidence' for hardwired sex differences, including emotional differences. As yet little understood, the highly complex research emerging from these disciplines is being used, argue Kaplan and Rogers (2003), to make claims about sex difference. As I shall indicate, these claims are precipitate, and any differences that do emerge are minuscule. Such claims are, however, influencing ways in which people gender emotions.

Unlike the human beings in whom they reside, genes, hormones, cellular activity are not conscious entities: they are not concerned with the business of morality or of what matters in human relations or to a good human life<sup>218</sup>. Nevertheless, genes and other biological processes and mechanisms are interpreted and hailed as if they do possess these capacities. Neither, surely, need they play a role in how we express our emotions, or in which sex should express which emotion, to what degree, in which situation. As I have argued thus far, we are rational, autonomous individuals, moving around in a rich, diverse and complex social world, and we act on that world as much as the environment acts on us. But just as we are constituted by our values, family, friends, education, work, life experience, the care we receive and the choices we do or do not make, so we are constituted by gender. Because of our brains' remarkable plasticity, there are endless potentialities for behavioural flexibility: we are 'open in all directions' (Jordan-Young 2010:87). Such

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<sup>218</sup>In *Professions for Women* (2003), Virginia Woolf kills her guardian angel who has urged her to employ the wiles of the female sex to achieve her desires and hide from society the fact that she is an intelligent woman with a mind of her own. Woolf's guardian angel, her own mental creation, presses her to follow the conventions and expectations for women of her society. Kaplan and Rogers (2003) cite this work to make the point that it is not Woolf's genes that are whispering to her to give up writing, but her society's sanctions and norms.

openness is available if we have autonomy (self-determination) and agency (what is necessary to constitute oneself as the author of one's actions) but culturally attuned brains and beliefs about gender may limit these capacities, investing men and women with those qualities that correspond to the 'facts' that science tells us about sex difference.

Gender, as one part of our social existence, is a construct of our identity, deeply moulding how we see ourselves and others, shaping our goals and aspirations as women and men in distinct ways. Gender does not, however, grow directly from genetic or hormonal soil, but from the soils of human cultures. Gender is, nonetheless, pursued with zeal and so:

[t]hose distressed by the conjunction of gender sexuality and power will not find it easy to reflect on rules encoded in the rules they rely on. (Herman, 2008:118)

New reasons will be sought to continue the status quo and, as scientists such as Kaplan and Rogers (2003), Fine (2010a, b) and Eliot (2011) warn us, science itself is being used to continue the gendered status quo even in the face of suspect evidence (Kaplan and Rogers, 2003:3-4).

The social-psychological focus is on gender and gendered emotions, and their expression in the home and institutional, including educational, settings. The philosophical focus of this chapter is autonomy. This chapter is organised into three sections. In the first section, I outline the nature and importance of autonomy to women's equality, arguing that autonomy is essential to resisting exploitation, to having a sense of one's legitimate claims, and for thinking about our gendered roles. Linking autonomy to the complexity of emotions, I will suggest that autonomous agents are emotionally complex agents, necessarily so because they are enmeshed in diverse relationships. I will also outline the threats to autonomy, including those emanating from scientific claims that women are predetermined to be compassionate, which destines them to follow their 'natural' caring mothering roles. Exemplifying the discussion are Margaret Atwood's *Cat's Eye* and Nancy. Whilst friendship, I suggest, is important to a good moral life, an external good of the utmost importance to eudaimonia, in *Cat's Eye* it is disabling and immiserating, for instead of encountering conventional narratives about female compassion and relatedness, the virtues of friendship and mercy, or loving parent-child relations, we find, in *Cat's Eye*, oppressive and insidious relational practices.

In the second section, I turn to the field of science, specifically to research in neuroscience and genetics, in order to explore how gender is being afforded scientific certitude that lends potent support to dimorphic (gendered) schema. In the third section, I move to a consideration of the empirical research on gendered emotions and roles, demonstrating how interpretations of emotional sincerity are influenced by gendered expectations and beliefs. We are less likely to trust a person's sincerity if they transgress gender norms or, more specifically, social and professional gendered norms. But emotional expression or repression can impact on self-esteem whilst emotional expression can be effective in maintaining masculine power. From gendered emotions I move to outline the impact of gendered roles on professional mobility and acceptance, considering, for example, ways in which gendered expression in the work place can disadvantage women in terms of their status, mental and physical health. Finally, I examine whether women are, in fact, more empathetic than are men.

## 5.2 Autonomy and Agency.

In my exploration of women's experiences, including those of Nancy and Elaine and Cordelia from *Cat's Eye*, I am driven by the concern that they might struggle with Berlin's very neat summary of autonomy:

to be a subject; not an object; to be moved by reasons, by conscious purposes, which are my own ... I wish to be somebody not nobody; a does-deciding, not being decided for ... that is, of conceiving goals and policies of my own and realising them. (Berlin, 2002:178)

In *Cat's Eye*, by Margaret Atwood, 9 year old Elaine is tormented by her best friends Grace, Carol and Cordelia. Cordelia begins her insidious torment by trying to improve Elaine's appearance and posture. Carol and Grace collude, always taking instruction from Cordelia: they do not act of their own accord<sup>219</sup>. The abuse is underhand, mute, and rarely committed in front of anyone outside the group, effectively isolating Elaine from help and insulating the group from censure<sup>220</sup>. Elaine becomes introverted, frightened and starts to self-harm, beginning with her feet, which no-one can see. While Elaine hates what is happening to her, she is powerless to refuse Cordelia's commands or to stand up to her.

<sup>219</sup>In Kantian speak, Carol and Grace are heteronomous agents, acting at the behest of another, Cordelia, rather than at the behest of their own moral laws. See *DV*4:433.

<sup>220</sup>Relational aggression can take many forms including whispering, gossiping, ostracism, sending nasty texts or social network messages, manipulating friendships. It often goes undetected because it is covert: girls hide their aggression because it is not usually approved of or seen as fitting for girls (Eliot, 2011:270). Relational aggression may also be a bid for power. I return to this in a later section.



Cordelia's power increases as it goes unchecked. 'Undue humility makes tyranny; weak concession creates selfishness' (Bronte, 2006:169)<sup>221</sup>. This is a mirror to real life abuse processes.

The effects of childhood bullying haunt Elaine all her adult life, colouring her attitude to herself, her work, to her lovers and children, above all towards women. She distrusts women who:

collect grievances, hold grudges and change shape...they have a certain way of wanting me to be and I am not that way. They want to improve me. At times I feel defiant: what right have they to tell me what to think? (pp.378-379)

Her attitude towards women, here lesbian women and the feminist movement of the early 70s, helps explain why Elaine feels only part relief when she joins the world of girls (see the epigraph). But there is more to the abuse that Elaine experiences and from which she suffers. Cordelia, too, is a victim, enacting her own experiences on Elaine who becomes the repository for her own confusion and pain. Cordelia's personality disintegrates, and she becomes prey to truancy, exam failure, overeating and drugs. Does Elaine see this? She does, I think. Cordelia reminds Elaine of the holes she used to dig in her back garden:

'What did you want it for?', I ask.

'... I wanted some place that was all mine, where nobody could bug me. When I was little, I used to sit on a chair in the front hall. I used to think that if I kept very still and out of the way and didn't say anything, I would be safe'.

'Safe from what?' I say

'Just safe', she says. 'When I was really, I guess I used to get into trouble a lot, with Daddy. When he would lose his temper. You never knew when he was going to do it. "Wipe that smirk of your face" he would say. I used to stand up to him.

*(Elaine, realising the import of what Cordelia has told her, reacts badly and refuses to accept the guilt and shame she feels<sup>222</sup>.)*

A wave of blood goes up to my head ... There's the same flush of shame, of guilt and terror, and of cold disgust with myself ... I don't want to know. (abbreviated from p.253)

And part of Elaine's own inability to let go of Cordelia is her shame at not helping her when she met her as a young woman, at least for not giving the adult Cordelia the chance to explain her behaviour as a nine-year old. The adult Elaine does not want to know what Cordelia experienced because, I think, had she known much sooner, her ability to move

<sup>221</sup>See p.45, Chapter 1, here.

<sup>222</sup>As we will see in Chapter 7, refusing to acknowledge emotions such as guilt, shame or remorse, is a tactic used by abusers to avoid moral responsibility and culpability for their acts.

around in the world would have been very different: Elaine would have been a freer woman.

As a child, Elaine learns to faint to escape her torment and damages her feet to conceal her mental pain. Cordelia digs holes she wishes she could hide in and blisters her hands to mask her mental anguish. My pupil, Nancy, lashes out, as we know, and she chews her fingers. She invents stories to get attention and fantasises that she is not the Nancy everyone dislikes. What all three have in common is a longing to escape from their selves, their present and their torments and they (fictionally) exist in some deformed state, as coerced, manipulated and oppressed creatures, unable to practise what they value deeply (in so far as young children or adolescents can) or to choose to be and do. The conditions in which Elaine, Cordelia and Nancy are socialised will infect their capacity to form good relations, to value the right things in the right way. Their circumstances will deform their self-respect, and push them towards oppressive conditions because that is the norm of their existence. If they are dominated by the emotions of fear<sup>223</sup>, shame, anger and disgust, their capacity to act according to what they truly value will be undermined, and so might the capacities of those for whom they try to care. In experiencing these emotions, the three fictional characters may compare themselves to an ideal of their former selves, or what they could have been had their choices or circumstances been different. And if their emotions and judgements are dismissed as being of no consequence because of their age, gender or social standing, they are diminished even further since emotions are fundamental expressions of who they are and of what they value. Their autonomy and agency are, and may continue to be, compromised: they may, and do, struggle to shape their own life course or realise their own individual and unique potential. Additionally, the three girls do not care for each other in morally appropriate ways. Autonomy so circumscribed may scarcely meet the conditions required for equality, dignity, and self-respect.

Autonomy is the basic condition of being able to determine one's own goals, plans, values, commitments, experiences and so on. It should mean an entitlement to express one's emotions without fear of discrimination, dismissal or disparagement. Autonomy is self-determination (Friedman, 2003:4), self-reflectively endorsed. Expressed in Kantian terms, a free will is a fully determining will that is governed by a law that it gives to itself. Free will is not occasioned by an alien cause (Korsgaard, 2008:12) and so must be an autonomous

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<sup>223</sup>Too much or inappropriate fear lies at the heart of many common psychiatric problems: self-harm, obsessive-compulsive disorders, panic disorders and post-traumatic stress disorders. Fear, as LeDoux (1999:130) observes, is a 'core emotion in psychopathology'. I return to this theme in Chapter 6.

will. An agent who chooses or acts in ways that reflect her goals, plans and values, is expressing a distinctive self, an autonomous will (*GW*:4:446-448). Self-reflection may be deep or shallow, extensive or narrow, conscious or unconscious, depending on how cultivated or habituated are the goals, plan or values of the agent but it is part of autonomy because it partly determines behaviour (Friedman, 2003:5). If self-reflection is impeded in any way, through fear, manipulation, control or abuse for example, it becomes less effective and so, in turn, does autonomy. Autonomy may also be impeded by gender norms and by beliefs about biologically determined behaviours. Why self-reflect on one's role as mother, carer or as a person who ought to be compassionate, sympathetic or angry in a certain way? In Chapter 4, I outlined concerns with Noddings' ethic of care, noting it does not adequately incorporate concepts such as autonomy. Being 'suffused' with joy, being 'receptive' to the other, is all very well, but only if there is also some reasoning about the rightness of one's caring role, about one's plans and goals, and whether one is situated in circumstances that permit autonomy.

Individuals who are unfavoured and lack power, such as Nancy, Elaine and Cordelia, can be subject to abuse and made fearful, so reducing their autonomy, at least in certain environments, in the school or the family. These are inhibiting conditions which distort, though need not totally preclude, the agent's ability to reflect thoughtfully on her plans, goals and values, being forced or coerced to choose and act in ways that are not in accord with the unique person she is or would like to be. Nancy, Elaine and Cordelia, along with their mothers (see below) as carers, are, to varying degrees and for different reasons, not always able to be the unique individuals they would like to be, or even to be 'efficacious'<sup>224</sup> in their private and public worlds. Conforming to gender roles, including caring roles, may also have this impact on their efficacy, as I shall indicate.

As autonomy is an expression of what matters deeply to the agent (Friedman, 2003:7), it is also important to agency and to emotional wellbeing. What matters and to what degree may change over time, fluctuating as new situations or moral concerns confront the agent. How the agent reacts to external circumstances, what capacities she has to judge and act, reflect and issue from her stable of values, concerns and commitments, and the degree of autonomy she can exercise. Whatever these capacities and values, and they develop as a result of socialisation processes and her connections to her family, friends and community,

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<sup>224</sup>Efficacious in the Kantian sense of using instrumental reason to bring about certain states of affairs that the agent desires, but which are also universalisable in the sense of being acts that other rational agents could endorse as permissible. See Korsgaard's (2008) Introduction on the principles which constitute the agent.

they should, ideally, be self-reflectively chosen, valued, evaluated and re-evaluated<sup>225</sup>. Friedman (2003:12) argues, reasonably, that perspective, orientation, attitude and outlook ground the agent's autonomy, and are constitutive of the practical, self-reflective agent. If the agent is defined by or welded to and categorised by beliefs, practices and norms not her own, or not freely or reflectively chosen, that agent's autonomy is weakened. An obvious objection to such an account is to question how we can know what our values, wishes, commitments, goals and plans really are given that we are socialised beings. Indeed, how can we meaningfully speak of autonomy if our actions, preferences and tastes are biologically or neurologically determined? A woman who is brought up to conform to her biological destiny of being a mother, a carer, to be more compassionate than men, to be unsuited to competition and aggression, cannot really be autonomous: rather, she is heteronomous. She is a determined being acting at the behest of alien forces that are internal (her genes and hardwired feminine brain) and external (her family, community, society). But what happens to women's perspectives, orientations and attitudes when they are exposed to new ideas, presented with alternative interpretations to what is seemingly irrefutable? The general point I wish to make is that neither biological destiny nor social norms are fixed. We all have the capacity to do and to be in more diverse ways than we have been socialised to expect. That is, as human beings we have access to, by means of our ability to reason, 'possibilities for enlarged competences' (Herman, 2008:80) enabling us to choose from an acceptable range of choices. However, these competences are often denied to women on account of their caring role and assumed emotional simplicity. In the brief account I provided on Nancy, Elaine and Cordelia's circumstances, it is clear that the competences of the girls were reduced in varying ways. Nancy struggles on so many fronts. Elaine distrusts women and herself. Cordelia resorts to drugs and alcohol, never making use of her talents before she commits suicide.

If we place Nancy and Atwood's girls, carers, and oppressed women (the girls' mothers) within Isaiah Berlin's conception of autonomy, to what extent are they subjects, not objects, moved by reasons and conscious purposes which are their own? The girls, as they grow into maturity, will continue to act in ways that are contrary to what they really want to do and to be, feeling ambivalent about who they are as individuals and how to realise their individuality. This kind of ambivalence can be seen in the real world, with mothers, for example. In Asher's (2011) study on motherhood and equality, the mothers she

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<sup>225</sup> I acknowledge, with thanks again to David Carr, that a communitarian might question the extent to which goals or values can really be self-chosen.

interviewed said they had freely chosen to become pregnant. They were supported by their husbands and by their health institutions, and, to varying degrees, by social welfare and employment laws. However, it became more difficult for mothers to remain subjects, self-deciders and doers, realisers of their own plans and goals when their babies were so needy. Many did the bulk of the caring work and the majority gave up their jobs or took maternity leave. While they found being a mother a joyous experience, they also felt frustration and doubt when they realised the extent to which motherhood and domestic chores eroded their autonomy, their plans and goals and their sense of being a self. Women in these circumstances might be seen as ‘ambivalently’ autonomous (Friedman, 2006:14), particularly as women (and men) who wish to have families do not often have viable choices about whether to work or not. Institutional structures are organised in ways that can limit such choices: tax breaks, child care, health care structures, discrimination against mothers, flexible working time and partner support. When we factor in gender stereotypes and beliefs about gender, opportunities for autonomy become even more complex for both sexes, though in different ways, as I will show below.

While there are objections to autonomy, as conceived, for example, by Butler (1990), Dennett (1991) and Sandel (1996), I will not discuss these here as they are not germane to my general argument<sup>226</sup>. One objection does, however, remain relevant, following from some of the criticisms of the ‘masculinity’ of justice claims and liberal moral theory I made in Chapter 4 with regard to Noddings’ (1984) theory of care. The view that autonomy is too individualistic, rational, abstract and self-maximising and that autonomous agents are in danger of being too self-sufficient and removed from meaningful relationships, needs further attention. What matters, as noted in the previous chapter, is what kind of ‘individualism’ one has in mind. If all that the self-maximising agent is concerned with is gain at the expense of others, then her actions are morally suspect. If the autonomous agent does not take care of the relationships for which she is responsible, she is, again, morally suspect. An agent who disconnects herself from others or destroys relationships in the pursuit of self-interest is likely to encounter loneliness and scenes of wrecked relationships, bodies or minds. Whether these outcomes matter or not to the agent will be a variable of the agent’s moral literacy. The danger, on the other side, of relinquishing autonomy for the sake of intimate relations, is that an agent may fail to be a ‘tenacious advocate’ (Hampton, 2007:29) of herself, setting few ends of her own because she is so instrumental to achieving the ends of others. This is the position of very many

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<sup>226</sup>See Friedman (2003) for further discussion.

women, who, in conforming to the beliefs and demands of their gender role, are vulnerable to inequality, weak self-assertion and exploitation.

Further, as I argued in Chapter 4, excessive individualism is not a prerequisite to achieving autonomy because autonomous beings, as I have described them here, are social beings, mothers and fathers, who develop their wants, wishes, plans, goals and values in social relations with others. Neither is autonomy about the separation of reason from emotion, as some theorists would claim. Let me reiterate: emotions can be rational and they can give us reasons to act, though these need not be good reasons. Autonomous agents are rational agents who experience emotions that will be influenced by their personality, up-bringing and social context. A mother (or father) who chooses or acts in ways that reflect her goals, plans and values, is expressing a distinctive self, an autonomous will, while she loves and nourishes her children, partner and friends. Autonomy is an expression of what matters deeply to the agent, and we can assume that what matters deeply to a mother is that her children, partner and friends are happy and well cared-for. However, it may also matter that she can pursue her own goals and plans, to the extent that domestic, social and institutional structures will allow. There will, however, be limitations to her autonomy resulting from gender and asymmetries of power.

Criticisms of autonomy also suggest, as we saw in the previous chapter, that autonomy is a masculine, rather than a feminine, aspiration and ideal state. However, not to claim autonomy for women is, as noted, hazardous for gender equality: failing to claim autonomy serves to sustain a gendered division. This is because, as Kittay (1998:84) has argued, ‘gender identity formation and women’s subordination are intimately entwined, and women’s mothering is the linchpin in the complex’. Gendered selfhood begins in early childhood (Chodorow, 1978; Kittay, 1988). The primary caretakers for (almost) all children are women. Girls learn that they, in their turn, will become female caretakers. They will separate from the mother so as to be like her in the ‘reproduction of mothering’<sup>227</sup> but they will be less differentiated or separated from their mothers than boys, remaining enmeshed and defined by their close and personal relationships. Boys tend to define their personalities by radically differentiating and separating themselves from their mothers, to forge distinct identities that are anchored to independence and autonomy. The emotionality of nurturing and rearing, these very messy domains in which empathy, compassion, love, and pain prevail and suffuse relations, is where women will remain

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<sup>227</sup>Chodorow’s term and title of her (1978) acclaimed book.

entangled, apparently hard-wired to their predetermined role. Men, on the other hand, escape to the domains of cool objectivity, calm assessment, and rational self-pursuit. Middle class and wealthy women are more likely to achieve autonomy because they can transfer some of the responsibility and the burden of care to, usually, poor or ill-situated women<sup>228</sup>. But even these wealthy women will be responsible for looking for suitable care, and then ensuring that the care work is carried out to a good standard.

Why do men and women pursue these different domains? According to Baron-Cohen (2003a:1), a widely cited and highly influential neuro-scientist: ‘The female brain is predominantly hard-wired for empathy. The male brain is predominantly hard-wired for understanding and building systems’, an essential difference he traces to foetal testosterone exposure (I will return to this in the next section). Gender capacity is linked to testosterone, the ‘male’ hormone, taking us a little further from when our gender was fixed at ‘gestation’ to uterine chemical forces now imbuing us with those male capacities. However, Jordan-Young (2010) cites a variety of studies which contradict these findings, concluding that studies of prenatal hormones and sex-typed behaviour yield significantly different results across different study populations making it difficult to claim cohesive evidence for any aspect of sex-typed behaviour (2010:87). What deterministic conclusions seem to bypass is that, because human beings are ‘open in all directions’, emotionally, morally and intellectually, we have a rich capacity to develop in diverse ways, depending on our goals, values, commitments and beliefs, our freedom to be and to do. These capacities are important constituents of our autonomy (self-determined) and agency (what is necessary to constitute oneself as the author of one’s actions) as I have already argued. If either sex is limited in the range of emotions available to them, because of scientific ‘evidence’ of hardwired emotional capacity, or related assumptions of appropriate gendered expression, then neither sex can be said to be completely autonomous. To do emotion, Shields (2002:170) suggests, is to do gender. Men have emotions; women are emotional (p.171). Men get angry; women get mad. But when women do get mad, accusations of emotionality control what is significant, or not, about the legitimacy of their felt injustices (Campbell, 1994:57). Dismissing the anger of disadvantaged groups such as women, young girls like Nancy or Elaine, impoverishes them further by bringing them below the threshold of equality, below the do-doing levels of autonomy.

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<sup>228</sup>Kittay (1999) discusses the elusive nature of equality for women. Men, she notes, rarely share the responsibilities of dependency work, and rarely is the distribution of dependency work an issue of political discussion. That situation pertains in the UK.

Women's traditional roles as providers of care, nurture, sympathy, compassion and love, and their willingness to give up their careers and interests for the sake of those they love, are very convenient for those left free to pursue their own goals and plans, preserving their agency and autonomy as a result. Compassion and empathy are good emotional capacities for women helping them in their caretaking role which, if we go along with Baron-Cohen, we are hard-wired to fulfil. There is an assumption that empathy is a 'good' capacity because we put ourselves in the shoes of another. But, as I have suggested, empathy can go wrong. Women's sacrificial tendencies, especially towards their children, partners and close relations, and the cultural norms which deem these tendencies to be highly desirable characteristics of womanhood and femininity, are exemplary of a vicarious tendency in which one is so consumed by the other's situation that one's own needs are dismissed as unimportant. To return to the earlier point of reproducing mothering, children who observe their mothers' 'saintly' and 'devoted' behaviours are learning about the 'permissibility of their own exploitation by submitting to, and even supporting, their subservient role' (Hampton, 2007:53). Abused women, tend to have heightened sensitivity to the needs of their partners, anticipating their wants and desires in order to minimize opportunities for violence and aggression (Friedman, 2003:142). While they are preoccupied with strategies of survival and security, particularly for their children, such women cannot attend to their own needs and wants. Their adaptive strategies against violence may include deference, passivity and appeasement. Abused women, as a consequence, may struggle to be 'do-deciders'; they are acted on by alien wills, who govern all aspects of their existence. As I argued in the last chapter, some accounts of care ethics may also mean that women who care may struggle to be 'do-deciders' because of their approbation of selflessness and the risk that poses in turning the 'pathologies of women's lives into virtues' (Nussbaum, 1999a:76). This is why I spent some time arguing for care to be supported and understood from an alternative, liberal, philosophical platform. I claimed, too, that an ethics of care ought to be theorized with respect to the emotions and concepts such as autonomy, agency, respect of the intrinsic worth of the individual, and it ought not to rest on assumptions of what is right and natural for person to be. Care ethics ought to vigorously challenge the division of gendered labour and emotions.

To help provide some insight into how autonomy can be circumscribed and why both autonomy and a theory of emotions are essential to an ethic of care, let us return to the subtlety and complexity of emotions I referred to in Chapters 1-3. Complex emotions, I argued, such as envy and compassion, develop in social relations with others. They



express, further, concern about our own and others' attitudes, and, if properly cultivated over time, emotions are morally appropriate evaluations of people and their acts. That is, our desires, beliefs, wishes and so on, are essential to social and moral development. Autonomous agents, therefore, contra claims of ultra rationality, atomism, and excessive individualism, will have complex emotions and desires, beliefs and wishes. Emotions such as compassion, I also argued, are crucial for the development of complex social relationships and for a moral standpoint (Ben-Ze'ev, 2001) and they are, in turn, essential for good care. If we cannot imagine other agents suffering joy or pain then we cannot imagine them having moral rights and responsibilities, and we will care less. This is why, for example, the fictional pupils of Nancy's world and Elaine's friends cannot see their pain or distress, trampling so easily on their right to live free from stress and worry. The girls are not seen as emotionally complex individuals: they are either angry or sullen. Cordelia, manipulative and calculating, is more outwardly emotional, but she is morally obtuse, perhaps in part because of her need to exercise the power she lacks at home, to subrogate Cordelia for her father whose abuse she is powerless to resist. Cordelia's bullying is both a re-enactment of her own treatment and an attempt at self-assertion and some form of autonomy: she wants to be a somebody, even if a deformed somebody. As Elaine observes of paternal power: 'Darkness brings home the fathers, with their real, unspeakable power' while 'daytime is ruled by mothers' (p.164) but the daytime rulers fail to see and act on their daughters' unhappiness or to check their husbands' power.

Their mothers fail, I suggest, because their role is to be subservient to their husbands. Atwood's mothers police their children, controlling them with the threat of their fathers if they do not conform to domestic and social rules, and because they themselves are frightened of their husbands' powers. Their other role is to be caring and loving. But caring work is not seen as emotionally complex work but routine and monotonous, rarely calling upon the capacity to choose, decide, judge or discriminate<sup>229</sup>. Empathy is 'simply' imagining what another is feeling, and if one knows one's husband and children, then very little thought is required. This kind of work is, also, women's work and not valued as much as that of non-caring work. If, further, emotions have no thought, and are merely suffusions of feeling, as Noddings' asserts, reason has very little place in care work. The capacities essential for autonomy, such as critical self-reflection, reasoning and moral literacy, being able to determine one's own goals and plans, are not fully available to the

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<sup>229</sup>On the importance of reason, justice and moral literacy in the private sphere and intimate relations, see, for example, Kittay and Meyers (1989); Okin (1989); Sherman (1989); Friedman (1994); Herman (1996, 2008); Nussbaum (1999a); Houston (2002); Baier (2010).

mothers of Nancy, Elaine and Cordelia, or to Noddings' carers. This is also why abusive men can erase their intimate partner's identities, and justify their abuse to (I will return to this topic in Chapter 7). It is also, presumably, why Nancy and abused women can be so neglected at home: they are not emotionally or morally complex beings.

If one aspect of autonomy is the capacity to judge and to be motivated by deliberative moral principles, then the 'empirical realisation [of autonomy] is a function of well-formed values and evaluative skills' (Herman, 2008:128). If Nancy spends a lot of her time resisting taunts and neglect, protecting herself against this malice, it is hard to see where she will find the space, in her hostile world, to acquire the skills for good deliberation, to become morally literate, or to express meaningful autonomy and agency. To be autonomous is to have and to develop cultivated emotions along with intellectual and moral capacities that are responsive to, and evaluative of, one's own goals, plans, values, commitments, and so on. Being aware of one's own separateness and the separateness of the other is also important to a sense of autonomy, and to emotional wellbeing. Otherwise, one's emotional repertoire may be contingent and unstable, being only lightly tethered to one's own genuinely authored constitution. We can begin to imagine, then, how care can go wrong, stunting the capacities of the cared-for if the carer cannot, or will not, see the other as a person of value, worth and dignity, or as someone who has the capacity for emotional complexity. We can also begin to imagine how care can go wrong, stunting the capacities of the carer if she cannot, or will not, see herself as a person of value, worth and dignity, or as someone who has the capacity for emotional complexity. And we can also see how care can go wrong if a parent simply cannot, will not, or is not allowed to care for her children because she is frightened, full of anxiety or traumatised by violence (the theme of Chapter 7). Cultivating the requisite habits of feeling toward any human being in need requires 'a sensitivity to the needs of others that involves a whole pattern of emotional and psychological engagement' (Cottingham, 2000:312). If emotions are rich intelligent complexes and if we hold that an ethical life derives from 'deep structural traits of our character and personality,' then to live a caring life will depend upon the cultivation of emotional sensibilities (Cottingham, 2000:312-313). For Noddings, caring is 'the very bedrock of all successful education' (1992:27) and 'the primary aim of moral education is to produce people who will engage successfully in caring relations' (2010:394). But if we do not understand how to care in emotionally appropriate ways, then it may be difficult to achieve good care in schools.

Noddings (1984) may or may not believe in the innate capacities of the sexes, but, as noted, she does tend to refer to the carer as ‘she’ and the cared-for as ‘he’. I will now turn to ways in which gendered emotional capacity is supported by science which tends to be trusted, taken to be authoritative and hard to challenge, not least because of the complex, esoteric nature of genetic science, cognitive neuroscience or cellular biology. These are the frontiers of science where there are hopes to reveal the human being and her nature gene by gene and nerve by nerve, or so it seems.

### 5.3 The Context for Gender Differences: The Field of Science.

I have argued that individual beliefs, norms and expectations can circumscribe, or promote, the capacity for autonomy, and the capacity to do and to be. Gender, as I have also argued, is a stubbornly persistent way in which the capacity for autonomy can be circumscribed. Sex is irrefutable biological difference, while gender is the ineluctable expression of that difference. Interestingly, sex, in some important ways, can be seen as an effect of gender: the desire, perhaps the need, to confirm the truth of gender by finding the proof of its naturalness in sex difference<sup>230</sup>.

On Kaplan and Rogers’ (2003:20-21) analyses, one way to understand how such differences are constructed, maintained and then supported with ‘proof’, is to consider a hierarchy of orders of analyses that corresponds to physics, chemistry, biology, psychology and sociology, each level rising in complexity, from the first to the last. Notably philosophy does not make the list. It is possible to discuss behaviour at the level of the gene<sup>231</sup> but that would yield only incomplete and oversimplified explanations. At higher levels of complexity, understanding behaviour involves the whole individual interacting with her social environment. At birth, the brain is incomplete. It does not have a sex<sup>232</sup> although some persist in arguing the contrary<sup>233</sup>. Many of the connections between the nerve cells and other parts of the body are tentative, as with sex, requiring some environmental stimulation to become permanent, as with gender. The brain is hardened in

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<sup>230</sup>This is complex but, for example, babies born with indeterminate genitalia, that is without gender-specific physical sexual characteristics, tend to be, very quickly, ‘sexed’ so as to be able to conform to a gender type. See Fausto-Sterling (2000).

<sup>231</sup>The term ‘gene’ is ambiguous. The definition will change depending on what aspect of heredity is being researched (Balaban, 2003:299). To add to this complexity, ‘development’ has many layers. This is, in turn, complicated by DNA which, contrary to popular belief, is ‘not easily translated into developmental or functional information’ (p.300). Arguing for the innateness of sex is, at best, highly dubious.

<sup>232</sup>Fausto-Sterling (1992,2000); Fine (2008,2010a,b); Elliot (2010).

<sup>233</sup>Pinker (2002); Baron-Cohen (2003a,b); Gurian (2004); Gurian and Stevens (2005); Lai et al. (2012).

the first three years of life (and so with gender) and whilst it continues to harden in the first decade (Fausto-Sterling, 2000:240), it is not completely fixed then but continues to develop and change throughout our lives, as do we, though notions of gender tend to be well and truly fixed by the time we are adults. The plasticity of the brain, argues Fausto-Sterling (2000), makes it plausible that the body can incorporate gender-related experiences throughout life. The point of this is that gender is not fixed biologically: much of the work for that is done by society. In other words, gender is a 'situated accomplishment' (West and Fenstermaker 1995:21) based on social interaction at all levels of society in complex ways that reinforce beliefs about the naturalness and inevitability of gender and sex difference.

The intricate multiplicities at work at the societal level can be captured by the complexity of trying to understand the operations of the central nervous system:

The true nature of the central nervous system has eluded investigators because of its fully integrated, constantly changing structure and a symphony of chemical mediators. Each sensation, thought, feeling, movement and social interaction changes the structure and function of the brain. The mere presence of another living organism can have profound effects on the mind and body. (Arnstein, 1997:179, cited in Fausto-Sterling, 2000:242)

The pliancy of the central nervous system should be warning enough that we ought to be cautious about what we can claim as 'truth' or evidence of timeless nature. Although nothing should be taken as permanently fixed, our bodies are used to confirm and incorporate what science tells us is the case.

There are complex forces at work in the construction of something so fine, so intricate and so formidably complex, as the central nervous system (CNS), without which our organism could not function, let alone exist. The CNS, comprising the brain and spinal chord, is a complex whole, highly complex in its particulars as research on the corpus callosum, an area of nerve fibres that straddle the left and right hemisphere of the brain, reveals. However, Fausto-Sterling (2000:117) notes that complexity does not inhibit researchers or media correspondents from making reductionist, deterministic and rather outlandish claims that the corpus callosum could explain all physiological and social differences between the sexes. The debate on the corpus callosum (hereafter CC) began in 1982, based on a preliminary study of just nine males and five females, and concluding that the CC could explain certain gender differences, such as visuospatial functions. Further claims were made that the CC could explain all of the following: women's greater intuition (*Time*

magazine); inborn sex differences in mathematics (*Brain and Cognition*, 1994); why girls are less likely than boys to take physics and engineering (*Elle*); why women have stronger verbal skills (*The Boston Globe*), and that women think holistically because they are in touch with the rationality of the left hemisphere and the emotions of the right hemisphere simultaneously (*Newsweek*)<sup>234</sup>. The latter claim was rather unusual, because, as we have seen, the two are mutually exclusive on some accounts but, if we follow this line of reasoning, women are both rational and emotional.

If we accept such claims as these it follows that there will be no point in, for example, encouraging girls to take up maths, sciences or engineering because they are not hard-wired for these professions. Neither will there be any point in encouraging boys to be caring and compassionate or in persuading girls that their choices to do and to be are equal to the choices of boys. The issue is, of course, that these ‘differences’ are not hard wired, and neither are they to be found in the CC which is far from being a structure that can be so reduced as to offer simplistic causal explanations of sex difference. The data on which some of the claims I described above are based come from the size and shape of the CC. However, the size and shape of the CC are so irregular and complex that it is very difficult to get accurate measurements of this structure. Do these difficulties, along with differences in research methodologies, techniques and measurements, or attention to the different part of the CC, deter some scientists from making claims about sex difference, or at least encourage some concurrence that there are none? It seems not, according to Fausto-Sterling (2000:126), who bases her research on the particular problem of the CC methodology, techniques and measurements in a study of thirty-four scientific papers published between 1982 and 1997. Drawn from studies of the CC, researchers in Fausto-Sterling’s study drew conclusions about size, function, changes in age, sex, gender, depending on the statistical approach to difference, including within and between group variation. Can researchers ‘know’ for sure about sex differences, if there are any, emanating from the CC, or indeed any part of the human body? Our response will depend on what we understand ‘know’ to mean. The epistemological bases of CC research differ, as I have suggested, so there is no single, unified ‘know’ in this sense. Further, the questions the researchers want to ask, which ones they will abandon or set aside as the research progresses, which data will be selected for further investigation, how the research is linked to their research or funding communities, and, indeed, the communities of beliefs, norms, values and so on, to which all researchers belong, all add to the epistemological

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<sup>234</sup>These examples are cited in Fausto-Sterling (2000:116-117).

complexity of ‘knowing’. Caution is, however, necessarily apposite with respect to these so-called ‘scientific’ claims about sex difference and gender.

The CC, along with other mechanisms, functions and parts of the body, acts as ‘fly paper’ (Fausto-Sterling, 2000:119) for hopes, wishes, beliefs and certainties of sex and gender differences, trapping whatever happens to fly past it. Nelly Oudshoorn<sup>235</sup> (1994:16-17) argues that early 20<sup>th</sup> century endocrinologists sought, created tests for, and classified sex hormones according to pre-existing beliefs about sex differences, and preconceived ideas about masculinity and femininity, for which the androgens, sex hormones, were the ‘chemical messengers’. Scientists, determined to find causes for sex difference in specifically male (testosterone) and female (oestrogen) androgens, had some difficulty with research that showed that males and females produce and use these hormones, not only for sex reproduction and development, but for a wide variety of functions such as liver function, bone growth, blood cell formation and carbohydrate metabolism (Jordan-Young, 2011:24). These hormones affect organs throughout the body, and are not specific to either sex<sup>236</sup>. To complicate matters further, male and female hormones come in several molecular varieties, as a family of chemically related compounds with similar biological properties (Fausto-Sterling, 2000:181-182): the hormones are but two amongst many. Although the term ‘sex-hormone’ is utterly inaccurate for what are multi-site chemical growth regulators, the label endures, and many of us have little idea that these chemicals have a function beyond sex, or that they have no sex at all. Gender is chemical even while there is no clear-cut source of hormonal sex difference. Sex hormone research has been profitable, however, for pharmaceutical companies who manufacture oestrogen and progesterone based medicines for contraceptives, post-menopausal women and agricultural livestock. It is also convenient to label hormones as packages of sex because that fits with our dualistic systems of gender. Such dualisms, on Plumwood’s (1993:43) analysis, consist of, for example:

Reason-male-mind-master-freedom-human-civilised-production-self  
Nature-female-body-slave-necessity-nature-primitive-reproduction-other

The dualisms map onto each other and are interdependent, Plumwood (1993) claims, shaping the identity of each side, while interdependency is denied or kept invisible. Care,

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<sup>235</sup>For the history of how sex hormones became gendered see Fausto-Sterling (2000); Oudshoorn (1994); Jordan-Young (2011). These writers draw on extensive research for how and why hormones have become strongly associated with sex, and thence gender.

<sup>236</sup>See also Fausto-Sterling (2000).

as we saw in the previous chapter, maps onto this picture very well. Cultures, be they scientific, political, media, or social, absorb such dualisms ‘as a store of weapons which can be mined, refined, and redeployed’ (Plumwood, 2003:43). Scientists often cannot see the belief systems weaving their way into their work, and so ‘they labour with partial sight... Gender and science form a system that operates as a single unit...’ (Fausto-Sterling, 2000:194).

Another popular flypaper for ‘proof’ of sex difference is neuroendocrinology, from which we learn that early exposure to different ‘sex’ hormones apparently results in sexed brains<sup>237</sup>. Lise Elliot, a biologist studying the plasticity of the brain, has made an exhaustive study of the research into differences between the sexes’ brains and concluded that there are only two facts that have been reliably proven so far. The first is that boys’ brains are bigger than girls by between 8 and 11 percent, a difference reflecting the height and weight differential of boys and girls. The second reliable finding is that girls’ brains finish growing about one to two years earlier than the brains of boys, reflecting the different maturation rates of the sexes, with girls entering into puberty a year or two before boys. So the brains of boys and girls are very similar and less sexually differentiated than those of adult men and women (Elliot, 2001:5). Nevertheless, the belief that the brain is sexed is still widespread and popularly accepted. Women’s brains, argues Brizendine (2006), have unique capacities, including verbal dexterity, the ability to form deep bonds of friendship and the capacity to read for emotions and states of minds, talents which men lack<sup>238</sup>. But the evidence for these differences comes from studies of adult men and women (Eliot, 2011:9). How can we be certain that such differences have not arisen from years of inculcation and nourishment from gendered stereotyping? Given the plasticity of the brain, the influence of epigenetic factors on the human brain, it is highly likely that these differences are not innate, solely biologically determined or fixed. For example, out of 124 extensively studied psychological traits that show sex difference, such as moral reasoning,

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<sup>237</sup>See Fausto-Sterling (1992, 2000); Fine (2010a,b); Jordan-Young (2010); Eliot (2011) for good critiques of this research and its doubtful claims for hormonal influences on sexing the brain.

<sup>238</sup>Brizendine claims that female foetuses grow more neural connections in the brain male foetuses. However, there is little, if any, credible scientific evidence to support these claims. See Fine (2010a: 259, fn.3.) In a review of the book, Jordan-Young and Balaban (2006) wrote that the *Female Brain* failed to meet ‘even the most basic standards of scientific accuracy and balance’, and was ‘riddled with errors’ (p.634). The problem with explanations of sex differences ‘is not that they are overly biological, but that they are fundamentally non-biological and explain nothing’ (p.364). Mark Liberman, a linguist, has also criticized Brizendine for her lack of relevant scientific sources and her claims about female communication skills. See <http://itre.cis.upenn.edu/~myl/languagelog/archives/004370.html>. Liberman also debunks Leonard Sax’s (2006) claims (along with many others who misuse science) criticising him for over-interpretation and over-generalisation of cognitive science research, see <http://itre.cis.upenn.edu/~myl/languagelog/archives/003284.html>.

aggression and a range of academic skills, psychologist Janet Hyde (2005, cited in Eliot, 2011:13) could only find 96 different traits and these fell in the small-difference range, with  $d$  values<sup>239</sup> of less than 0.35. Where there are extremes between the sexes, such as in ADHD and dyslexia (which affect males more than females), or performance in mathematics, in which men, generally, do better than women, (or so it seems<sup>240</sup>) these make the headlines: the values which show similarities do not (Eliot, 2011).

Claims about male and female capacity, in whatever field, have consequences for men and women's ability to pursue their innate talents and achieve autonomy. Neuroscience is being 'insidiously misused' (Eliot, 2011:9), influencing how we see ourselves as individuals with gendered identities and changing the way boys and girls are educated. Exemplifying this, Pinker (2002) confidently asserts that 'women experience basic emotions more intensely, except anger', they feel more empathy towards friends, smile and laugh more often (p.345) and he continues: 'Learning and socialisation can affect the microstructure and functioning of the human brain of course, but probably not the size of its visible anatomical structures' (p.345). How do these anatomical structures affect behaviour? Research suggests that the amygdala, to which Pinker is referring, is larger in men than in women, and that it is important for sexual arousal in men but not in women (Eliot, 2011:290-291). However, both sexes experience arousal, and brain growth is unaffected by puberty, as are core personalities and cognitive development. That men are taller than women generally is no indication of cognitive capacity, individual talent, skill or potential or emotional capacities.

Science, allied with beliefs about gender, remains, nonetheless, a potent dimorphic schema that can influence, quite profoundly, how we perceive our status, attributes, and behaviour, both actual and imagined. There is a plethora of research, for example, to show that ascriptions of gender will have a significant impact on the way we perceive emotions and the behaviour of children (Jordan-Young, 2011:249)<sup>241</sup>. Baron-Cohen (2003a;b), however,

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<sup>239</sup>Statistically, the  $d$  value is the difference value, calculated by subtracting a mean score on a given test for one group, say females, from the mean score of another, males. The result is divided by the standard deviation of both groups. The results are, usually, shown as a bell curve to indicate the overall spread of abilities. Differences are considered small when the  $d$  value is around 0.2, positive or negative, medium when the  $d$  value is 0.5 and large if the value is higher than 0.8. See Eliot (2011:11).

<sup>240</sup>See research by Andreescu et al. (2008) that points to the influence of cultural and educational systems and attitudes, not sex, on mathematical aptitude and performance.

<sup>241</sup>And see Condry and Condry's (2006) study of 200 adults' perceptions of a baby's reaction to a toy in which they were ascribed emotions depending not on what the observers saw on their faces, but on how they thought a baby boy or baby girl should react: their descriptions were gendered.



is clear that boys are natural systematisers whilst girls are natural empathisers<sup>242</sup>. To test this assertion, in a study that has become a cornerstone for claims about innate differences<sup>243</sup> according to Nash and Grossi (2007), Jennifer Conellan et al. (2000) with Baron-Cohen filmed 102 day old infants to measure how long boys and girls looked at a face and a mobile phone. Both boys and girls looked, on average, at the face for equal amounts of time. Boys, however, showed more interest than girls in the mobile phone, looking at it for 51 percent of the time, compared to 41 percent for girls. Girls on average spent 49 percent more of their total looking time looking at the face compared to boys who looked at it for 41 percent of the time. The researchers claimed that they had ‘demonstrated that at 1 day old, human neonates demonstrate sexual dimorphism in both social and mechanical perception’ (Conellan et al., 2000:116). The study excited much comment and confident conclusions because day-olds would not have not been ex-utero long enough to have been socialized. The study ‘proved’ that girls were hardwired for empathy and boys for interest in detail and systems building. The implications for careers were clear: girls should aim to be carers – teachers, nurses, and social workers. Boys should aim to be engineers and physicists<sup>244</sup>. However, there were problems with this study (Nash and Grossi, 2007). Firstly, newborns are difficult to study. Their attention spans are variable and they drift amongst various states of consciousness. There are methodologies which take account of these difficulties but Conellan and her team did not apply them. For example, the preference for faces represents a perceptual bias preference for patterns, rather than for faces *per se* but the face the babies looked at was the face that of a female researcher who knew the sex of the child and could have moved her face to increase salience (Nash and Grossi, 2007:8-9). The conclusions of the findings, that there are dimorphic sex differences, based on the statistical analyses, which were also problematic, were not ‘proved beyond a reasonable doubt’, and the comparisons between the length of time spent looking at the mobile phone or the face were not significant (Conellan et al, 2000:114).

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<sup>242</sup>See Eliot (2011) who agrees that women are more empathetic but notes that whilst, in self-report studies, women often report that they are empathetic, the size of the difference is not as great as many suppose and women’s views of their empathetic capacity is coloured by their desire to be empathetic, and so conform to the gender stereotype. Men report less empathy, but, similarly, this may be coloured by their desire to appear unaffected and masculine (p.260-261). Whilst tests to measure how well men and women interpret emotions from other people’s faces do show women are faster and more accurate, the size of the difference is small and reveals that a third of the men were better than women at recognising facial expression.

<sup>243</sup>The authors cite Pinker, who warmly endorsed the test methods in a letter to the New York Times in August 2005, suggesting that Baron-Cohen and his colleagues had provided the ‘most sophisticated research on the nature and origin of sex difference in cognition’.

<sup>244</sup>See, for example, Baron-Cohen (2003a,b; 2012); Sax (2006). Baron-Cohen traces the essential difference between the sexes to foetal-testosterone. For criticisms see Jordan-Young (2010) who cites a number of studies which contradict, or at least raise doubts about, Baron-Cohen’s research claims and methods on the effects of testosterone on sex-typed interests and components of empathy.

Further, the findings of the study have not been replicated. Instead, ‘When preferences for real faces over face-like patterns emerge in three-month olds, they are found for girls and boys alike’ (Turati et al., 2005, cited in Nash and Grossi, 2007:11). If the research had been conclusive, boys and girls should continue to diverge in their innate capacities for empathy and social intelligence and reasoning skills: but they do not. Individuals may well vary in their capacity for empathy or reasoning abilities (systematising) but, as a group, the sexes do not<sup>245</sup>. However, if women are not present in great numbers in the sciences or mathematics, that may have something to do with beliefs about boys’ and girls’ innate skills, how they are consequently socialized, and which subjects, courses and careers they are encouraged to take (Prosser, 2006; SEED 2006,2007). Moreover, women’s absences from the upper echelons of these fields, and other competitive and ‘masculine’ professions, may have much more to do with how we ‘see’ women than how women actually ‘are’. Narrow reproductive differences are, of course, not denied. They exist. But biological difference is surely no reason for inequality of opportunity. Ought women to stay at home, asks Socrates, ‘on the grounds that the bearing and rearing of their puppies incapacitates them from other duties...?’ (*The Republic*, 2007:451d). To Glaucon’s response that men and women should share all duties, but recognise women as weaker than men, Socrates responds:

And can you use any animal for the same purpose as another...unless you bring it up and train it in the same way?’ (415e)

... if the only difference between them is that female bears and male begets, we shall not admit that this is a difference relevance for our purpose (454e).

Women’s ‘natures’, reproductive differences between men and women, and beliefs about hardwired differences, all entail a division of domestic and nurturing labour and that, in turn, ensures their unequal status with men as I shall now demonstrate in the final main section of this chapter.

#### **5.4 Gendering Emotions, Gendering Roles.**

Empirical research confirms the gendered nature of emotional expression. Hutson-Comeaux and Kelly (2002:1) claim that stereotypes regarding individual emotions such as anger and sadness are gender-specific. They studied the reactions of 60 women and 117

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<sup>245</sup>See Nash and Grossi (2007) for further evidence that brings into question claims about widely believed sex differences in cognitive abilities and empathizing capacity.

men presented with 16 scenarios depicting male and female actors over-reacting to eight female (happiness) and eight male consistent (anger) emotional events, four in an interpersonal context and four in 'an achievement context (i.e., work- and goal-related events' (2002: 4). Whilst both sexes were negatively evaluated when over-reacting to gender-consistent emotional events, women's over-reactions to happy events were judged less appropriate than the same over-reactions by men. Especially in interpersonal contexts, men's over-reactions to angry events were judged less appropriate than women's overreactions, providing some support for the 'emotional double-bind effect' in which both sexes:

are expected to express particular emotions (and their behavior is judged as inappropriate when that emotion is not expressed) but are judged as inappropriate when those emotions are expressed in an extreme manner (Hutson-Comeaux and Kelly, 2002:7).

Such an effect, Hutson-Comeaux and Kelly suggest, could lead to limiting the range of emotional expressions available to women, encouraging them to express positive emotions 'rather than being able to express a full range of emotional intensities' whilst gender-inconsistent emotional reactions could 'provide more veridical information and thus legitimize the emotional expression' (p.7). Men's over-reactions to happy events were judged more sincere than women's over-reactions but women's over-reactions to angry events were judged more sincere than men's. Both sexes were judged to be more sincere expressing gender-inconsistent emotions thereby providing some evidence that gender-inconsistent emotional over-reactions will be judged more valid or sincere than gender-consistent reactions. In turn, argue Hutson-Comeaux and Kelly (2002:8), 'gender stereotypes appeared to create expectancies for behavior that influenced its informativeness'. Moreover, as these findings occurred mainly with respect to scenarios in the interpersonal context, that provides further support for the over-reactions of women to angry events in work-related situations being judged less appropriate than men's reactions and lead Hutson-Comeaux and Kelly (2002:8) to question why it is more appropriate to overreact to a happy event in an interpersonal context and to call for more research to enable a better understanding of 'the context specificity of emotion stereotypes'. Of particular relevance to my study, is that Hutson-Comeaux and Kelly's research demonstrated that women were expected to be more expressive in other-orientated events, while men were expected to be more expressive in self-orientated contexts in which they were, of course, autonomous/agentive. Men or women who deviate too far from what is expected of them emotionally meet with negative social sanctions. Men who cry might be judged weak, while women who become 'too' angry may be regarded as bitter and their

emotional reactions dismissed as over-reactions not worthy of serious consideration (Campbell, 1994). Gender inconsistent reactions and gender stereotyping of emotions can become more complicated for women than men with women caught in a double bind as expressiveness and social control can both be negatively evaluated (Shields, 1997). Women who are not emotional may be regarded as cold or their expressiveness viewed as overblown.

Such empirical research findings, and Campbell (1994), Shields (1997) and Hutson-Comeaux and Kelly (2002) cite a wide range of supporting studies, lend empirical weight to my argument that, for both men and women, to stereotype emotions along gender lines and to evaluate their expressions differently is to limit the range of emotional expression available to them. Empirical findings suggest that gendered expectations and beliefs of emotional expressions can distort the interpretation of emotions' epistemology. We assess a reaction not solely on the basis of the person who expresses the emotion, but on their gender, potentially undermining not only the sincerity of the person who is happy, sad, or angry, but also their integrity. If we suppress our emotions, in effect if we conform to gendered expectations in order to be positively evaluated by our peers and intimates, that suppression, as noted earlier, can have ill effects and lower self-esteem. Self-esteem is, as I have argued, an important constituent of autonomy and agency, as it is of one's dignity, and that holds, of course, for both men and women. On these grounds, gendered expectations require consideration in an exploration of emotional expression.

Boys are more likely to experience high levels of self-esteem than are girls<sup>246</sup>. This is important because girls' feelings of vulnerability and tendency to feel negative emotions can impair not only their access to the full range of emotions but, also, their levels of academic and professional confidence (Eliot, 201:257). Girls' suppression of anger and aggression can lead to interpersonal stress and depression. Relational aggression among girls is a significant cause of loneliness and isolation of victims, and can cause harm to the perpetrators who are jostling for power and status, as we saw with Elaine and Cordelia earlier in this chapter. We also encountered this with Nancy. Many boys experience relational aggression, but often not to the same degree as girls because they have approved outlets for ritualised aggression: sport, rough activities, playing aggressive video games. Girls also have access to these activities, but perhaps avail themselves of them less frequently than boys. In any case, girls are not encouraged to be angry whilst acts of 'soft

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<sup>246</sup>See Kling et al.'s (1999) survey of more than two hundred studies measuring self-esteem, from which they concluded that whilst differences were small, men's self-esteem was shown to be higher than women's at every stage of life.

tactility', such as holding hands, gentle hugs or kissing, are not acceptable for boys and men. Those boys who do display such soft behaviour may be socially stigmatised and thus homosexualised (Anderson, 2011:732). Epstein et al. (2001) suggest that young boys are expected to prove they are '“real boys” in ways that mark them as masculine, even macho, and therefore (by definition) heterosexual' (p.135). The homophobia explicit in denigrating 'feminine' behaviour, limits their behaviour, simultaneously functioning to promote the maintenance of heterosexual power, while subjugating women (Anderson et al., 2011).

Burke and Attridge (2011) undertook a study that examined gender differences in family, personality, work style and leadership among high earning professionals. These women and men were similar on most of the measures tested, including parental and early-life experiences, work styles and leadership styles but twice as many women as men reported experiencing prejudice or discrimination at work (p.207). A majority of men and women acknowledged gender-specific obstacles, such as childbearing and shouldering the burden for greater family care responsibilities, to career success for women in general, and being a successful leader also was defined somewhat differently for women than for men (p.207)<sup>247</sup>. Explaining the paucity of women at the top of many professions, Asher (2011) suggests that becoming a mother can entail a profound break with career aspirations, affecting earning potential, opportunities for promotion, and equal parenting. She notes the wide disparity between men and women's experience of parenthood, and the 'glacial slowness' of progress towards domestic equality (p.8). Three quarters of mothers claim primary responsibility for the care of their children, a source of marital stress, with only four percent reporting that this responsibility is shared by their partner (Lewis et al., 2009:34)<sup>248</sup>. However, in the same report, only 29 percent of respondents believed that childcare was the primary responsibility of the mother, and men and women had differing perceptions on the extent to which childcare was shared. 31 percent of men stated that they shared childcare with their partner but only 14 percent of women agreed (p.35). In this study, perceptions of domestic involvement clearly differ between men and women and, arguably, between desired and real states of affairs. Segregated family roles leave many women feeling trapped and excluded, contributing to unhappy families according to Asher (2011:23). Fathers' low involvement in childcare and domestic responsibilities increases the risk of divorce, particularly if the mother has had a previous job and 'In economic and

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<sup>247</sup>See Jordan-Young (2011) for similar studies.

<sup>248</sup>Also cited in Asher (2011:19).

sociological research, there has been too great an emphasis on women's paid work and not enough attention given to the division of unpaid work' (Sigle-Rushton, 2010: 22)<sup>249</sup>. Sigle-Rushton (2010) also suggests that measures of subjective wellbeing should be incorporated in empirical studies of individual and household behaviours, a suggestion I endorse and a theme I will return to in the concluding chapter. Of course, I have pointed here to but a fragment of the data and analyses available on gender segregation but what emerges is that gender norms, begin and endure throughout a child's life into adulthood and such norms will surely include the cultivation of gendered emotions. Once a pregnancy is confirmed by health officials, a woman moves inevitably into women-centred natal care (Asher, 2011:35)<sup>250</sup>. Here we see in action Shield's (1992) observation of gender being fixed at 'gestation', arguably reinforcing the simple dichotomy between men and women's reasoning and emotional natures, a dichotomy that is fixed, as Mill discerned, 'beforehand on some general presumption, that certain persons are not fit to do certain things' (2006:151).

I have sought to indicate here that gendered stereotypes, including those related and pertaining to emotion, can be powerful, even damaging, to mental and physical health and wellbeing (Brody, 1997; Syed, 2008). The systematic suppression of human emotional capacity is a major source of gender and class division and discrimination (Syed, 2008:186), especially if men or women transgress their expected stereotypical roles. Such role expectations, of course, transcend gender. If they transgress Islamic norms in the workplace, Muslim women, for example, may express negative states based on emotions of guilt, shame (when they cannot control events that go wrong) or fear<sup>251</sup>. As we have seen already, beliefs about the scientific basis of innate difference play into gendered emotional stereotyping and will likely shape the way we socialize children, as well as guide our interpretations of and reactions to emotions expressed by others and ourselves. Girls will be nurtured to feel greater compassion and sympathy, and therefore to care more for others, than boys. The obvious problem with such reductionist arguments, and the

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<sup>249</sup>The UK coalition government, especially post the August 2011 riots, when the question of single parents was once again raised as a source of young rioters' lawlessness, ought surely to be aware of the effects of segregated parenting roles. See for example <http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/uk-world-news/2011/08/15/english-riots-david-cameron-blames-the-parents-for-mayhem-86908-23346519/>. The latest report from the Centre for Social Justice (October, 2011) does not talk of improving gender disparity in domestic involvement in its recommendations on how to prevent family breakdown.

<sup>250</sup>One way in which governments or health services could lessen gender disparity is to include men in every aspect of neo- and post-natal care.

<sup>251</sup>Syed also notes that Muslim girls' experience of having lower status and preference than her brothers curtails the expression of certain emotions such as aggression (2008:191). This curtailment explains the women's typical shyness, lack of confidence and self-assurance.

apparently logical conclusions they lead us to make, is that they reduce, in effect, autonomy or agency. These beliefs mean that we are what our genes or our hormones determine us to be. If men are not hardwired to empathise to the same degree as women, but are by nature system builders, then men ought to realise their potential by, as Levy ironically suggests ‘understanding the world and building and repairing the things we need in it’ while women should get on with ‘putting people at their ease’ (2004:319-320).

Whilst gendered stereotyping can lead to a restricted repertoire of ‘acceptable’ emotional expression, in the workplace it can also lead to disadvantages for women and their career opportunities. In studies to test hypotheses on the relationship between gender, emotional expression (anger) and status conferral, Brescoll and Uhlman (2008)<sup>252</sup> found that male and female evaluators conferred lower status on female professionals deemed to be angry than on angry male professionals, regardless of occupation or job status. Women’s emotional reactions were attributed to dispositional states such as ‘she is an angry person’ (p.268) with angry women regarded as less competent at dealing with workplace situations (p.273)<sup>253</sup> and, as a result, less likely than men to be accorded status in the workplace. By contrast, men’s reactions were attributed to objective, external circumstances (p.273), supporting Shields’ (2002) argument that anger is a status emotion that can enhance the power of men but lower the status of women. Ben-Ze’ev (2001) (and see below) also argues that emotions interpreted from and accorded status depending on a person’s rank, colour, ethnic group or gender. Such ‘emotional display rules’ (Ekman and Friesen, 1969) are, according to Ekman (1984:320), ‘over-learned habits’ about who is or is not permitted to show what emotion. If we are content to follow these emotional display rules then women should not show anger, except in maternal roles with children. Men should not cry. But in early childhood there is no significant sex difference in emotional expression between the sexes. Boys, however, are socialised out of crying so as to assume the male stereotype of ‘toughness’ and by the age of 11, boys are 20 percent less likely to cry than girls and, by the age of 16, 40 percent less likely to do so (Eliot, 2011:254). Boys still feel

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<sup>252</sup>See also Swan (2008) who writes of therapeutic practices in the workplace. She cites Furedi (2003) who is concerned about the feminization of the self and the workplace, believing the ‘emotionalism’ of women, black middle-class and working-class and white working class people is ‘marginalizing emotional self-control, rationality, invulnerability and independence’ (p.90). For Swan such beliefs can be read as a fear of ‘white middle class emasculation’ (p.93) with Furedi claiming that the preference for feminine emotions has led to a ‘gender hierarchy’ with ‘women at the top, feminine men at the bottom’ (p.93) in a hierarchy ‘hostile to self-reliance and self-control’ (p.93). See, too, Faludi (1993) for accounts of the backlash against feminism.

the emotions, but learn not display their feelings, adopting instead the ‘mask of masculinity’ (p.254). The impact on health, Eliot notes, of constantly suppressing emotions such as sadness, shame or sympathy, is to increase mental health problems and the inability of some men to connect to others (p.255). Girls, on the other hand, can display and confess vulnerable feelings because they are expected to be more vulnerable and to display that vulnerability. Again, this helps explain why women care for and about people, and are directed into the caring professions. Even if it were deemed desirable, Nancy, however, might not be permitted this outlet. Nancy is not a girl who has high status and she is not a member of any favoured in-group. If she tried to express feelings that indicated her vulnerability by crying, becoming distressed or angry, she would likely embarrass her peers or incite mockery and I shall return to this later.

We see, in both the workplace and the home, further examples of emotional display rules that affect women. Women are more likely to express shame as an ‘internalization of the idea that they deserve less status’ than men (Brody, 1997:385; Syed, 2008)<sup>254</sup>. A woman may express guilt when promoted to a position of higher power than men (Brody, 1997) and she may over-compensate at home if she holds a higher status job than her husband (Fine, 2011a). The status hypothesis, as Eliot (2011:152) notes, may also provide another explanation for why women may smile more than men. Women may need to smile more and be faster and more accurate in reading faces in order to avert aggression, the more so the more unequal the relationship. Eliot (2011:262) suggests, too, that both men and women are more sensitive to the emotion expressed on men’s faces than on women’s and men are especially attuned to reading men’s facial anger. Women also tend to score well on the Interpersonal Perception Task (IPT) as demonstrated in Koenig and Eagly’s (2005) enquiry that sought to examine if women’s greater empathy gave them an unfair advantage over men in social settings. Research participants were all told they were undertaking a test of social sensitivity. One group was told that men do less well than women on such tests, while the second group was given test information in a gender neutral manner, that is with no information about men or women scoring higher or lower than each other. The men in the group given the gender loaded information did slightly worse than the women. In the gender-neutral group, men performed as well as women. What this study seems to show is that if we are primed by our gender, we will think in gender terms, assuming the behaviours, gestures and emotional expressions of that gender. If you tell me that, because I am a woman, it is natural for me to be more compassionate than a man, I may well

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<sup>254</sup>We will see this at work in the next chapter.



conform to the emotional expression of compassion and caring. If I am told that I will be more attractive to men if I smile and display happiness than if I display pride<sup>255</sup> then, again, I may well tend to conform to that emotional display. Nancy, if she is told her angry outbursts and refusal to smile are 'un-ladylike', may well be less inclined to conform, especially if her refusal to comply with what is expected has become part of her emotional defence. To that extent we might applaud her resistance of gender stereotyping but such resistance might well lead to further negative consequences from teachers and peers alike.

In a further apposite enquiry for my study, Graham and Ickes (1997) devised an empathic accuracy test to infer the thoughts and feelings of others. In a three-part experiment, two people were partnered and asked to wait while the experimenter changed a light bulb. As they waited for the experiment to begin, their interactions were covertly filmed for six minutes. When the experimenter returned to explain the true purpose of the experiment, the participants were asked if they would like to view the film, stopping the tape to record a thought or feeling, and noting whether it was positive, negative or neutral. Finally, the film was replayed but this time it was stopped when the partner reported a thought or a feeling. The other participant now had to infer what her or his partner was thinking or feeling. Once finished, the inferences and reported thoughts and feelings were compared. In the first seven studies, no gender differences were found in married couples, heterosexual couples, strangers, all female or all male groups, or across state or country (Ickes, 2003). However, gender differences emerged in the next three studies in which the researchers had modified their instructions to the participants, asking them, now, to gauge how accurate they thought were their interpretations of the others' thoughts and feelings. Ickes' conclusion was that including a question on the accuracy of their perceptions of others' thoughts and feelings primed women to be more empathetic. He suggests that this research provides further corroboration for what he describes as compelling evidence that women will show greater empathetic accuracy than men when they know that this is being measured and when, consequently, they may consciously conform to expected gender stereotyping (2003: 135)<sup>256</sup>.

These studies reveal that context, socialisation processes and cultural beliefs are key determinants of emotional capacity and expression and that hormones or genes may be far

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<sup>255</sup>See Tracy and Beall (2011).

<sup>256</sup>And see Ickes et al., (2000). Fine (2011a) also cites a study by Klein and Hodges (2001:21) in which the empathy difference between men and women disappears when financial incentives are introduced: both sexes do well and accuracy increased when they were offered \$2 for every correct answer.

less important than some scientists and commentators would have us believe. As I stated in the introduction, and subsequently argued, I follow the view that human beings are ‘open in all directions’ and that we are not pre-determined, pre-destined creatures. The plasticity of our brains and our ability to reason ensures our potential for diversity and growth. But gender, especially gendered stereotypes played out with regard to expected and acceptable emotional expression, can clearly limit that potential and so limit our autonomy, especially if we uncritically accept the findings of so-called science.

## 5.5 Concluding Chapter Five.

We cannot claim to be autonomous beings, capable of making rational choices if we act at the behest of our genes and hormones, rather than on moral deliberations informed by emotions and intellect. Our actions constitute who we are, not our genes: genes do not act for reasons. What count as reasons are principles, and principles describe something essential about our deliberations, as well as the content of those deliberations. These deliberations, in turn, say something about the kind of person we are, who we wish to be, and how we might like to appear to others. If one goes to the extent of asserting that our thoughts and decision making powers are largely physically caused, that not only disempowers human agency, our acts cannot truly be our own, at least not in a reasoning way, but it also seems to suggest that if we are not choice making creatures, then we lose, with that capacity, our dignity.

Autonomy is a capacity that is employed in the context of rational deliberation (Hill 1992:92) in which we might ask ‘what is the situation at hand?’, ‘how am I to read it?’ and ‘what should I do?’ Determinism, as Hill (92-93) advises, ‘offers no guidance on how to act’. It is not, therefore, relevant to rational deliberation, or to deciding what sort of reasons have weight. Autonomy, in sum, includes the idea that we are committed to:

both a principle of self-respect...that includes respect for other rational agents. The former requires that – one’s choices be justified to oneself not merely *at the moment*, but over *time*, and not merely as one reflects on the *products* of one’s choices but also as one reflects on *the sort of person one makes of oneself* by these choices. (Hill, 1992:90)

As we will see in the next chapter, respect for women and children as rational agents, who are encouraged to make choices that reflect their values, plans and goals, are curtailed in exploitative and abusive relationships, so threatening their emotional wellbeing.

## Chapter Six: Emotional Wellbeing – Threats and Capabilities.

*Imagine ... being afraid to go to sleep at night, being afraid to wake up in the morning.*

*Imagine ... being denied food, warmth or sleep.*

*Imagine ... being punched, slapped, hit, bitten, pinched and kicked.*

*Imagine ... being pushed, shoved, burnt, strangled, raped, beaten.*

*Imagine ... that you can't face the shame of admitting what's really going on to family or friends.*

*Imagine a future without fear.<sup>257</sup>*

*Alison: Can you see a future with no fear, Nancy?*

*Nancy: A future wi' no fear? A cannae imagine that, naw. A cannae imagine no stressin'.*

### 6.1 Introduction.

This chapter extends my focus on the emotional wellbeing of women and girls, focussing initially on ways in which that can be threatened by forms of abuse. It is in the private setting of the family that many abuses against women occur<sup>258</sup>. The private space of the home, Mackinnon argues, belongs to men: it is where 'wives are raped in private', women are exploited and made 'objects of male subjectivity and male power' and where 'equality is not guaranteed' (2005:38). A universal fact of womanhood is that nowhere are women equal to men, socially, politically or economically. While MacKinnon's writings may be regarded by some as extreme, it is a disturbing universal fact that women are subject to gendered violence, often at the hands of their intimate partners or family members<sup>259</sup>. I suggest that the problem of violence is universal because it is found everywhere regardless of region, country, class, faith or race. Htun and Weldon (2012)<sup>260</sup>, presenting data from over 70 countries across four decades, also assert that violence against women is a 'global' problem. Research from North America, Europe, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and Asia found 'astonishingly high rates of sexual assault, stalking, trafficking, violence in intimate relationships, and other violations of women's bodies and psyches' (p.548). No

<sup>257</sup>'Imagine...' is part of the Women's Aid Federation campaign on domestic violence. See <http://www.womensaid.org.uk/page.asp?section=0001000100140004&itemTitle=Posters>

<sup>258</sup>While my focus here, as elsewhere, is on the experience of women, I do not mean to suggest that men do not get trapped into abusive and oppressive relationships. They do. The statistics we have, however, such as those used here, demonstrate overwhelmingly that more violence is perpetrated against women by men, than by women against men.

<sup>259</sup>See the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence at <http://www.ncadv.org/learn/TheProblem.php>

<sup>260</sup>The report contains detailed statistics on the kind and levels of violence. The importance of feminist movements to raising awareness of violence against women is a key theme of this report.

region of the world, the authors report, is immune to violence against women, and in Europe, 'violence against women is far more dangerous to the female population than terrorism or cancer' (p. 549, citing Elman 2007:85 and see Nussbaum, 2005). The Human Development Report (2000:50) states that, with globalisation, trafficking of women and girls for prostitution has increased with 500,000 women a year trafficked out of countries in Eastern Europe and the CIS (the former Russian Federation). In Asia, about 250,000 people, mostly women and children, are estimated to be trafficked every year. Between 85 million and 115 million girls and women have undergone some form of female genital mutilation and suffer from its adverse physiological and psychological effects. Domestic violence is a serious human rights threat to women in every society. Around the world, on average, one in every three women has experienced violence in an intimate relationship (p.50).

Nussbaum (2005)<sup>261</sup> also notes that while some women are more vulnerable than others to violence few women are entirely free from the fear from violence. In 2010, the National Union of Students (UK) published a survey on women's experience of harassment, stalking, violence and sexual assault on university and college campuses. Of more than 2000 women surveyed, 14 per cent had experienced serious physical or sexual assault; 68 per cent had been subject to verbal or physical sexual harassment, and nearly one in four had experienced unwanted sexual contact. Reporting such incidences to the police is low, ranging from 1 per cent (less serious physical violence) to 17 per cent (serious physical violence) (pp.3-5). The reporters noted that '[m]any women students struggle to get through their course without coming into contact with harassment or violence in one form or another'<sup>262</sup>.

One of my aims in this chapter will be to consider the effects of abuse on emotional health and to ask why women and children are so abused. One route to abuse is the dehumanisation of the person to be abused. Following Zimbardo's (2007) psychological studies of the processes of dehumanising low status groups and individuals, society, often censoriously, perceives victims as deserving of their punishment (battered wives, unpopular children, the assaulted women who should have been more 'chaste' in my introductory account of attitudes I encountered whilst growing up in Lewis, for example). We blame victims for the consequences of their actions, perceiving them to be beneath our

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<sup>261</sup>Nussbaum (2005) cites her own position as an example. She has a secure job, a good income, came from a good family, has a security protected apartment, and lives in a country where rape and sexual assault is treated as a serious crime. Despite her privileged position, this did not prevent rape, attempted rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment (p.167). To her account, I could my many of my own anecdotal experiences.

<sup>262</sup>From the foreword.

moral concern, and we dehumanise them in the process. In such dehumanising, we ‘out-group’ people<sup>263</sup> and divest them of emotions, for humanness belongs only to the in-group. The out-group lack human essence and complex emotions such as compassion, shame or guilt, emotions that contain strong moral evaluations. Out-groups’ emotions are primary: they feel anger, disgust or fear, emotions they share in common with animals. This process of dehumanisation complements the self-humanisation of the in-group which does have complex pro-social emotions such as compassion, pity and sympathy. Research amply demonstrates the power of dehumanisation and the fact that many of us frequently (though we might not admit it) infrahumanise those we regard as inferior<sup>264</sup>. As I shall demonstrate, men who abuse women dehumanise those women and that, of course, has a deleterious effect on those women’s emotional wellbeing.

In the first section of this chapter, I present a brief narrative from Nancy that describes her life at home and her abuse at the hands of her father. From that narrative, I outline how abuse affects children and women before discussing the psychological processes by which women and children come to be abused. Following Nussbaum’s (1999) analysis, I draw on her seven routes to objectification, illustrating these with excerpts from abused women and abusing men, and introducing the Scottish legislation intended to protect women and children from such harm. I then move to the Capabilities Approach, an ethical framework focused on basic justice and entitlement, in order to discuss Capability 5, *Emotions*, asking how this central capability is compromised when women and children are treated as mere ends to others’ advantage. In the second section, I focus more specifically, but briefly, on the physical and emotional effects of intimate partner violence, citing research to demonstrate how abuse corrodes functioning, a key idea of the Capabilities Approach that I develop in the third section. Here I outline the key features of the Capabilities Approach (hereafter CA), internal and combined capabilities, and functioning. The ethical aspiration of the CA is that people should be enabled to be and to do, as dignified beings with goals and plans. Accordingly, governments and institutions should aim, minimally, for threshold levels of functioning in the ten key capabilities, including, essentially for this thesis, emotions. The value of the CA, I propose, is that it allows us to assess overall advantage and quality of life with regard to various freedoms, or what can be termed ‘opportunities’. I suggest, in line with Nussbaum’s CA, that if any of these opportunities are absent or not fully available, then we will have reduced functioning. I start, here, to link this claim to my

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<sup>263</sup>See Ben-Ze’ev (2000); Leyens et al. (2000).

<sup>264</sup>Research cited by Bandura (1996); Leyens et al. (2000); Zimbardo (2007).

assertion that emotional ill-health or compromised emotions can severely limit functioning in all of the capabilities. As Nancy lives in an environment of abuse, and is unpopular in school, I apply the CA to Nancy to evaluate her level of functioning.

In the fourth section, I propose that *Emotions*, Capability 5, might be regarded as an ‘architectonic’ capability as it ‘organises and pervades’ the other capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011:39). Nussbaum has, to date, claimed this role for only two of her ten capabilities: *Affiliation* and *Practical Reason*. However, I shall suggest that emotions are architectonic because they are critical for functioning across each capability: all can be compromised or strengthened by an individual’s emotional health. To support my claim, I return to empirical research, this time from psychology and sociology, on abused women’s emotional states and the justifications that abusing men offer for their abusive behaviour. Finally, I reiterate the arguments made thus far in this thesis, that cultivating our dispositions to feel compassion, anger or joy appropriately, for the right reason, and in the right way, is integral to moral education and ethical orientation, and to how we respect the integrity and agency of others. Attaining critical judgement, or practical intelligence, so as to discern what is worthy of our attention is likewise essential to developing appropriate affective dispositions<sup>265</sup>.

## 6.2 Nancy’s Narrative: The Routes to Abuse.

What follows is a narrative of Nancy’s experience of violence. Violence is extreme and can have extreme effects on a person and a limiting effect on that person’s ability to function and act in ways that reflect her experiences, values, concerns and goals. I focus on domestic violence in this chapter because it is a common experience universal to women and is due, in part I suggest, to corrosive beliefs about gender norms and entitlement. Specifically, continual violence, and the expectation of violence, has corrosive consequences for emotional and physical functioning. A further motive in focussing on domestic violence is to prepare the ground for the study of emotions to be included in education curricula and in order to enable compassionate work in schools with pupils such as Nancy. I am motivated to make this argument by working from my experiences as a teacher and as a woman. The previous chapter sought to demonstrate, using fictional accounts from the novel, the effects of malformed views about women and, in turn, the power of the state and its institutions on people’s ability to function well, emotionally,

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<sup>265</sup>See Burnyeat (1980:69-92); Kosman (1980:103-116); Sherman (1989:157-199); Annas (1993:47-131).

creatively and physically. Many adolescents are embarrassed and ashamed to talk about what they have experienced and witnessed, fearing that they will be stigmatised or disbelieved (Mullender et al., 2002). They are also extremely reluctant to talk about what is happening in their personal lives because of a strong sense of loyalty to a parent or to their siblings whom they wish to protect, not just from social opprobrium, but from the involvement of Social Services, schools, and the police. This desire to protect also stems from a fear that outside interference, or ‘meddling’, will incite the abuser to further abuse. Often the children and abused parent are sworn to silence: ‘Or else!’. Here, Nancy is responding to questions about her life and domestic violence. There are long pauses before she answers.

*All a’ve known is them shouting and arguing, ma Dad hittin’ ma Mum, ma Mum screaming when he hits her bad, her going tae hospital or the polis turning up at the door. Disnae dae any guid when they dae turn up, like, cos he just gets madder and blames her for getting him into bother.*

*O aye, she’s feart o’ him, rattlin’ roond wi’ nerves most the time. She’s a rash on her hawns and fis – no braw. We’re all feart. We go roond being quiet, trying to please him. Ma Mum will clean like mad, get on at us to dae our rooms and ‘hings. Sometimes, though, she just sits and stares into space, no hearin’ or seeing anyhin’. She’ll no go out, disnae dare tae, no withoot his say so. He e’in gets mad if she phones her own Mum.*

*After a big fight, ‘specially if she’s tae go to hospital, it’ll calm doon for a while, but no for long. All he says is he’s gone tae far, that he’d no meant to hit her so bad. Says it’s all her fault, been nipping his heid, no leaving him alone, she’d no had the tea on, or was wasting his money. Sometimes he’ll no e’in let her boil the kettle for tea, no e’in let her eat her dinner – it’s his stuff, his food, his electricity, no fur scum like her.*

*Aye, we’ve begged her tae leave him. But she’s too feart o’ what he’d dae to us. And we’ve nowhere to go anyhow. Aye, he’s kicked and skelpt me a few times, ‘specially when a’ve tried tae help ma Mum. He just laughs or goes raj wi’ me, tellin’ me am a skinny wee slut, no use to anyone, another fucking waste o’ space, just like ma Mum. What comes out his mouth is pure filth like.*

*His brether’s no better. Another raj. Tried it on wi me one night...trying to take ma jammies off. Said it was decent like, no tae worry, but no tae tell no-one. It’s no right to be touched like that, no by an Uncle. I said no and kicked him – he backed off quick like cos ma Dad was doon the stairs drunk, Mum tae – she just drinks all the time now. He disnae like that neether. Says she’s no a woman, just a slut and a whore, like the rest o’ ‘em. If ma Uncle comes roond now I put the chest o’ drawers across the door – cannae risk it if it’s only ma Mum in the hoose. She’d no hae a clue what tae dae like.*

*A dae ken how I feel most the time, just deid like. Cannae ‘think neether. Feel as if ma stomach’s been eaten up by hungry rats. Sometimes they’re up for running up ma insides so’s to escape, ken? Cannae blame them – rubbish place tae be. Imagine? Could spit them oot at ma Dad (she giggles, then sobers up). He’d*

*prob'ly throw me oot, or worse. Got these blisters on ma fingers – Mum says its stress.*

*School? School's nae use. Cannae dae the work, too tired, and a just dinnae get it now. My heid burns, my eyes tae. Teachers nip ma heid all the time, they go on and on, so I just lose it. No really got friends neether. No there in school.*

*A dinnae talk aboot it. Tae embarrassed, feel tae stupid, ken? A cannae imagine nothin' but what's coming next, and that's no worth imagining.*

*Naw, I cannae imagine a future wi' no fear<sup>266</sup>.*

As Nancy says, she cannot imagine a future with no fear, abuse, neglect or shame. And she is not alone. According to Department of Health statistics, 750,000 children experience domestic violence, and almost every school will have children affected by it (2002:16). In three of five cases where children experience abuse, their mothers are also being abused although figures may be higher because many women do not report domestic violence, and it may take many years before they finally do (Department of Health, 2009:7). Mullender et al.'s (2002) research, which directly asked school children about domestic violence, revealed that approximately one third lived with some form of domestic abuse. In 30 to 60 percent of domestic violence cases, the abusive partner is also abusing children (Edelson, 1999). 54 percent of women victims of serious sexual assault were assaulted by their partner or ex-partner (Stern Review, 2010)<sup>267</sup>. Repeated abuse not only reduces a mother's capacity to parent well, it increases her children's vulnerability to further and ongoing abuse (Farmer and Owen, 1995). The effects of domestic violence on the wellbeing of children like Nancy is understood: it features as the strongest contributory factor to a child's poor outcomes in school and in adult life. Many children and young people live with the fear of violence and abuse that the Women's Federation asks us to consider in their 'Imagine' campaign. The effects of distress and trauma on children include constant worry and anxiety about family; difficulties eating and sleeping; absence from school and difficulty in concentrating; depression or distracted behaviour; aggression, behavioural difficulties; deliberate holding of breath; reduced resilience and self-protection. 31 percent of children living in abusive or violent homes report low self-esteem (Department of Health, 2009:9). The effect on children's health includes physical injuries; premature birth

<sup>266</sup>Fear - scared; hawns and fis - hands and face; braw - pretty; skelpt - slapped; cannae - can't; hae - have; ken - know; heid - head.

<sup>267</sup>Report of the Taskforce on Health Aspects of Violence against Women and Children (Albierti, 2010:10) that includes statistics on forced marriage, female genital mutilation (an estimated 66,000 women in the UK), abuse of disabled children, people with a limiting illness, and the elderly. See Crown Prosecution Service for links to a variety of reports on domestic violence, [http://www.cps.gov.uk/news/articles/domestic\\_violence\\_-\\_the\\_facts\\_the\\_issues\\_the\\_future/](http://www.cps.gov.uk/news/articles/domestic_violence_-_the_facts_the_issues_the_future/).



and/or low birth weight; stress related illness; speech and language delays<sup>268</sup>; self-harm; and substance abuse (pp.11-13). In cases of neglect, it is the mother who is most often blamed for failing to provide good care, doubly punishing her when she is also experiencing domestic abuse (p.13). Children may be neglected because their mother is not allowed to care for them properly, has had her resources to care for them removed, or is simply physically and emotionally unable to look after the children as she might wish. Recall Nancy saying that *'sometimes he'll no e'in let her boil the kettle for tea, no e'in let her eat her dinner – it's his stuff, his food, his electricity, no fur scum like her'*. This is a further example of an unfair, arguably unjust, effect of the gendered view of parenting in which women are expected to be the primary carers. While the primary focus here is on the effect of abuse on emotional function, the effect of emotional dysfunction on physical health is all too apparent: the two are mutually reinforcing and, as I will shortly demonstrate, poor emotional functioning, along with physical and mental ill-health, will continue into adulthood if children are not removed from harm.

Domestic abuse is increasingly seen as an important child protection issue. In Scotland, there is a framework for early intervention in families at risk. Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC, 2007), which builds on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), is a multi-agency policy approach that sets out the values and principles of helping all children achieve their potential. GIRFEC has been incorporated into The Scottish Government National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan for Children and Young People (2008)<sup>269</sup> and in England and Wales, the Department of Health (2009)<sup>270</sup> has undertaken to raise awareness and understanding of domestic violence, and to offer guidance in schools on how to help children who live with domestic violence. Yet, despite these measures, and despite increased understanding of the dreadful and comprehensive effects of domestic violence on its victims, violence against women remains a pervasive, universal phenomenon. So, too, does women's subordination (Charlesworth and Chinkin, 2000:4). The violence persists because of the prevalence of attitudes that normalise and excuse it,

<sup>268</sup>In a study by Veltman and Browne (2001), 75% of abused or neglected children situations had delayed cognitive development and 86% had delayed language development.

<sup>269</sup>See the Scottish Child Care and Protection Network (SCCPN) briefing *Children Living with Domestic Abuse* (2011) for further resources on children and domestic violence, including strategies, policies and children's experiences. The National Society for the Protection of Children Against Cruelty (NSPCC) is also a rich resource on research on domestic abuse,

[http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/resourcesforprofessionals/domesticabuse/research\\_wda87793.html](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/resourcesforprofessionals/domesticabuse/research_wda87793.html)

<sup>270</sup>This is a practical toolkit aimed at practitioners working with children. *Improving Safety, Reducing Harm* is a practical toolkit which cross references with Every Child Matters (2003), The Children Act (2004), Safety and Justice: the Government's proposals on Domestic Violence (2003), Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004) and the Vision for Services for Children and Young People Affected by Domestic Violence (2006).

and because beliefs about gender are rarely challenged, as I have argued throughout this thesis. As a 2011 NSPCC<sup>271</sup> report on teenage intimate violence amply demonstrated, many young children see violent relationships as the norm. It is so prevalent in their lives that many teenagers tolerate or accept intimate violence (p.105), as well as coercion, harassment and controlling behaviours. The violence is also gendered. The NSPCC study, along with many others, continues to show that sexism, misogyny, and beliefs about gender, all serve to perpetuate power asymmetries between men and women, including beliefs that women deserve their maltreatment<sup>272</sup>. Whilst policy makers have sought to address the issues, the statistics indicate that abuse is alive and thriving around the family hearth.

As noted, the most pervasive form of violence suffered by women is abuse by an intimate partner. The setting for the abuse is the private space of the home, where, traditionally, government has sought not to interfere, and where men can exercise power, in the form of repressive and oppressive acts, over their partners and their children. The UN Convention Against Torture (1987), for example, omits to discuss the violence and torture of women in the home, ‘even though this is a problem so pervasive it occurs on a global scale’ (Charlesworth et al., 1999:628). A 1989 UN Report noted that ‘violence is part of the dynamics of many family situations’ but, despite the murder, abuse, humiliation and degrading treatment of women, this ‘does not seem to be considered unusual, or uncommon behaviour’ (cited in MacKinnon, 2007:30-31). A further pervasive feature of abuse is that women suffer because of their ‘sex and gender’ (p.12): men get what they want and what they believe they are entitled to with the aid of, in MacKinnon’s (2007) analysis, a state that is itself gendered as male because the public sphere is dominated and shaped by men. Women are controlled by ‘all tiers of society’ and their violence is directly connected to the gendered imbalance of power found across the globe, argue Charlesworth and Chinkin (2000:12). Women are more likely to suffer poverty due to unequal access to paid employment, and a lack of status and influence within their communities (p.8). Women face disadvantage and inequality, not because their individual capacities are inferior to those of men, but because of their primary roles as mothers and carers. Equality, as MacKinnon points out, ‘is valued nearly everywhere but practised almost nowhere’ and this ‘is nowhere more true than between men and women’ (2007:44). In no country do

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<sup>271</sup>Wood et al.’s (2011) NSPCC report, ‘Standing on my own two feet’ was the first UK report specifically concerned with the effects of intimate violence on disadvantaged teenagers.

<sup>272</sup>See for example, Burton and Kitzinger (1998); Mullender et al. (2002); Barter, et al. (2009); McCarry (2010); Somali (2011). These authors also cite additional studies.

women have equal political power with men, claim Charlesworth and Chinkin (2000:10), who also suggest that gender-based violence ‘poses a health burden to women similar in magnitude to that caused by tuberculosis or HIV infection’ (p.13). In England, ‘violence against women is more prevalent than stroke, diabetes or heart disease’<sup>273</sup>.

Women, too often, are treated as objects. Nussbaum (1999a:218) suggests there are seven routes to objectification, the first being the ‘instrumentality’ that occurs when the woman is treated as a tool and which is, interestingly, a route used to preserve and enhance male pride and masculinity, as exemplified in the excerpt below, cited in Dobash and Dobash (2000:32-34).

When do you think it’s okay for a man to hit a woman?  
 I don’t like it. A slap, yes, now and again if it’s needed.  
 What do you mean a “needed?”  
 If you’re sitting in the pub with all your pals and she comes in and gives you a load of cheek. To put her in her place verbally, and if verbally doesn’t work, physically.  
 What do your friends think of women then?  
 That they’re here for one thing and that’s it.  
 Do you not think men’s attitudes towards women are changing?  
 Not in the pub I go to.

The second route to the objectification of women is ‘Denial of autonomy’.

*She’ll no go out, disnae dare tae, no withoot his say so. He e’in gets mad if she phones her own Mum. (Nancy)*

Used to just stop me from going out and I used to like sit in my house. ... Well sometimes he did used to hit me. It was a relationship like that ... And then if I go out he’ll just go mad and then just basically I’ll just end up crying and go back home. So I’d just rather stay in ... Which was a mistake really because then he used to do that all the time then, and then obviously he had something over me. (Caitlin, aged 16, extract from NSPCC, 2011:27)

‘Inertness’, in which the woman is regarded as having no agency, is the third route to objectification, as in: ‘I am fed up with everyone running my life for me, and doing my thinking for me, giving me their opinions on who I am’ (Department of Health, 2010:23). The fourth route is ‘Fungibility’, in which the woman is regarded as interchangeable with other objects:

At first I felt really bad, dirty and ashamed. But after a while it had been going on for so long and with so many different men, I didn’t feel anything towards it

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<sup>273</sup>Taskforce on the Health Aspects of Violence Against Women and Children (2010).

anymore. What they did to me was evil, they ripped away my dignity, my self-esteem... It's not a normal relationship when your boyfriend is getting you to sleep with all his friends for money. (Anonymous young woman, aged 15, victim of a child exploitation ring<sup>274</sup>.)

'Violability', when the woman or girl is permitted no personal boundaries, is the fifth route to objectification, exemplified by the anonymous victim of a child exploitation ring above and by Nancy's experience of her Uncle's attempted rape: *'His brether's no better.*

*Another raj. Tried it on wi' me one night... trying to take ma jammies off... It's no right to be touched like that, no by an Uncle'*. The sixth route is 'Ownership', which occurs when the woman is regarded as the personal property of her partner. 'Denial of subjectivity' is the final route, in which the woman is treated as if her emotions, feelings and experiences are of no account, as when Nancy's Dad mocks her for trying to protect her Mum from his blows: *'tellin' me am a skinny wee slut, no use to anyone, another fucking waste o' space, just like ma Mum'* or when he calls his wife a *'slut, whore, just like all women'*.

Nancy's world is a dark place. And as I have argued, emotions are powerful. They enshrine our experiences, values, concerns and goals. Emotions, too, provide us with an orientation, an attitude to the world, colouring that world in a variety of tints, shades, and colours, which enliven or darken our world, depending on what is happening to us (see Chapter 1:1). The tints, shades and colours in Nancy's world will be dull, indistinct. The girl caught up in the child exploitation ring has had to live in dark places. The emotional currents that Nancy and this girl experience will, for the most part, lie still and cold as the girls shift out of the emotional and physical present, to places where they cannot be reached and harmed. Emotions, because they contain beliefs, the capacity for appraisal of the self and others, and the context in which these selves occur, can be manipulated for good or ill. In this present discussion, women's emotions are being manipulated for malign purposes: women become the objects of some men's use and satisfaction. When women and children are abused, the abusers have embarked upon one or more of these routes to objectification, and consequent dehumanisation, of their victims. And when women are treated as objects, they will likely experience multiple and corrosive capability failure, that is a diminished capacity to do and be that undermines their dignity and self-respect, along with their sense of worth and value. Women's bodily integrity is compromised and longevity is likely shortened. In Nancy's words, her mother is: *'a rash on her hawns and fis – no brow'*. This level of capability failure will also stunt women's emotional development (if the abuse begins in childhood) or capacity (if the abuse occurs in

<sup>274</sup>The girl was coerced into having sex with up to five men a day, at least 4 times a week. See BBC, 8 May at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-17914138>.

adulthood), reducing her ability to function well in the world to a corrosive degree. '*She's rattlin' roond wi nerves most o the time*', says Nancy of her mother. Such failure has consequences for physical and mental health, undermining her capacity for senses, imagination and thought, as well as her practical reason because she '*cannae think...she just stares into space*'. Because Nancy's mother is abused, treated as a mere object for Nancy's father's use, her freedom to affiliate with others in friendship, to join groups, to pursue interests outside her home, even to love her closest intimates without fear of reprisal or ridicule, is compromised because '*she cannae e'in phone her own Mum*'. Along with these multiple failures comes the failure to control her environment and to feel safe and secure, '*aye, we're feart o' the time... he'll no e'in let her eat her dinner*'. The need to always think and act in the present means that future planning is almost impossible because '*a cannae imagine nothin' but what's coming next, and that's no worth imagining*'.

In the light of what I have presented here, I propose that schools should incorporate studies on emotions so that young students understand not just the importance of emotional health, but also what emotions are and how they enable us to move around in the world. I argue that good emotional health can entail good physical and mental health, a positive orientation towards the world that allows us to flourish in ways that express our moral values, goals and aspirations. When emotional health is hampered or distorted through cultural norms, gender stereotypes or experiences of abuse and neglect, wellbeing is degraded in multiple ways. I will argue too that close attention should be paid to the Capability Approach (CA), as developed by Martha Nussbaum, because the key question that drives the approach is: what am I able to do and to be to live a dignified life of my choosing in good relations with others? This is a rich and significant question because, following Aristotle, and indeed Kant<sup>275</sup>, in treating each person as an end, the CA asks us to think about the potential quality of a person's whole<sup>276</sup> life and the opportunities available to her to realise her own conception of eudaimonia. If individuals' emotions are

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<sup>275</sup>Aristotle understood that choice was central to a good human life, the practical life but that wealth alone could not achieve happiness. Wealth 'serves only as a means', to realise something else (*NE*.1096a5-10). Kant, influenced by the Stoics, believed in the equal dignity of persons. Both philosophers believed in each person as an end who should not be exploited in ways that increased vulnerability or undermined dignity. The CA is concerned with wealth to the extent that it enables a person to develop, promote and safeguard capabilities and realise functioning. For the philosophical influences of the CA, see Sen (2009), Nussbaum (2011) and later discussion here.

<sup>276</sup>Aristotle, in his discussion of eudaimonia in the *NE*. was interested in the practical life of the person over the whole of that person's life. A single event, or series of events, or taking a short span of a person's life, would not tell us whether such a person was habituating virtuous character in order to realise her ultimate end: eudaimonia.

stunted or deformed, we can posit that the quality of their life will be limited unless institutions such as schools, medical services, social work departments, can intervene to help, with sensitivity and humanity. I shall also propose that the CA should be incorporated into education as a way of thinking about how well those we teach are able to do and to be, and how we are to understand and promote their emotional wellbeing. In Scottish school education, such an approach, along with the suggestions I make here on what could be included in curricula, would link very well with the aims of a Curriculum for Excellence.

I have already referred to two key terms of the CA: functioning and capability. Briefly, a ‘capability’ is the opportunity to achieve the plans and goals a person has reason to value, whereas a functioning ‘is an active realization of one or more capabilities’ (Nussbaum, 2011:24-5). I have also alluded to what Nussbaum refers to as the ten ‘central capabilities’. This is a list of ten central capabilities, which, Nussbaum argues, governments or, indeed, institutions such as schools or universities, concerned to promote and sustain social justice should take as integral to realising that goal. The CA was originally developed by Amartya Sen (1999, 2009) to provide and informational focus’ (2009:232) for judging and comparing overall [dis]advantage and life quality including, for instance, levels of poverty, disability and the opportunities for various kinds of freedoms. Unlike Nussbaum, Sen does not specify a formula, such as the central capabilities, for how governments or institutions should use that information, or provide an account of basic justice. The CA insists that each person be taken as an end, not as an object of another’s exploitative use, and that each person be given opportunities (sometimes translated as freedoms) to pursue goals that she or he has reason to value<sup>277</sup>. Nussbaum has incorporated into the CA notions of dignity, threshold levels of functioning (the minimum capability needed for a person to flourish in each of the central areas) and the idea of political liberalism, the latter in order to ‘prescind’ advocates of the CA from ‘offering any account of comprehensive value’ (2011:19)<sup>278</sup>. That is, the theory is partial so as to achieve overlapping consensus on what is of value to people of different political and religious persuasions in a liberal democracy. If we apply the CA to Nancy, and to the women described here, it becomes immediately clear that they are not flourishing and certainly not free, or able, to enjoy a fulfilling life. Rather, their lives exemplify instrumentality, inertness, reduced autonomy and subjectivity, fungibility, violability, and ownership by partners.

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<sup>277</sup>But not trivial, selfish or exploitative goals, for example.

<sup>278</sup>See Chapter 4 for the importance of a liberal approach for the view of personhood adopted here.

While, on Nussbaum's version, the capabilities are to be regarded as non-fungible (not to be traded up or down or exchanged for more or less of another capability), some capabilities can be seen as particularly fertile and so particularly beneficial for functioning (2011a:45) and for the promotion of other capabilities. *Emotions*, (Capability Five) as I have intimated above, and will shortly demonstrate in some detail, is a fertile capability that promotes fertile functionings. Women anywhere, who experience injustice because of their sex, embody capability failure on so many levels. It is, tragically, the case that many women are in prison because of abuse and exploitation, suffering from emotion dysfunction. Unless fertile capability is restored to them, not only will they be unable to do and to be, many of these women will go on to become repeat victims, with increasingly degraded functionings, a theme I shall return to later.

### 6.3 The Emotional and Physical Effects of Intimate Partner Violence.

#### Fear

Intentional components:

- a] cognitive evaluation: negative
- b] belief: harm, danger; vulnerability, current or future events outwith one's control
- c] threat to eudaimonia: many, concerning oneself and/or others: e.g., threats to personal safety, artistic freedom, physical, moral and emotional integrity, affiliation, one's own life
- d] object: many and heterogeneous: intimates, oppression, violence, imprisonment, the state, etc.

Link to other emotions: guilt, regret, shame, anger.

Intimate partner violence is one of the most common causes of injury amongst women (Campbell, 2002:1331). The dominant emotion is fear, allied with anxiety (see the intentional components above). The injuries and fear associated with battering can result in chronic ill-health such as recurring pain (headaches) or recurring nervous system symptoms such as seizures. Battered women also report gastrointestinal symptoms, such as irritable bowel syndrome related to chronic stress and cardiac problems such as hypertension. According to Campbell, gynaecological problems are the 'most consistent, longest lasting and largest physical health difference between battered women and non-

battered women' (2002:1332). These problems include sexually transmitted diseases<sup>279</sup>, vaginal bleeding, chronic pelvic pain, and urinary tract infections, and such problems were three times higher for victims of physical and sexual abuse than amongst who experienced just physical abuse (p.1332).

Turning to emotional health more specifically, Lang and Sharma-Patel (2011), in a review of the literature on the relation between childhood maltreatment and self-injury, note that children will develop healthy emotions if those emotions are safely and sensitively reflected and accepted by their carers. Healthy emotional development also requires that adults tolerate and model children's emotions so 'that children learn to identify, accept, express, and then manage intense affect in an organized, cohesive manner' (p.29). By contrast, emotionally maltreated children do not have their own affective states 'reflected, accepted, or clarified', rather they are often 'discouraged, punished, ignored or otherwise rendered helpless in making emotional expressions' (p.28). Children can become 'silenced', scared to their own emotions, and without an outlet for emotional expression. The result of poor modeling, or 'silencing', the authors report, is often affect dysregulation and mood lability<sup>280</sup> (mood instability) with poor outcomes. Children will either express affective states that are not moderated by cognitive input, potentially leading to self-harm to alleviate powerful emotions or they will process cognitive information without the role of affect, thereby inducing a sense of 'psychic numbness', a form of 'dissociation' in order to escape from trauma (Lang and Sharma-Patel, 2011:30). A study by Tull et al. (2007) on the impact of heightened negative affect (NA) on victims of childhood violence found that the intensity of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was influenced by negatively evaluated emotional responses. Victims had poor emotional regulation as a result of a limited awareness of emotional responses, non-acceptance, and/or negative evaluation of and reaction to one's responses (p.581). NA intensity and psychological problems can result from unhealthy emotional responses, such as avoiding emotional experiences, which reduce functional emotional processing (p.584) and the capacity to read the environment

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<sup>279</sup> 'Battering' encompasses patterns of behaviour that are used to establish and maintain control over an intimate partner, including sexual control. The behaviours are many, and include: isolation from family and friends, criticism, forced sexual contact, manipulation, sexist comments, harassment, rape, destruction of personal property, unwanted touching, stalking, sabotaging attendance at job or school, brainwashing, threats of being killed. For a full list, see the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence at <http://www.ncadv.org/learn/TheProblem.php>

<sup>280</sup> Emotional lability is usually a neurological disorder that manifests as uncontrollable laughter or crying, states which bear little relationship to the underlying mood, or are greatly in excess of the mood or eliciting stimulus. Emotional lability can have a significant impact on individuals' social functioning and their relationships with others. Sudden, frequent, extreme and uncontrollable emotional outbursts may lead to social withdrawal, interfering with daily living, and social and professional pursuits, and have a negative impact on overall healthcare. See Green (1998), Olney et al. (2011).



for emotional clues. The result for victims is increased vulnerability to PTSD. Nooner et al. include the following consequences of PTSD brought on by trauma.

Trauma that is associated with more shame and deviance is associated with higher rates of PTSD (e.g., for sexual abuse 57 percent have PTSD versus 10 percent for natural disasters).

Serious physical health problems increase the risk of PTSD in adolescence.

Over 80 percent of individuals with PTSD have a comorbid substance-use disorder, typically beginning in adolescence.

PTSD in adolescence is also associated with suicide, substance abuse, poor social support, academic problems, and poor physical health. PTSD may disrupt biological maturational processes and contribute to the long-term emotion and behavior regulation problems that are often evident in adolescents with the disorder.

Adolescent females with PTSD were three times more likely to have asthma, five times more likely to have irritable bowel syndrome, and twice as likely to have a sexually transmitted disease (Nooner et al., 2012:7).

Shields and Cicchetti (2001), examining the relationship between parental maltreatment and the likelihood of bullying and repeat victimisation, investigated 169 maltreated boys and 98 maltreated girls at a summer camp for inner city children in the USA. They concluded that adults maltreated as children are more likely to batter their partners, abuse their children and become repeat victims of partner abuse or sexual assault. Children of abusive or neglectful parents may come to believe that ‘coercion, violence and exploitation’ are a normal part of all relationships<sup>281</sup>, influencing their behaviour towards aggression and intimidation, or appeasement (p.349). The authors noted that maltreated children demonstrated more anti-social and fewer prosocial behaviours, so showing low respect for the feelings and rights of others (p.348). Research also shows that some maltreated children show submissive and ingratiating behaviour in order to appease their parents and avoid violence (p.348)<sup>282</sup>. Such children may become vulnerable to later exploitation and abuse because, once targeted for bullying, maltreated children are less likely to be assertive or to defend themselves since such behaviour is what they have come to expect, as noted earlier. In new social situations, ill treated children may be socially compromised, reacting with hyper-arousal and fear, which may further contribute to their risk of victimisation (p.348). As Shields and Cicchetti point out, ‘whereas arousal and vigilance may be adaptive in dangerous homes, they would undermine social functioning with peers’ (p.348). Other maladaptive emotional responses include showing limited

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<sup>281</sup>For supporting, and disturbing, evidence on the experience of domestic violence on young teenage behaviour, see the report by the NSPCC 2009 and 2011.

<sup>282</sup>Cicchetti and Toth (1995).

capacities for guilt or remorse; little empathy for peers; impoverished emotional connections; difficulties in processing social information to respond in emotionally appropriate ways; difficulties in adjusting socially because of limited emotional competence.

Shields and Cicchetti's analyses also revealed that gender did not moderate bullying behaviour (p.358). Maltreated girls are as likely to bully and to harass as maltreated boys. Consistent with other studies, victims are more anxious and distressed, bullies are angry, and both passive victims and bullies have emotional regulation problems (see also Shipman et al., 2007). Effective regulation of emotions helps us to make decisions about when and how to express emotions. Parents who respond harshly to emotional expression, or who respond inconsistently or rarely, are likely to teach their children to suppress 'wrong' emotions, or express them inappropriately<sup>283</sup>. Shipman et al.'s (2007) findings also reveal that maltreated children are at risk of emotional and behavioural difficulties which could interfere with the attainment of academic and social goals, placing them on an 'altered development trajectory, increasing the risk for the development of psychosocial difficulties' (p.278). In the case of child sexual abuse (CSA), the victims, unsurprisingly, encounter the same emotional regulation difficulties. CSA victims have less understanding of emotion, inhibit negative emotions to a greater degree, use fewer emotion words, and display greater affective suppression than do non abused children (Walsh et al., 2011:1104)<sup>284</sup>. As with the studies of maltreated adults and children above, emotion regulation defects will be manifest in victims who learn to cope with their chronic stress and anxiety by repressing their emotions and avoiding heightened NA. While avoidance is an important adaptive strategy in abusive homes, in the long run, the victims are more likely to be vulnerable to psychopathology<sup>285</sup> such as PTSD and dissociation (Walsh et al., 2011:1104)<sup>286</sup>. Victims also report more difficulty identifying emotional states, a disorder referred to as alexithymia<sup>287</sup>, and may engage in emotionally avoidant behaviour such as drug and alcohol abuse, sexual promiscuity and self-injury (Corston, 2006; Plugge et al., 2006; Walsh et al., 2011). As with victims of domestic violence, victims of early child sexual abuse are at greater risk of repeat victimisation.

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<sup>283</sup>See Chapter 1. For the fictional account of such effects, see Chapter 5 and *Cat's Eye*.

<sup>284</sup>See Shipman et al. (2007).

<sup>285</sup>Recall that fear is the core emotion in psychopathology (fn.183, p.126).

<sup>286</sup>See Litz and Gray (2002).

<sup>287</sup>A state of deficiency in understanding, processing, or describing emotions. Alexithymia places individuals at risk of other medical and psychiatric disorders while reducing the likelihood that these individuals will respond to conventional treatments for the other conditions. See Haviland et al. (2000).

In Walsh et al.'s (2011:1109) study of 160 female inmates in a US correctional facility, 84 had experienced sexual abuse, 90 of the participants reported at least one rape since age 14, and 60 reported at least one instance of physically forced vaginal penetration. Other women, however, self harm<sup>288</sup> to relieve intolerable feelings of anxiety, stress and depression.

For me it is easier just to pick up a knife or a razor blade ... and feel all the tension come out of my body. It was a very blissful and calming experience. ...[if] you've seen me after I've cut my wrists, I've got this smile on my face. It's like all of a sudden all this energy and all this negativity have come out and I'm feeling, yeah, I'm on top of the world. (Plugge et al,2006:58)

The relief comes from having power over her own body, the power to inflict self-harm, since, until she receives help, she has no other way of relieving her distress and anxiety. This is an understandable and rational exercise of power in the sense that it is she, the prisoner, who is reasoning about the best way to relieve her tensions in the absence of meaningful palliative help. Indeed, given that self-harm can be seen as a 'form of self-preservation', a 'prelude' to suicide and so survival because someone else may be alerted to the distress or suicidal feelings of the harmer (Royal College of Psychiatrists Report, 2010:23), self-harm is a rational act. Studies interviewing people who have harmed themselves show remarkable consistency in expressing the desire to manage 'unbearable pain or unbearable situations' (p.23). In a study of people who self-injure and have a diagnosis of borderline personality disorder, about 90% indicated that they felt less angry and anxious and more peaceful after self-injury (Klonsky, 2007). Participants in another study also reported that self-harm helped them to 'function better, helping them to stay connected with reality' (Csipke and Horne, 2008, cited in Klonsky, 2007:23). Self-harm is very different from the power of external subjection which impairs the capacity to reason, to make authentically informed decisions (in the sense that decisions are the subjected person's own), and creates distortions of what is natural (subjection rather than opportunities for freedom)<sup>289</sup>. CSA victims were significantly more likely to experience

<sup>288</sup>See the literature review by Lang and Sharma-Patel (2012) mentioned earlier. The correlation is high. Common effects include alexithymia, PTSD, feelings of suicide and depression. Guilt, shame and disgust increase after self-injury (p.28), contributing to further self-injury in order to vanquish negative emotions. Affective disorders also underlie borderline personality disorders (BPD). Self-harm moderates overwhelming emotional states. Cf. the girls in *Cats Eye*.

<sup>289</sup>Lukes (2005) discusses the concept of power as capacity in a highly illuminating way. Power could be transformative and a force for moral good, being able to live authentically and autonomously. The powers I discuss here do not realise transformative change in a positive way, but in ways that malform and corrupt the

adolescent and adult rape and were significantly more likely to experience emotional regulation problems. Re-victimised women had significantly higher impulse-control scores compared to women reporting only rape (pp.1109-10), that is revictimised women experienced greater difficulty in controlling their behaviour. In addition to trauma symptoms, emotion dysregulation, non-acceptance of emotional responses, lack of emotional awareness and clarity, maladaptive coping mechanisms such as drug abuse, victims may be vulnerable to further assault because of alexithymia (Cloitre et al., 1997). Because the victims cannot differentiate between different emotional states, compounded by their difficulties in accepting emotional arousal and denying emotional states, they cannot regulate their emotions. This may lead to frustration and anger, feelings of inadequacy and shame, and an inability to regulate chronically negative states such as intense fear (Walsh et al., 2011:1112). Research<sup>290</sup> also shows that victims are more likely to endorse negative emotional appraisals such as shame, anger and disgust, so that their self-appraisals of worthlessness, stupidity, and the effects of powerlessness might take root even more deeply in their psyches. The combined effects of these complex negative states, allied with coping strategies such as intoxication and/or emotion control, mean that women are less likely to discern risks in their social environments due to poor ‘attentional capacity’ (Walsh et al., 2011:1112).

What these analyses clearly indicate is corrosive capability and function failure of *Emotions*, that is, Capability 5, one of the ten central capabilities on Nussbaum’s list. Capabilities, recall, describe what a person is able to do and to be or, in Sen’s terms, opportunities and choices to live different lives and to achieve *actual* functionings. As demonstrated here, emotions are a powerful and fertile means by which we can do and be, choose and act, but when they become corrupted, distorted, disabled or maladapted, we may act less well, and find it difficult to do and be. We may also find that emotional malfunctioning arises when the opportunities to develop healthy emotions are closed down. To understand how this occurs, and to offer an antidote, at least a step towards one, I now consider key elements of the Capability Approach.

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person. I cannot digress into such a discussion for reasons of space, save to use the concept in its commonly accepted sense of ‘power over’.

<sup>290</sup>Including that conducted, for example, by Gratz et al. (2007).

#### 6.4 Capability Failure: The Capability Approach.

To become a fully realised person is to be able to make and have plans for one's present and future, and to have a stake in realising those plans; and it is about being in a positive mental and emotional state from which we can *imagine* the forms our life might take. Capabilities are not simply about a person's natural abilities and talents, for no matter how much talent or innate ability we have, if we are given few opportunities to develop these, they will remain in a nascent state, and we will not be fully realised individuals. As I argued in Chapter 5, imagination is vital to seeing what life might be like for others, to imagining what is possible, and to extending the borders of our own experience to encompass the realities of others and ourselves. Such imaginative construals are also important for compassion, sympathy and positive empathy. The novel, as I have started to suggest can help us in these respects, though it may be less effective for the person who has experienced high levels of abuse. If an abused individual lacks insight or understanding of her own emotional state, because of alexithymia or emotion dysregulation, she is unlikely to respond with insight and understanding to a novel. But that is not to say the novel could not be used as a therapeutic and educational tool.

Being free to become a fully realised person is also, importantly, about having a life of breadth and diversity in terms of being free to pursue interests, hobbies, physical, intellectual and emotional activities, friendships and family, professional life. It is also about being free to examine, explore and take up or reject opportunities for new life experiences. How well we can achieve richly realised selves is dependent, however, on a 'combination of personal abilities and the political, social and economic environment' (Nussbaum, 2011a:20). Nussbaum refers to these 'freedoms' as 'combined capabilities' (p.21) which are the 'totality of the opportunities [one] has for ...for choice and action in [a] specific political, social, and economic situation' (p.21). In developing our capabilities, we develop our range of human powers, enabling us to become distinctively individual and unique, but in relations with others since we are by nature, as Aristotle observed, social animals.

Further, the power of the capability approach lies in its facility and potential as a tool by which to judge and compare overall advantage and life quality, such as opportunities for various kinds of freedoms. We can already begin to see the difficulties that Nancy, and other women discussed here, face in realising capabilities. At the most basic level, Nancy is not in a position to 'imagine' a future without fear. Incarcerated in the present by abuse,

her imaginative powers are paralysed by fear and anxiety. Nancy is alienated from herself, from her body and from her mind; she is neither free nor purposive because she is subject to the cruel and arbitrary power of her father. She may also, if her Uncle becomes determined to pursue her, become alienated from her own sexuality if the right to her own bodily integrity becomes her Uncle's, an entitlement to use whenever he so desires. Nancy's social environment is directly impacting on her opportunities to do and be, and very specifically on her emotional expressiveness. As we have seen, in order to cope with adverse circumstances, Nancy's ability to cope with emotional regulation becomes stunted, limiting awareness of her emotional responses, compounded by non-acceptance of her affective states. When she does have emotional episodes, these will most likely contain negative evaluations. Her shame, for this is likely to be one of the emotions she regularly experiences, at her inability to control what is happening to her and those she cares for, will penetrate very deeply into her being, working closely alongside fear to paralyse her, and to conceal Nancy and her plight from the world. Nancy will turn inwards towards negative self-appraisals, undermining her self-confidence, and her feelings of self worth and dignity, as she denigrates her own personality. This is a girl with combined capability failure, and Nancy is only 14 years old.

Shame, of course, has an important moral function, which is to signal to us when our conduct falls below our own and others' standards, and when we have not exercised enough compassion or sympathy for those affected by our actions. However, here, in the case of Nancy, the function of shame is being distorted. It is very closely allied with humiliation, a public exposure of Nancy's 'weakness', her vulnerability; in other words, it is allied to malign forces in her environment, which puts her at a great disadvantage<sup>291</sup>. By way of contrast, consider masculine shame at being dishonoured by a woman, the effects of shame differing by gender, and the consequences for a woman judged to have brought shame to the family honour<sup>292</sup>. Okin (2005:234) reminded us how men are 'radically dependent on the work and efforts of women'. Men are also, however, radically dependent on women for their states of being. As I intimated earlier, and will return to shortly, women must not only ballast and support men's pride and masculinity, they are instrumental in supporting male autonomy and subjectivity, and their states of not being inert, owned, fungible, violated and used as instruments; the very states that many women are denied in the process. However, entrenched beliefs about gender serve neither sex well,

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<sup>291</sup>For a developed account of shame, see Nussbaum (2004a).

<sup>292</sup>See, for example, *Honour*, by Elif Shafak (2012).

disabling men and women from realizing their full potential, from realizing complex ends and from realizing their capabilities. Because of unjust self-preference, men and women may suffer combined capability failure. In the case of honour killings, capability failure reaches the extreme: fathers, brothers and uncles resort to murder or serious injury; women must forfeit their lives, or live abjectly constricted lives. In these cases, I suggest, the capacity for compassion will also be suppressed, overridden by tradition and custom.

‘Internal capabilities’ refer to intellectual and emotional capacities, states of mental and physical health, levels of learning and understanding, and personality traits, dispositions to belief, and so on. These capabilities are ‘fluid and dynamic’ (Nussbaum, 2011a:21) because they are developed, for example, in the family, school, social and professional environments. While the two kinds of capability overlap, Nussbaum draws a distinction between internal and combined capabilities to allow us to judge whether each is being developed well. In the case of Nancy, we might judge that her combined capabilities are not being well developed. A just society, Nussbaum argues (2011:21), will see to it that opportunities exist to permit the healthy development of both sets of capabilities. For example, education to secondary level (age 18) is free in the UK, while provisions exist to allow young adults to attend further and higher education. To that extent, many young adults have the opportunity to develop their internal capabilities for learning and understanding, in the process developing their emotional, intellectual and social capacities. Health care is also free, so that the internal capability for good health should be realised without reference to class, race, gender or age. In this country too, the internal capability for developing critical thought may be realised externally in freedom of expression, and for that capability to be realised, education is necessary. As should be clear from these brief examples, internal capabilities cannot be fully realised unless social, political and economic conditions conduce to their flourishing. Combined capabilities, then, consist of internal capabilities and the social, political and economic conditions (2010:22) in which they can be realised.

What then of capability five, *Emotions*? Like all our capabilities and capacities, emotions need nurturing and developing, especially if they are to be morally appropriate, as I have argued in this thesis. Emotions are expressions of our values, commitments and goals, of who we are in the present, the past, and possibly, the future (see Chapters 1 and 2). They are the rational expressions of our beliefs or evaluations of what is happening in our internal and external landscapes. Emotions can also be rational responses to external

events, important coping mechanisms that allow us to adapt to changes in our environment. Emotions also indicate the familial and cultural influences on our socialisation. The extent to which we are able to express our emotions is a function of all of these complex, interacting factors. Women, as I argued in Chapters 2-4, are generally nurtured to be compassionate, to be less aggressive than men and to control anger. Men, on the other hand, are generally nurtured in the opposite direction: many feelings and emotions are 'feminine' and so 'unmasculine'. In some respects, men's and women's capacity to access the full range of human emotions is not fully realised. It is restricted, limited, or, in extreme cases, stunted and deformed. In any of these situations, emotional 'functioning' is affected, where 'functioning' is understood as an 'active realisation of one or more capabilities', the 'end-point' of capability articulation (Nussbaum, 2011:25).

How does this analysis fit in with Nancy's ability to function? Nancy does not know how she feels most of the time; she feels 'dead'. Her emotions are paralysed, save for those which keep her vigilant and on the look out for harm. On some occasions, she is unable to think, she is too emotionally drained to work well in school, and she struggles to make friends.

*A dae ken how I feel most the time, just deid like. Cannae 'hink neether. Feel as if ma stomach's been eaten up by hungry rats. Sometimes they're up for running up ma insides so's to escape, ken? Cannae blame them – rubbish place tae be. Imagine? Could spit them oot at ma Dad (she giggles, then sobers up). He'd prob'ly throw me oot, or worse. Got these blisters on ma fingers – Mum says its stress. School? School's nae use. Cannae dae the work, too tired, and a just dinnae get it now. My heid burns, my eyes tae. Teachers nip ma heid all the time, they go and on, so I just lose it. No really got friends neether. No there in school.*

The tragedy of Nancy's state is that she can barely function and her capabilities will barely be realised. It is probably fair to suggest that Nancy is not even close to a minimum threshold level of functioning, and what levels of functioning she has are not 'secure'<sup>293</sup> by dint of the organisation of her familial and social life. Emotional health is so fundamental to general wellbeing that I would argue that it plays, alongside affiliation and practical reason, an 'architectonic' role in a good human life. Nussbaum (2011a:39) singled out affiliation and practical reason for their particular potency to organise and pervade all other

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<sup>293</sup>The notion of capability security comes from Wolff and de-Shalit (2007). Capabilities not only need the conditions to be realised, they need to be secured for the future. Public policy should be developed to secure future capabilities and functionings. They too give a central place to affiliation as an organising capability. In education, one way to secure capabilities is to make provision to support children with any additional need. In Scotland, for example, the ASN Act (Scotland) (2004) specifies that all pupils should receive additional support for learning whenever that support is needed and for whatever reason, including, for example, bereavement, illness, or a temporary disability. GIRFEC policy documents also make this provision.



capabilities, hence their architectonic power. I agree. Part of what makes emotions powerful mechanisms for acting in the world is that they often, if not always, result from reason. In love, we can reason about the person we love. In anger, we can reason about the sources of our anger. In compassion, we can reason about why the person merits our compassion. These types of emotions are dispositional (see Chapters 1-2). It is more difficult to reason with oneself in occurrent states such as fear, but recall that fear has an evolutionary role in protecting the organism from danger. Sudden anger may also seem to displace reason, but there is an appraisal mechanism involved, and usually a healthy person can give reasons for their anger. As we have seen here, abusive men will often not confront their emotions for fear of what those emotions would reveal about the kind of person they are, and for what the emotions would disclose about the effects of their acts. Guilt, remorse, shame, disgust and compassion are banished. Abused women often cannot distinguish between their emotions because of the mental anguish that such discernment brings to them about their current state of being. On my account, whilst we might not approve of them or find them morally acceptable, maladaptive responses can be rational, and understandable, given the circumstances.

The lack of discernment is also a rational, [mal]adaptive coping mechanism. Unremitting fear and anxiety is incapacitating: such a state results in mental and physical ill health. At best, such women might reason ‘I can’t cope’ with my thoughts, daily living, social pursuits or professional career. Her functioning in the central capabilities of health, affiliation, reason, and so on will, consequently, be negatively affected. This is why I suggest emotions are architectonic: they control and direct, pervade and organise, the other capabilities. Let us now see if the argument for emotions as an architectonic capability can be sustained by applying it to Nancy’s case before I expand the discussion to include an analysis of why men might assault their partners.

## **6.5 The Architectonic Potency of Emotions.**

Nancy is humiliated by the power she lacks over her life. Her physical and emotional integrity are far from guaranteed, and certainly not secure from further violent encroachments. She is powerless to protect her mother and siblings from abuse and encroachments on their bodily integrity. She feels, when she does acknowledge feelings, shame, anger, humiliation and fear. These are strong and disabling emotions, though she may not be able to distinguish between them. Nancy, hyper-vigilant at home to the tiniest

inflections of tone, to the merest physical movement of the hands, arms, eyes or alteration in posture, as well as hyper-sensitive to her father's choice of words and the quality of his demands, is emotionally unattuned, even obtuse, outside the home. This emotional 'deadness' may disable Nancy even further, as we shall see, if no-one intervenes to palliate her circumstances. Nancy is severely disadvantaged. Her life is miserable. She lacks opportunities to flourish, her capabilities and functionings are repressed or stunted, and what little she has is only insecurely her own. It is doubtful she feels any self-respect or a sense of self-worth. She is emotionally stunted and very vulnerable, a likely candidate for repeat victimisation, not just by her father or Uncle now but also outside her home, and possibly in later life, because she is unable to regulate her emotions. In any case, if Nancy has normalised violence, she is likely to tolerate high levels of violence, coercion and oppression in her own intimate relationships.

Emotional dysregulation affects Nancy. Access to friends, education and health are all compromised. She is vulnerable to repeat victimisation, drug and alcohol addiction and promiscuous behaviour, all of which compound her disadvantages. Nancy's maladaptive emotional responses mean that her power to reason and to affiliate will be limited. She is likely to show limited capacities for guilt or remorse if she becomes violent with her peers. If she is passive, she is unlikely to be aroused to action if she sees that someone deserves her attention and her help. She may have little empathy or compassion for her peers because her ability to make emotional connections is impoverished. Nancy is so anxious or traumatised by her experiences that she simply does not have the resources to be pro-social towards others. Nancy may develop difficulties in processing social information in order to respond in emotionally appropriate ways, lacking the psychological and emotional acuity to interpret potential harm from predators. Because of her limited emotional competence, Nancy may develop difficulties in adjusting socially, whether in school, in college, or in work in later life. This is how capability failure in Nancy's emotions affects her opportunities for doing and being: virtually every capability is pervaded and disorganised by emotional corrosion. This is why I describe emotions as an architectonic capability. But how does this capability failure manifest itself in men?

Borochowitz (2008), in a study of 18 batterers in Israel, explored the narratives that the men used to justify their violence. The data was collected during two open in-depth interviews that focused on the emotional life stories of the participants,

as presented and interpreted by them. Each participant told his life story from his earliest recollection to the present, with an emphasis on his emotions. Borochowitz noted the common patterns that characterise violent men<sup>294</sup>, many of them came from emotionally alienated, hostile and abusive families. Their dominating emotions were anger and jealousy, fuelled by possessiveness resulting from stereotypical attitudes about women (p.1168). The men, further, not only struggled to recognise the emotions of their partners, they found it difficult to recognise and express their own emotions (p.1168). They lacked empathy for their partners (Dobash and Dobash, 2011). In their narratives, the men 'erased' their wives as independent beings, along with their emotions, perceptions and own life narratives (p.1170), in the same way that Nancy's father has erased his children and partner. The justification the men gave for their physical and emotional violence was that they saw themselves and their inner world as 'hurt and shattered by the other. Consequently, the other must be devalued or changed' (p.1170). This was a particular consequence of these men's idealisations of what a woman should be and do. If she fails to live up to his expectations, fails to fit into his narrative conception of their life together, a narrative defined purely on his terms, she has to be corrected. The men permit no deviation in emotional and behavioural expression; to do so would be an assertion of their partners' individuality and separate existence. In erasing all the features of her existence as an independent person, the violent man erases his partner's autonomy and, with it, her capacity to think, reason, feel, to do and be. He renders her functionless, a 'mere branch of the batterer's inauthentic self' (p.1170). One of Borochowitz's respondents articulates the objectification of his wife indicating his anger that she did not fit into his ideal of womanhood:

...as someone who grew up a prince...all of a sudden finds himself with a woman that doesn't take care of him, doesn't spoil him... Well, I felt betrayed ... she betrayed my principles. She betrayed the relationship I thought we had. (p.1176)

What is also striking in this narrative, as I read it, is the self-centredness of the respondent. Proust (2003/2) wrote eloquently that self-centredness makes each man a 'king, enabling him to see the ordered ranks of the universe beneath him' and to 'enjoy the luxury of absolute monarchy' (p.351). It is still the case, as we saw in Chapter 4, that many women remain subservient to men, being nurtured to believe that they are subservient, or coerced into behaving subserviently if they form a relationship with men who do not respect them as equals with a right to a separate existence. The preference for males over girls in some

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<sup>294</sup>For example, Bowlby (1988) and Dutton (1996).

cultures<sup>295</sup>, their better treatment, and their acculturation to believe that they are superior to women, cannot but help fuel the propensity towards violence when women do not conform to their standards of ideal womanhood. J.S. Mill (2006) powerfully remarked that if men were not taught to worship their own will as a ‘grand thing’ (p.178), they might be more unselfish.

The nurseries of violence, selfishness, self-centredness, abuse are families, or at least, they ‘overflow from that source’ wherever else they might exist<sup>296</sup>. While the incidence of violence in middle income families may be diminished (Campbell, 2002), that could be because women of independent means, who are educated and have a job, can escape their violent partners whilst many poor women cannot. One reason for the level of violence that continues even in more egalitarian societies such as the UK may be because, still, ‘the generality of the male sex cannot yet tolerate the idea of living with an equal’ (J.S. Mill, 2006:186). Selfishness and unjust self-preference derive their nourishment from the unequal relations between men and women. This has no rational basis save that, to follow Figaro<sup>297</sup>, the man ‘went to the trouble of being born, and nothing else’. Dobash and Dobash’s (2011:114) drew on qualitative data drawn from a subset of 104 casefiles of men convicted of murdering an intimate partner in the UK in order to examine their post-event beliefs, rationales, and justifications prior to and after murdering their partners. Dobash and Dobash (2011) found that the men, as often happens, either flatly denied murder or responsibility for the murder. For some, they noted, denial is ‘absolute, whereas for others it is conditional and based on various rationales and notions that absolve the perpetrator of responsibility’ (p.120). The reason for denial of responsibility is that abusers and other violent offenders are ‘generally non reflective, reluctant to acknowledge and/or address their problematic behaviors, and rarely genuinely self-critical’ (p.120). The men saw themselves as ‘norm-enforcers’, upholding ‘high values’ such as marriage and motherhood. Many displayed no remorse or sorrow for what they had done, seeking instead to blame the victim for failing to obey or show them respect, or being flawed as a partner, housewife or mother. 46 percent felt no empathy for the murder victim even after a

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<sup>295</sup>See *The Economist* article on ‘Gendercide’, in which it was claimed that 100,000 million girls have disappeared through abortion, murder or neglect. The ‘destruction’ of baby girls, the article claims, is a product of three forces: ‘the ancient preference for sons; a modern desire for smaller families; and ultrasound scanning and other technologies that identify the sex of a fetus’ (March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010), (<http://www.economist.com/node/15606229>).

<sup>296</sup>For compelling and critical discussions on the family see, for example, Okin (1989) and J.S. Mill (2006).

<sup>297</sup>Mill cites the character Figaro, the valet-hero of Pierre Beaumarchais’ play *The Marriage of Figaro* (1778).

lengthy time in prison (p.127)<sup>298</sup>. Self-pity was used to deny agency and responsibility<sup>299</sup> and, by refusing to be empathetic or feel remorse, they were able to justify violence and even murder. Bandura (1991) suggests that men's violence, rigid denial of responsibility, moral culpability and weak empathy, is made 'righteous through cognitive restructuring' (p.73). That is, their acts are seen as being committed for high moral purpose, while they also employ mechanisms to distance themselves from those acts, dehumanising their victims so that they become objects of contempt. The men remain wilfully uninformed about their behaviour and, as a result, will continue to be violent to their partners.

## 6.6 Concluding Chapter Six.

Mill, writing in 1869, thought it presumptuous that men could know the real nature of women, because women's natures had been so distorted and disguised by suppression, a lack of education and a denial of equality. Contemporarily, we can still see the effects of defective attitudes to women in stark terms, particularly in their capability to access the rich resources and forces that are their emotions. Persistent sexual inequality, assumptions of male entitlement, the denigration of women on account of their 'weak' nature and emotions (Chapters 1-2), and beliefs about what women are and should be (Chapters 3-4), including their commodification continue. We need not presume how such attitudes impact on women, however, because we know their effects in reality. Perhaps the most unfortunate victims of negative and dehumanising attitudes can be seen in female prison inmates. Women with histories of violence and sexual abuse are over represented in the prison system, and relationship problems are one of the main pathways for women's entry into prison (Corston, 2006)<sup>300</sup>. What can we do to stop Nancy becoming one of these women and to help her and others like her?

Schools are amongst the most important places where children should find support, positive influences and role models<sup>301</sup>. Warm and respectful relationships with teachers

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<sup>298</sup>Blake and Gannon (2008). Rapists are more likely to have perspective-taking deficits, believe the violence to be less harmful than non offenders, enjoy the victim's distress, especially if the relationships were adversarial. 70% of rapists in a study of 17, regarded women as sex objects and 68% believed they were entitled to sex (p.41).

<sup>299</sup>See also Adams (2007).

<sup>300</sup>See Corston's (2007) study for a vivid example of the effects for women prisoners of being poor, not in control of their lives and with few choices. Almost half of the women had experienced violence at home, one in three women had suffered sexual abuse, compared to just under one in ten men; and one in twenty women had been raped since the age of 16.

<sup>301</sup>Veltman and Browne (2001) also make this point in the case of abused children.

who model kind and compassionate behaviour, might help to develop higher levels of self-esteem and worth, so reducing aggressive behaviour. Sensitive and creative teaching can help foster a sense of academic accomplishment which might, again, reduce poor behaviour and negative psychopathologies. Another way is to encourage children like Nancy to stay interested in order to achieve later educational and professional success and to encourage children to take part in activities to boost their confidence. These are obvious ways to help them feel safe, secure and worth something to somebody. Reading novels to engage the imagination and transport the mind to another safer world in the comfort of the school library or with a sensitive teacher might be another strategy and I pursue this in the next chapter. Unfortunately, however, maltreated children consistently struggle at school and are more likely than others to be excluded (Veltman and Browne, 2001:230). As noted, there are very promising policies and legislative proposals in Scotland to help all children with needs, including maltreated children, but there is a gap between policy aspirations and what schools are able to do in practice. That gap exists not just because of the complexity of these children's backgrounds, behaviours, personalities, attitudes and affective states, but because of resource shortages, inappropriate training, and teachers who might feel overwhelmed with the number and complexity of their responsibilities. An oft repeated refrain from teachers is 'I'm not a social worker'. So, what can schools do to support Nancy and, indeed, all pupils in their emotional development?

I shall now turn, in the concluding chapter of this thesis, to ways in which we might help teachers provide sensitive, caring and compassionate support for all of the pupils they teach, including young people such as Nancy and others who suffer the sort of abuse I have outlined here. I concur with Auerbach (2003: 549) that '...there is always going on within us a process formulation and interpretation whose subject matter is our own self'. This is true for Nancy, young learners, and their educators alike (indeed every citizen) and interpreting literature is part of this process, and a support to developing our capabilities. By working together, Nancy and I, we may bring our overlapping, complementary, perspectives, experiences, beliefs and insights to bear on the novels we read so that we can come to, perhaps, a view of the human condition, a view of who we are and what we might become. Novels give us pause for thought, a space in which to contemplate ourselves and others, in thought-provoking, compassionate and imaginative ways. I propose that reading novels may help develop our emotions, senses imagination and thought, and practical reasoning, helping us to become autonomous individuals concerned for justice and wellbeing.

## **Chapter Seven: Moving Forward.**

### **7.1 Introduction.**

In this final chapter I will, initially, reiterate the principle arguments of this thesis and then propose a number of recommendations, derived from these central arguments, on ways in which we might move forward on emotional wellbeing and gender equality in education. A number of the proposals I make here pertain to teacher education and activity in schools and these recommendations are both tentative and brief. What I propose here could, as noted earlier, equally well be advocated in other public institutions such as prisons, hospitals and care homes, but as my professional expertise lies in secondary education, this is what I concentrate on here.

In greater depth, I focus, in this final chapter, on the use of the novel to illustrate philosophical points but also as a vehicle for the education of emotions and, especially, for the cultivation of compassionate minds. Here, I bring together the novels I have drawn on in this thesis, arguing that fine novels can help us to explore and to understand what it means to have enduring traits and emotional sensibilities. Novels can help us to inculcate moralised emotions as an integral part of good character in ways that might support the emotional health of pupils such as Nancy. This is a fairly lengthy discussion, focused on ways in which the exploration of the emotions in this thesis might play itself out in pedagogy and the curriculum. I then outline some limitations of this thesis and note, in so doing, some areas for further research. In the fourth section, I articulate the impact that researching and writing this thesis has had on my own professional practice and attitudes whilst noting, here, how I believe that this enquiry represents an original contribution to the field. Finally, I close by giving Nancy the final word as she speaks of her favourite book and her emotional reactions to it.

### **7.2 Summing Up.**

In the introductory chapter to this thesis, I stressed the importance of emotions as essential elements of human intelligence and wellbeing. Accordingly, I noted that the central issue the thesis would address was that the emotions deserve and demand more scrutiny and theoretical attention than populist accounts provide if we are to educate young people who can enjoy emotional wellbeing. I went on to argue that emotions are complex, sometimes subtle, sometimes overt, evaluations of what is important to us. They can be rational and

intelligent because they are responses to information streaming in to us from the external world. They are intelligent because to judge, appraise, or reason, is to exercise the intellectual faculty (Deigh, 2000:298)<sup>302</sup>. Emotions are responses to what we value, to our perceptions and beliefs about who we are, what matters to us, how we see ourselves in relation to others and how we think our goals and aspirations are being realised or hindered. These were the principle arguments of Chapters 1 and 2. Emotions connect us to our past, keeping alive thoughts, images, feelings, events, long after they occur. Emotions also keep us rooted in the present while bringing us information about the possible world of the near future, information on which we might act, if we can. Emotions matter to our reason, wellbeing and functioning, as I have demonstrated throughout, because emotions can themselves be rational, arising as they do in reasoning creatures.

I argued, particularly in Chapter 4, and following Aristotle and Kant, that human beings as rational creatures are of absolute value, ‘beyond price’ but also vulnerable. The ends we pursue are varied and plural, reflecting our dispositions, intellect, virtuous character, plans and goals. The goals we pursue are important to us because we are ourselves ends and we are end-setters<sup>303</sup>. If I accord myself status as a human being with a rational nature, then surely every other person has the same claim to make. Being rational, end-setters of intrinsic worth (we are persons, not things), we ought not, therefore, to be made subject to others’ wills if, in the process, our autonomy, dignity and intrinsic worth is degraded or denied for the sake of some other’s ends. To so subject or sacrifice ourselves would be to deny our basic humanity, and we saw the fictional consequences of such acts in *HD*, *The Road* and *Cat’s Eye*. Ethically, I argued, we should respect ourselves by pursuing what is good for us to enjoy a good life, or eudaimonia, while promoting the good ends of others. We ought also to respect the right of others to make and follow decisions that accord with their personhood, that is with who they are and what they want to do and be. If we give reasons for actions that justify the instrumental use of another person, we are, in effect, subjecting the reason of that person to the will of our own reason, erasing or denying that she is a valuable, thinking, goal setting person in her own right with legitimate intelligent feelings and emotions.

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<sup>302</sup> And so on this account, screaming one’s head off at one’s shadow, punching a wall, or throwing darts at a picture, could be construed as rational and intelligent, if, in responding thus, an inanimate object is substituted for the real person. As outlets for these intense emotions, the responses, we may suppose, rest on reasons, such as to alleviate the discomfort of anger, frustration or thwarted loved. Alternatives may have been assessed and an (symbolic) action chosen – screaming, punching and throwing darts – bringing, thereby, some kind of satisfaction and consequent discharge of the emotion without causing harm to a sentient being.

<sup>303</sup> *GW*:4:428-9.



Rearing a child<sup>304</sup> to nurture ethical regard and respect for the absolute worth of all others can be facilitated by cultivating a healthy emotional repertoire to which that child has free access. Individuals should, I have argued here, be able to call on that emotional repertoire to help them choose responses at the appropriate time, in the right circumstances, and to the right degree. Those responses should be available to persons, not on the basis of their sex, but on the basis of their evaluations of human need or action. While all emotions can be regarded as guardians of the moral realm<sup>305</sup> if appropriately cultivated to respect the absolute worth of persons, or to disdain immoral acts, in Chapter 3 I selected compassion, following the work of Nussbaum (2001) as *the* emotion to be guardian of this moral realm. Compassion rivets our attention to a person in need or distress, propelling us, sometimes with urgency, to palliate her discomfort. Compassion need not require a tragedy to make itself present; noticing an unhappy pupil should be enough to motivate me to ask what is wrong and if I can do so, to act to help alleviate her discomfort. Compassion, too, might be present when we just look at people, moving our thoughts towards the hope that their lives are going well but when, for example, our gaze falls on people we know to be routinely stigmatised or negatively stereotyped, compassion should be present in greater force. Compassion can call on a rich combination of anger, disgust, love, pity, shame, wonder or awe to help us judge whether an act or an individual merits our ethical opprobrium or concern. I felt compassion for the father and the son in *The Road*, for the pitiful victims of European colonisation in *HD* and for those bullied in *Cat's Eye*. Given its role in our ethical life, compassion, as I see it, might be regarded as an 'arch-guardian' of the moral domain, a kind of 'architectonic'<sup>306</sup> emotion that pervades and organises all other emotions, organising and directing what we do, once we have taken in and evaluated what the world is doing to a vulnerable, sometimes powerless, person such as Nancy.

Central to my argument in support of attending to the emotions in education, is that, suitably cultivated, emotions are not only ethically good guides to action and interpreters and judges of moral salience, they are also intelligent because the creature they animate is intelligent. However, emotions are still often regarded as irrational, as 'emotive' unthinking forces of nature that propel us without will or reason. On such accounts, the intelligent person is an emotionless person: cool, rational and objective, one who is not easily moved by love or compassion, or at least, one who can set these feelings aside for

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<sup>304</sup>Following Aristotle, it is easier to cultivate the requisite habits in a child than in an adult.

<sup>305</sup>Following Haidt (2009).

<sup>306</sup>Following Nussbaum (2011:39).

some greater good. I have sought to show that such a view of emotions and their bifurcation from rationality is mistaken and, whilst calling for care in education, I have highlighted a tension occasioned by some accounts of care. Some care ethicists wish to disavow rationality because of its remoteness from ‘feeling’ and caring; but, as I argued in Chapter 4, such a view misapplies or misunderstands the liberal, ethical conception of the person whilst promoting a view of emotions as unthinking. Allied with the still commonplace view of emotions as distinct from reason, we can begin to see how the absolute value of women as ‘Woman’ has been denied. Her ‘emotional nature’ entails a propensity to irrational attitudes and conduct. These beliefs have been embodied in, and they sustain, gendered asymmetries in which men are viewed as the legitimate possessors of power, being rational and impartial. Women are deemed the natural recipients of male power and organisation, being irrational and partial, as I demonstrated in Chapters 4 and 5. I argued that such a view, whilst convenient to those who enjoy the privileges of gendered power, is disabling of women’s and men’s potential to do and to be. In education, boys and girls are steered into subjects, careers and behaviours that are motivated by beliefs about natural roles and innate capacities, including natural emotional capacities: compassion for girls, aggression, or at least, assertiveness and rationality, for boys. In such circumstances, school pupils are, arguably, circumscribed end-setters, particularly if their lives are contoured around gendered emotions.

I examined how emotions can be used to dehumanise, denigrate and deny dignity to women, firstly, because the intelligence of emotions is not generally understood and so emotions are frequently regarded as neither intelligent nor rational, but unintelligent. Secondly, emotions can be used to deny dignity to women because women and children are frequently taken to have fewer complex emotions. Despite the fact that compassion, sympathy and empathy may be deeply complex, because they develop in relations to others, as I demonstrated in Chapters 3 and 4, these emotions are often dismissed as weak and sentimental, fit primarily for caring, for women’s work. Women are caught in a double bind, as they are with their emotional expressions (see chapter 5). When they are outgrouped, seen as inferior to men, then their emotions are deemed mainly primary: they feel anger, disgust or fear, emotions they share in common with animals. If they are regarded as natural primary carers, their emotions are conveniently taken to be basic, because emotional care is not complex (see chapter 4). However, properly cultivated, as I argued, such emotions contain complex evaluations of what is salient and worthy of our attention, motivating us to good action. But to do good acts requires practical, reflective

activity that is conducive to achieving good ends, promoting our own and others' flourishing in the pursuit of those valued ends. Moralised compassion, as arch-guardian of the moral realm, is necessary for ethical conduct and should, I have sought to demonstrate, be available to and cultivated in both sexes.

However, the effects on women and children of having their emotions, perceptions and experiences denied, can be deeply traumatising, erasing to a large extent who they are and what they can and could be as persons. I indicated this in Chapter 6 where I also outlined the routes to women's objectification. These routes included the denial of autonomy, experiences, perceptions and opinions, and the fungibility and instrumental use of women's bodies and services in the private sphere. Here, compassion is absent. Women are denied their status as rational end-setters and their best and natural role is as carers undertaking an undervalued act, as I argued in Chapters 4 and 5, because such acts require love, compassion and sympathy, emotions that are less important in the public sphere where aggression and objectivity seem to be more purposeful. Where there is a lack of respect for children, and especially young girls, this can extend to women, and vice versa, as the NSPCC reports of the previous chapter clearly demonstrate. They are treated as fungible objects, things without intrinsic value, things for which compassion is unnecessary. And so, if compassion, the arch-guardian of our moral conduct, is absent and supplanted by contempt and disdain, some women and girls are ready to be, and do become, dehumanised. A character such as Nancy, who exemplifies all too many of the young women in today's schools, will require sensitive support if she is to realise her capacities to do and to be, to live a life worth living, to express a full range of healthy emotions. I will make the case here, and with respect to practical pedagogy, that the novels could be used to explore themes that might be sufficiently removed from real life experience to allow a sense of confidence in talking about one's own emotions and life's experiences; at least to help us with our need to understand ourselves and our lives. I will suggest that novels can provide exemplars of how we come to treat people well or badly. How we come to see people, how we value them as persons, will, to a large extent, determine how we treat them.

When we treat people as possessions, as persons we need in order to define our own, selfish, states of being, or as persons whose duty it is to subsume their personhood into that of her partner, so that he may continue to pursue his own ends, we fail to respect such people as ends. Women, or children, who fail to conform to what is expected of them by

their partners, or carers, may be ill-treated or have their choices limited. Maltreatment of any kind is rarely conducive to wellbeing, and sustained maltreatment, of the kind I discussed here, and as exemplified in the bullying in *Cat's Eye*, can have catastrophic effects on the lives of the maltreated: emotional dysfunction, emotional dysregulation, PTSD, mood lability, alexithymia. All such consequences can have serious, deleterious consequences for health, affiliation, senses and imagination, and the capacity to reason and deliberate with the result that repeat victimisation may be the result. Consequently, and on the claims I have made throughout the thesis, because they are powerful forces that pervade, organise, control and influence what do, how we are, what we might be and how we might act, I propose that emotions should be seen as an architectonic capability.

Proposing that emotions are an architectonic capability indicates an emergent, now to be developed and tested, original contribution to the field. Aware of the need for any PhD to make a distinct contribution to knowledge, and for its author to demonstrate independent critical ability, it is, at this stage, useful to sum-up ways in which this thesis has sought to fulfil such criteria. Focussed on the emotions in education, I have co-located philosophy, feminism and gender, relevant insights from psychology, sociology and the novel, arguing that all of these are important to an understanding of the person if we are to educate that person to their fullest potential and to enable them to live a life of emotional wellbeing. The philosophy of the person I have constructed derives from Aristotelian and Kantian conceptions. My insistence on attention to personhood represents a relatively unusual approach in Scottish education which does not often, if ever, begin with a philosophically explicit idea of a person, either in its curricula or pedagogy. I am not here thinking of the work developed in academic journals or books, many of which deal with these issues extensively (see, for example, Carr and Steutel, 1999) but of explicit conceptions of the person, as articulated in this thesis, in curricula design or pedagogy. Some of these strands, gender for example, or emotional wellbeing and treating pupils with respect, are, of course, to be found in education policy and documents, and so are not, perhaps, new. However, the strands are, arguably, not well connected in curricular documents and policy, and often lack theoretical and philosophical depth and clarity. Further, teacher education curricula, practice and policy in education rarely attend to any deep consideration of, for example, what an emotion is, that emotions can be educated as well as managed, the roots of gender

and sex disparities<sup>307</sup>, or that institutions can override inappropriate or harmful personal values and beliefs, along with natural empathic and compassionate concerns. Scant attention is paid to philosophy, to the ethics of educational practice *as practice* in Initial Teacher Education, postgraduate or Continuing Professional Development programmes for primary or secondary teachers. Philosophy and ethics are often regarded as too theoretical, too difficult, and of little use in practice. I have sought to suggest otherwise. On my account, education should begin by asking what is a person and what does that person need to do in order to become a being and doing end-setter who can enjoy emotional, intellectual and physical wellbeing.

What I have sought to articulate is the importance of justice to realising capability development and functioning that enable emotional wellbeing. Justice rests on the ethical principle that human beings, as reasoning, vulnerable creatures, ought to be treated with dignity, and to have their personhood, including their autonomy, valued and respected. Just institutions have a key role to play, but we should, in education, promote greater awareness of what constitutes human emotion. The Capability Approach, with its ethically evaluative principles and stress on the non-fungibility of ten central capabilities, one of which is *Emotions*, can be a powerful tool of analysis to see how those we teach are faring. Additionally, it can serve as a powerful tool for the evaluation of our professional practice and pedagogy, helping us to interrogate our attitudes towards those we teach and towards what it is we think we should be teaching and our pupils should be learning.

In order to respect and protect Nancy's personhood, aided by the development of her capabilities and the provision of opportunities to realise her potentialities and plans, she will need a number of important goods and services. There needs to be recognition that Nancy needs help and that her problems require acknowledgement. She will need, for example, therapy and counselling, strong support in school, assistance from Social Services and health care services. Nancy needs to feel secure, to live in an environment in which, for at least some of the time, she is free from anxiety about her personal safety and those for whom she cares. She needs, too, to believe she has a future for which she can effectively plan. To secure that future, Nancy needs to be able to access, accept and employ her emotions in order to develop practical wisdom (Chapters 1-3). The account, recall, is of Nancy as an *abused child*. She often misses cues about the emotional states and

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<sup>307</sup>Only recently have notions of gendered teaching practice been introduced into year four of the B.Ed. degree at the University of Glasgow and few courses in that four year programme are explicitly concerned with philosophy, for example.

well-being of others and herself. She represses her emotions and so is not employing them in ways that might allow her to deploy her practical reason to its fullest extent (Chapter 6). To do so, as I argue in this conclusion, she needs help. Nancy needs to be able to interpret and act with a degree of moral literacy (Chapter 4), and to protect herself from destructive impulsive behaviour and predatory interests (Chapter 6). If we could get it ‘right’ so that she can flourish, then school could offer a haven, a safe place for Nancy, physically, intellectually and emotionally.

There are, as I noted in Chapter 6, statutory provisions for children of domestic violence and children with additional support needs, emotional and educational, are ensured support throughout the public sector via legislation and policies. Some of these legislative and policy initiatives have been discussed, as have some of very many reports that focus on the needs of young people such as Nancy, including, for example, *Shaping a Fairer Future* bulletins and research papers, legislation such as the Equality Act (2010)<sup>308</sup>, and campaign group publications such as those from the Women’s Aid Federation and EVAW (End Violence Against Women Coalition), the NSPCC and the SCCPN. Such publications outline what ought to be done to end inequalities, discrimination, violence arising from gender stereotypes and beliefs, and all are very valuable and important. The *Shaping a Fairer Future Report* (Prosser, 2006), for example, acknowledges the dramatic changes that have taken place in the traditional assumptions about what men and women can do. However, that report also notes that the gender gap persists, and along with it, gender stereotyping. Subject and career choices are still determined by deep-rooted assumptions of gender, and children, as we saw in Chapter 4, still have fixed views about men and women’s roles from a very early age. Prosser (2006:20) recommends that teacher training should emphasise the need to challenge gender stereotypes and that there should be a ‘systemic’ change in the way education is delivered in order to reduce gender stereotyping (p.16). Used in conjunction with the Capability Approach, these resources could be more valuable still, if we ask, from a well informed perspective, how well, or not, women’s equality, status and emotional wellbeing are being developed and protected. Many of the goals to which policy makers, researchers and campaigners aspire for women are richly embedded in the CA: respect, human dignity, women as ends not means who strive for a life of flourishing and wellbeing in relationships with those they value and care for and the opportunity to enjoy relationships not defined by control and subjection.

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<sup>308</sup>Equality Act, 2010 [c.15] at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/introduction>.

The CA, in more general terms, may also be useful for examining the extent to which we are expected to conform to prevailing norms. It provides an evaluative framework against which we might ask, for example, how women should look when the dominant image is a variation on Barbie. We might question, too, norms on sexuality in denominational schools, perhaps in all schools; the identification of young people with dominant groups, local and national, such as gangs in impoverished areas or the ‘in-group’ in schools, and, of course, gendered expressions and interpretations of emotions. The CA can also offer essential insights into how the ten central capabilities are intrinsically connected and woven into each other, such that a deficiency in one capability area can lead to a deficiency in another, as I have sought to demonstrate here with Capability 5, *Emotions*. Each of the capabilities potentially fertilises the others, promoting their active realisation (Wolff and de-Shalit, 2007), and emotions, I have argued, are especially important in either fertilising or inhibiting other capabilities. But how can we move forward with the CA and with the emotions capability in particular? There is an increasing awareness of the importance of the CA in education, as the upcoming special edition of the Cambridge Journal of Education testifies<sup>309</sup>. We may expect to hear more of the CA in the future if we can include the approach in education curricula but there is very significant work to be done on emotions before we might expect our teachers to feel equipped to help their pupils attain emotional wellbeing.

Based on the key points raised in each of the chapters here, and drawing on their main conclusions, I shall now offer some recommendations, premised on the view that a more compassionate society is possible if, in education, we can cultivate compassionate minds. To do this, teachers will need to understand how human emotions work and the extent to which they are crucial to understanding our own and others’ wellbeing. The capability of *Emotions*, a capability I have proposed as architectonic, pervades and organises all of the capabilities and merits much deeper attention than it has received hitherto. Thus, I emphasise, in the recommendations that follow, ways in which schools and teacher education might respond. Unless our teachers of today and tomorrow are better equipped, then little change is likely to occur.

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<sup>309</sup>And in which I have a co-authored paper on the CA and Inclusion (Hedge and MacKenzie, 2012b).

### 7.3 Teacher Education and Emotions in Schools.

Please note that teacher education, here, includes initial and ongoing teacher education, from undergraduate to postgraduate study and Continuing Professional Development (CPD). The focus on emotions in teacher education that I propose below would include research from psychology that demonstrates that institutions and situations have great power over the behaviour and attitudes of the individual. Seminal research by Darley and Batson (1973), Zimbardo et al. (1973), Milgram (1974) and Doris (2002), for example, shows, quite conclusively, that moral and emotional character can be overwhelmed by the norms and practices of the institution, or by the novelty of a new situation in which the individual has no previous experience and, consequently, lacks first hand moral literacy. We know teachers come to teaching with strong moral and empathic concern for the emotional wellbeing of their pupils. Once in schools, unfortunately, despite the fact that emotions are inextricably linked with teaching (Zembylas, 2004), newly qualified teachers learn to suppress their emotional concerns and to ‘sublimate their feelings to a cognitive and management process which disables their ability to express and enact their feelings of care for individuals’ (Cooper, 2004:12). Knowing that institutions can have this effect on emotional capacity and moral values may help teachers adhere more confidently to their own beliefs and values, and to retain their compassionate and sympathetic concerns for their pupils (Zimbardo, 2007), hence the following recommendations.

1. Embed attention to emotions in teacher education curricula. This should take into account the philosophical basis of emotions, including their ethical components, and the cognitive structure of emotions. There should be an exploration of gendered expressions of emotions, and how the gendered cultivation of emotions may limit good human functioning, and sustain stereotypes and prejudice. The complexity of emotions, both basic and complex<sup>310</sup>, should be examined. Studies from psychology could be used to show how emotions are implicated in the dehumanising of ‘outgroups’ whilst humanising ‘ingroups’, denying complex emotions such as compassion to the ‘outgroups’ who may comprise women, children and ethnic

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<sup>310</sup>Six emotions, as I argued earlier, are regarded as ‘basic’: joy, fear, anger, etc, so-called because they are evolutionary adaptations. They may lack intentional content, depending on the context, but can still be ‘complex’ in the sense of the evaluations they contain, as expressions of our personal values and dispositions, their relationship to objects of value, and consequent responses. Our capacity for complex emotions means we can integrate first person intentionality with third person intentionality, making comparisons or drawing inferences from what we perceive, believe or imagine is happening. This kind of intelligence is important for social understanding and development (Ben-Ze’ev, 2000: 108).



minorities, while attributing emotional complexity to ‘ingroups’, enabling them to assume superiority over people seen as less powerful or important than themselves.

2. With particular attention to pupils’ emotional wellbeing, and to foster compassion, the CA (in combination with other resources such as legislation, policy initiatives, government commissioned reports on equality, women’s health, domestic violence; reports from women’s groups such as Women’s Aid Federation, and children’s advocacy groups such as the NSPCC) should be used as a framework to determine whether gendered practices pertain, and to assess the extent and appropriacy of support for all pupils, including the vulnerable.
3. In order to premise a better understanding of the emotions in a much more clearly articulated view of personhood, embed the CA in teacher education in ways that take account of the philosophical bases of the approach, specifically its concepts of personhood, dignity, self-respect, and persons as ends not means. The construction of the CA itself, the central capabilities and their application to the real life situations and emotional health of children and teachers should be applied to considerations of educational policy, teacher education practices, school classroom practices and pedagogy, and school management and leadership.
4. Critical lessons on gender construction, discrimination and violence should be embedded into the curriculum accompanied by courses that challenge gender stereotypes, including discussions on ‘masculinity’ (see McCarry, 2010). Gender curricula should also tackle issues of sexualisation of women and young girls in the media and popular culture including courses on gender equality to educate about the following discriminatory practices<sup>311</sup>.
  - The ways in which women are devalued: dismissed or criticised for being ‘emotional’ and irrational; inequality, unequal power, the subordination of women; the seven routes to the objectification of women; women and girl’s discrimination in education and the workplace; challenge honour codes, whether in individuals, gangs or in traditional cultures.
  - How emotions are used to dehumanise or denigrate women: the lack of compassion, sympathy and moralised empathy for women and children; effects on

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<sup>311</sup>EVAW (Cerise, 2011) has a very useful section on the multiple factors that contribute to violence against women and girls, and their work sits well with what I argue here.

women and children when their emotions, perceptions and experiences are denied or erased; the effects of trauma on emotional development.

- How a lack of respect for children, and especially young girls, can carry forward to a lack of respect for women.
- How we might challenge notions of masculinity: challenge male entitlement to sexual services, women's work and efforts; men's entitlement to be cared for at the expense of women and girls' own entitlement to flourish; men's entitlement to punish women for not conforming to gender norms of femininity; men's beliefs about what it means to be a man.
- Innate sexual differences: challenging beliefs about innate differences between men and women and assumptions about how and what boys and girls should learn and, in particular, which emotions are 'natural'.

Embedded in such courses should be an examination of the effects of poverty and exclusion, and the importance of justice to realising capability development and functioning. Vulnerable people are especially prone to capability failure. A 'whole school approach' to prevent VAWG (violence against women and girls) might support awareness raising on how a lack of public focus on gender stereotypes, in government and the media, perpetuates discriminatory practices and relates to emotional health. In these ways, we can expand perceptions of women and children as unique and separate entities, who are dignified beings, worthy of respect, by dint of their humanity, emphasising that, alongside men, they are equally valuable members of our species with a right to a full emotional repertoire.

### **7.3a The Novel as a Tool for Educating the Emotions.**

My fifth recommendation, and one that I shall pursue in greater depth than those above, pertains to the use of the novel to help inculcate moralised emotions, particularly compassion, in order to enrich children's emotional evaluations and to help them explore a range of emotions as they read accounts of other, fictional, worlds. The novel, and all art forms, could be used in the courses suggested above to creatively and imaginatively explore themes that are rarely present in the curriculum. Working with judicious excerpts, whole passages, or, if time permitted, whole books, would be an invaluable and illuminating way to explore themes such as anger, fear, compassion and justice, whilst

expanding the literary competence of learners. Reading might help Nancy to develop enough resilience to come through her awful experiences, to withstand the bullies in school and somehow resist her father. She might use her anger to fight injustice and avoid her own injustices, but only if she is strongly supported. If those who teach her can feel compassion for her plight, and seek to understand, rather than punish her, for poor behaviour and emotional excesses, then Nancy might pull through. She might begin to imagine an alternative future that she can plan and organise and in which she can, at last, express her own personhood. My claim is that novels can be helpful in developing emotions if used sensitively by educators to see the particulars and to develop practical intelligence. Novels can help us ask: ‘What would I do if I were in this situation?’ and then evaluate responses, both our own and those of the fictional characters in the books.

Reading, as an ethical endeavour, may help in examining and exploring the themes of compassion, justice, autonomy and gender. And so I ask how Nancy might experience the novel, what emotions she might feel and what insights novel reading might furnish to support her emotional wellbeing. Creatively used, novels can illuminate abstract ideas or shed light on complex human lives since, at their imaginative and sensitive best, they are explorations of human psychology and experience. They may help the reader ask: ‘What if?’, ‘How does this apply to me?’ or ‘Why have I reacted in this way?’. Developing pupils’ capacities to read beyond the surface of the story’s structure and intentions may help them read the psychology and experience of the fictional characters with insight and wisdom. Importantly, too, novels can provide exemplars of how we come to treat people well or badly. How we come to ‘see’ people, how we value them as persons, will, to a large extent, determine how we treat them.

Engaging us emotionally is one of the hallmarks of a good novel. We make judgements, guess the next move, rationalise what is happening. We respond emotionally to the world of the novel in ways that express our values. Importantly too, we can hypothesise on and clarify our own values in the safety of the novel’s situations and characters. Perspective-taking (empathy), a capacity that can encompass compassion, pity, sympathy, envy, jealousy, anger, guilt or revulsion, is aroused when the reader responds imaginatively enough to enter the novel’s universe. Novels, in this way, promote our capacity to connect and identify with people and situations outwith our everyday world of experience<sup>312</sup>.

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<sup>312</sup>Woessner (2010:235) has argued that sensitizing us to the pain of others has been one of the central aims of the novel since the Enlightenment.

Novels can captivate us morally as we read, and viscerally participate, in their profound moments. So, too, novels may have ‘surpassing value’ (Nussbaum, 1994:54) for Nancy, who, if we could imagine her reading some of the novels used here, might embark on a journey to explore her own moral sensitivity and allegiances to characters and events. We might muse with her on the ways in which the individual’s moral sense is socially conditioned, on the relationship between individual responsibility and her social context. We might discuss with her the limiting and enabling conditions that allow the imagination to pulsate, the emotions to be nourished, the mind to be freed from servitude, ranging across questions that concern virtue and vice, emotional wellbeing and human flourishing. I have argued here that literature can play a philosophical and epistemic role in the cultivation of moral emotions. Reading literature, in this sense, may be instrumental, since it is aimed at desiring a good end. As Williams (2002:170) observes there may be, inevitably in literature education, a means-end relationship but ‘it is as inappropriate to speak in means-ends terms of benefits of literary study as it would be to speak of the activity of sailing as a means to the pleasurable end of enjoyment’ (p.172). The end of sailing is not just simply enjoying the elements or testing one’s skills in navigation, any more than the end of reading a novel is to extract all the juices of its moral life. However, one of the purposes in reading novels may be to inculcate an appreciation of our responses to the life depicted in the novel, and thereby promote, perhaps, greater self-understanding. Of course, and as Williams (2002:172) notes, ‘pedagogic tact’ will be necessary to avoid narrow instrumentalism, so ensuring that young pupils like Nancy remain sensitive to the novelty and complexity of the books she reads.

If the novel is a journey of all human experience, the ‘highest form of human expression so far attained’ (D.H. Lawrence, cited in Leavis, 1967), then Nancy should be encouraged to read, including so called ‘difficult’ novels. Leavis understood Lawrence to mean that this form of human expression was the ‘highest form of thought’ about the ‘nature, the meaning and the essential problems of human life’ (1967:11). If we accept novels as visions of humanity in all its diverse complexity, a reader such as Nancy should surely be granted access to these visions to ponder on how far they reflect her own life circumstances, on what she might learn about her own complex and difficult universe, and on what the worlds of others might reveal to her. I contend that literature, of the kind discussed here, can arouse in us emotions we did not think we were capable of experiencing, or normally wish to experience, as well as emotions that we do normally feel. By this, I mean that the novel invites us to empathise with the characters, to be aroused by anger, fear, compassion, sadness, or to feel satisfaction with varying intensity,

and to do so privately. Reading is usually solitary but in our solitary sealed world, we are free to imagine vividly, to feel, encounter and confront vicarious emotions in the privacy of our own mental worlds. Fictional worlds are safe places in which to experience emotions and to let the imagination wander free; there are no real world obligations, demands or expectations. These private experiences can also furnish more public discussions of the novel, assuming that Nancy is willing to reveal her true feelings to her classmates and to me<sup>313</sup>.

Might Nancy feel the compassion and pity I feel for the father and his son in *The Road*? I might ask her to dwell on the intense love the father feels for his son, for whom he sacrifices his own death in the vain hope of finding a better life on the coast. I say 'sacrifice' because death would probably be better than trying to survive although death is a luxury in this novel. I might ask her to examine why she feels compassion or pity: what do these emotions contain? I would like to know her reaction to the mother's suicide, whether she could sympathise with her frightened despair at the thought of living in a world in which women are used to give birth to babies for food, knowing this might be the fate of her own child. Would Nancy feel respect for the boy's moral integrity, his resolute determination to stay alive (morally at least) by keeping 'the fire'<sup>314</sup> alight within the soul without becoming like the predators hunting what is left of living human flesh? And would Nancy recoil in horror at the depredations that have brought about the hunters' depravity, whilst feeling profound sadness that, at some unspecified date in the past, an event occurred that would end all life? I would enjoy discussing with Nancy the beautiful profundity of the novel's ending.

Once there were brook trout in the streams in the mountains. You could see them standing in the amber current where the white edges of their fins wimpled softly in the flow... On their backs were vermiculate patterns that were maps of the world in its becoming. Maps and mazes. Of a thing which could not be put back. Not be made right again. (p.137)

In *The Road*, we are confronted with a ghastly, eternal, changeless present: the past is receding, words are dying. For the boy, there is no future, no history, no memory, no hope. Even to remember in the present is a struggle. The end of existence in *The Road* is the 'onset of some cold glaucoma dimming away the world' with 'nights dark beyond darkness and the days more grey each than what had gone before' (p.1). What would

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<sup>313</sup>Trilling (2008:381-401) discusses just such concerns in *On Teaching Modern Literature*.

<sup>314</sup>The boy's metaphor for moral goodness.

Nancy make of this? Might the book allow her the opportunity to reflect on and deliberate about her own life, and to consider ways in which she might have a future that is denied to those in *The Road*? In his reading of Macbeth, Cavell (2003:229) fastened to the idea that we humans crave the 'inhuman, of limitlessness, of monstrosity', but that we are also horrified by thoughts of what breaking the bonds of humanness would wreak. The craving and the horror is an anxiety about human identity whose bonds we wish to escape. In *The Road* we have escaped all bonds but that of predator to predated, morality to humanness. The fascination of the book is in the inhuman, in the limitlessness of destruction and in the monstrosity of our heedless regard of the future.

I have claimed that novels such as *The Road* can help train and develop the literary competence of Nancy, and others of a similar age, as part of their intellectual and emotional growth (Nikolajeva, 2010). Such a training may contribute to the development of Nancy's 'practical intelligence', the disposition to make good judgements in all aspects of her life as she matures as a learner and young woman to become a virtuous person, or person of good character in the Aristotelian sense. For Aristotle, a virtue, is 'some kind of state in a "person's soul" ' (Annas, 1993:4), one in which she is kind, honest, courageous or just. Virtues are dispositions, how we have 'made ourselves and chosen to be', according to Annas (1993:49), who notes that virtues involve deliberation and decisions over time which, in turn, can improve the effectiveness of our rationality (p.51). This is one part of the structure of virtue. The second, and most pertinent here, is the affective aspect of virtue in which we can habituate our emotions over time to respond to what is of value in the right way: a form of ethical perception. The third aspect is the intellectual structure of virtue, that is the reasoning about and grasping of the right thing to do<sup>315</sup>. A virtuous person engages in good practical or intelligent reasoning and she will be sensitive to the complexities of a particular situation. Nancy's education, along with her upbringing, is vital to this process of good habituation<sup>316</sup>. Nancy, as she develops her practical intelligence, will have to put effort into 'considering, thinking about and working out the various factors relevant to her choices' (Annas, 1993:90). As a young learner, she is still 'internalising about the right ideas to follow; is still tempted by temptations contrary to virtue, since her feelings are still not in harmony with her judgement' (Annas, 1993:90). Literature, I suggest, could guide Nancy towards developing her emotions to see the particulars ethically and to develop her practical intelligence to ask, 'What would I do if I were in this situation?'.

<sup>315</sup>Representing in *NE*.II 'Moral Goodness'; VI 'Intellectual Virtues'; VII 'Continence and Incontinence.'

<sup>316</sup>*NE*.1095b3-13; 1104b3-12; Sherman (1989).

What might also happen to Nancy as she reads is that she may develop skills of perception and responsiveness to fictional events, an ability to 'read' the fictional situation and to discern the emotional and ethical particulars, so as to generalize these to more universal conclusions<sup>317</sup>. This relates to Aristotle's concept of practical learning discussed earlier: practical intelligence allied with emotional intelligence<sup>318</sup>. This is not a technique in the way of recognising metaphor ('like') or simile ('as'): it requires different guidance. Practically, in real life, discerning the particulars by emotional discernment is a process of maturation and guidance and Nancy, indeed all pupils, will need to learn this. And novels might help. To enable Nancy to read for the narrative in *The Road*, she will need to develop the skill to understand, indeed the desire to accept<sup>319</sup>, that time, cause and effect, do not always happen in simple linear ways, but contract, expand, bend and overlap in complex, fascinating ways<sup>320</sup>. Narratives that play around with time can be disconcerting and unsettling; or they may be exhilarating. Nancy's literary and emotional competence will improve if she accepts that plots, as life, need not be linear or predictable. Plots can move between temporal planes or from the natural to the supernatural; they can take place in parallel but different times or have no specific sense of time as in *The Road*, where time is meaningless because it will shortly cease. Nancy, when she comes to that realization, may be deeply unsettled, filled with wonder and sorrow at such a state of pitiful affairs. How does one imagine that life can never exist again because human beings sought to eclipse nature, and to control the ambitions of nations by amassing destructive weapons, assuming nuclear disaster to be the cause of the dying world? For those who remain for the moment, they are living in the ashes of an adventure gone disastrously wrong<sup>321</sup>. And Nancy may understand the implication of the message: 'That all our knowledge will be completely dead at that time when the door to future things is closed forever'<sup>322</sup>.

Nancy's competence will be tested to the extent that she can read the connections between

<sup>317</sup>See Chapter 4 for the development of this argument.

<sup>318</sup>And these issues, of course, connect with those raised in Chapters 1-4.

<sup>319</sup>I say 'accept' because unsophisticated readers (and I do not mean to suggest that in a pejorative way) may become irritated and switch off from the novel unless its complexity and intention is not explained to them. See Nikolajeva (2010) from whom I derive these points.

<sup>320</sup>Mikhail Bulgakov is exemplary at playing with time. See the *Master and Margarita*.

<sup>321</sup>There is a resonance here with Steiner's (1971) analogy of *Bluebeard's Castle*. Successive women open the doors to his castle because the doors are there to be opened. The women pay for their curiosity by being imprisoned forever or murdered, depending on the version by Bluebeard (and the metaphor suggests his misogyny and what happens to inquisitive women). Our curiosity and endless pursuit of facts are hardwired into human intelligence, so that learning moves endlessly onwards. We are, says Steiner 'hunters after reality, wherever it may lead' (p.103).

<sup>322</sup>Dante describing the condition of hell. There is no present in hell, only the past and future. Canto X.

the plots to derive meaning or author intention and to be moved, emotionally, by the narrative strategy. However, Nancy's ability to follow the plot will not necessarily mean that she is reading for meaning. For this she will need to understand the novel's hermeneutic or interpretive code (Nikolajeva, 2010:150), developing her ability to make meaning of the text on many layers, drawing out a variety of themes such as the nature of memory and identity, or the relationship between bullying, abuse and self-harm that intimately frames the world of friendship in *Cat's Eye*<sup>323</sup>. Cordelia commits suicide; Elaine attempts it and is left to die by her friends. Elaine's brother is killed by terrorists and, throughout her life, she navigates her persona, psyche and art uncertainly amongst and across feminist and male dominated communities.

Another layer of complexity which could be opened up to Nancy is the ambiguous and open-ended nature of the novel: the reader has sometimes to imagine the fate of the characters beyond the last page of the book. A novel, too, may be resistant to a single interpretation, it can be cognitively and emotionally demanding. Nevertheless, such novels need not impede Nancy's (or other readers') understanding and she may, indeed, feel compelled to go on reading because she relishes precisely that complexity and character identification. It is easy to dismiss 'difficult' books as unsuitable for young readers, but it is worth bearing in mind that while:

Readers may not be able to articulate their understanding... they are certainly capable of some meaning-making even in extremely complex narratives, especially with training and assistance. (Nikolajeva, 2010:157)

Teachers, of course, may focus much of their effort on teaching the basic skills of reading, the how of reading: the plot, character, narrative voice, metaphor, allusion, analogy, reader response, and so on, not least because they are inevitably driven by curricula and assessment regimes. Of greater interest to me is how Nancy will reason about the novel she is reading. There is little research evidence about the 'process' involved in understanding works of literature, according to Nikolajeva (2010:147)<sup>324</sup>. Pupils such as Nancy may competently discuss the plot and metaphors of a poem, for example, but do so without having connected to that poem in a deep and personal way, without necessarily understanding the interdependence between its literary facets, or without discerning the various themes and levels of complexity. We might posit, in common terminology, that

<sup>323</sup> Atwood's portrayal of friendship broke new ground when the novel was first published.

<sup>324</sup> Researchers in the field of psycholinguistics might dispute Nikolajeva's claim. As I have no expertise in this field, and as it would take me away from the focus of this discussion, I will not pursue the point further.



such a reader is ‘competent’ (Culler, 1975) at an adequate if basic cognitive and aesthetic level (Nikolajeva, 2010:146). But how does Nancy learn to process what she reads in a competent, or as I shall call it, a sophisticated way? Undoubtedly, she would need to be guided. Nikolajeva suggests, and I agree, that the role of the educator is crucial, and I am acutely aware that the educator can kill the desire to read novels for their own sake if teaching is routine, utilitarian or mediocre. If the novel is treated as a mere means to extract understanding for examination purposes, without sensitivity or passion, the novel’s potential life, all its possibilities, will sink into inanity. Poor teaching, Steiner argued (2005:18), ‘diminishes the student, it reduces to gray inanity the subject being presented’ and he described poor teachers as ‘amiable grave diggers ... they do not “open Delphi” but close it’. By contrast, Steiner suggests, good teaching ‘is to lay hands on what is most vital in a human being. It is to seek access to the quick and the innermost of a child’s or an adult’s integrity’ (p.18). Insensitive or instrumental teachers may threaten the pupil’s willingness or desire to be uncertain, to doubt, to dissent, to freely engage in hard thought, to want to know more and to begin to feel the freedom that comes from exercising the mind and questioning what is. There can be emotional discomfort with uncertainty and complexity; but there can also be feelings of exhilaration and excitement at the possibility of what knowledge and understanding can reveal to a pupil such as Nancy. True teaching ‘can be a terribly dangerous enterprise’, the teacher ‘takes into his hands that inmost of his students, the fragile and incendiary matter of their possibilities’ (Steiner, 2005:103). It is the ‘incendiary possibilities’ of emotional and intellectual engagement that I wish to open up in Nancy to support her emotional development and wellbeing.

The novels I have used in this thesis exemplify writerly and dialogical texts<sup>325</sup>. Such texts are challenging and stimulating. As noted, they leave open ‘gaps’ (Nikolajeva, 2010:157) that allow the reader to explore and to fill according to her imaginative powers or imaginative courage, to interpret according to her experience, or to imbue with meaning depending on her cultural or social context. There is a tendency to think that children and young adults prefer the closed and monological text, where the cracks and gaps are filled, the plot is easy to follow and the levels of meaning are few. There is a tendency, too, to offer young readers, as Nikolajeva (2010:157) regretfully notes, adaptations of literature classics such as Shakespeare or Austen, that have stripped the lives of their creations to bare plot so that readers have nothing but ‘proairetic’ (or anticipatory) codes to explore.

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<sup>325</sup>I follow Nikolajeva (2010:157) here. Texts can be writerly or readerly, following Raymond Barthes (1977), monological or dialogical, following Mikhail Bakhtin (1981), or closed and open, following Umberto Eco (1979).

This may have the effect of disconnecting readers from cognitive, emotional and moral development, as well as disconnecting them from the joy of reading. Offering stripped down adaptations or merely anticipatory, predictable novels may also indicate that we mistrust and under-estimate young people's ability to engage with complex novels, discouraging them from wishing to read and to explore, in their own ways, the gaps that good novels provide. Nancy's real world is complicated. Is it the educator's role to ignore that and to pretend it is not or is it our role to provide Nancy with opportunities to consider other, equally but differently complicated worlds and to work with her on possible responses to those worlds?

Novels, of course, contain 'contextual codes' and understanding those codes could also contribute to Nancy's emotional and intellectual development. Nancy could gain a sense of satisfaction, a certain pride and pleasure that she understands more than just the surface of plot and character. Nancy may come to understand what inspired writers to write as they did, and to understand writers' own emotional and intellectual responses to their contexts. *The Road* may be prophetic; it may be a 21<sup>st</sup> modernist version of Dante's *Inferno*<sup>326</sup>. The context for *Unless* and *Cat's Eye* is feminism in the 1990s and 1970s. Atwood, as noted earlier, is ambivalent about feminism, Shields less so. Feminism, for Shields, has not fully achieved its own dreams and hopes, and is still uncertain, as women are, about how to assert its own vision in the face of powerful masculine visions<sup>327</sup>. These contexts offer wonderful opportunities for the teacher to teach, as I have said, much more than just theme, structure and plot, and so, for example, how does Nancy feel about feminism?

There are, further, ethical codes that may help to orientate Nancy, depending on which social or cultural group is writing, at which particular historical period. Attitudes about, for instance, gender, race, patriarchy, children, parent-child relationships and sexuality will vary across time, as exemplified in the novels discussed here. Consider Chinua Achebe's (1977) condemnation of a *Heart of Darkness* for its racism and the astute feminism of *Cat's Eye* and *Unless*. Classics, of course can be 'treacherous' (Nikolajeva, 2010:156) because of their sincerely held, but now objectionable, attitudes and beliefs<sup>328</sup>. However, these very relationships are there to be examined: why and how have such beliefs changed,

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<sup>326</sup>I am speculating but cannibals are in punished in the lower reaches of Cocytus or hell where they are frozen in ice. Sinners here lose their souls (Canto XXXIII).

<sup>327</sup>Shields examines this feminist ambiguity by means of Reta's relationship to writing. Reta is a successful novelist but her new editor is eager to change the feminine focus of her novel to one that is more masculine.

<sup>328</sup>See Chinua Achebe (1977) on *HD* and Wayne Booth (1988a) writing about Paul Moses' take on *Huckleberry Finn* which he damned as 'bad education' on race and slavery.

and are the changes for the better? A young reader like Nancy could critically assess the codes in all of the novels described here. Would she identify with Cordelia or Elaine, or both?

Aristotle conceived friendship to be one of the finest things of a good life. Valued ends, he believed, became finer if shared with friends. Friendship embodies good will, generosity and affection, acts of mutual reciprocity. Friendship is not only instrumental to happiness, it is the 'greatest' and 'most necessary' of external goods, important in developing and expressing virtuous character<sup>329</sup>. Elaine and Nancy lack this fine thing. Hazardous friendship, of the kind depicted in *Cat's Eye*, is disabling and immiserating, marring Elaine's possibilities for happiness and a rich and rewarding relational life, as noted in the previous chapter. The 'Lady of Perpetual Help', about whom Elaine hallucinates when she is close to death, embodies the kind of mothering she needs. Elaine needs compassion, kindness, rescue, salvation, and protection from danger, all of which are absent in her real world. Sometimes we know too that children (and wives) can turn out to be 'the wrong person' (p.249), unable to please their fathers whatever they do, as Nancy well knows. Like Cordelia, Nancy, I imagine, is unlikely to want to please her father, or to be abject before him. Like Elaine, Nancy would probably be angry if she saw either her sibling or her mother acting abjectly so as to avoid violence or humiliation. There are strong feminist issues for Nancy to explore: the role of women, their social construction, their unequal relationship to men, and how girls are brought up to conform to a stereotype of femininity and to express the 'right' emotions in accordance with those stereotypes.

However, as Nancy might learn, Atwood defies feminist expectations<sup>330</sup>: the feminist code is more complex and ambiguous. Despite what Elaine knows about the female universe, the aetiology of women's oppression and deformed ethics, she is an anti-feminist (or is she?). She does not turn towards the female community for safety and reassurance; she seeks out safety amongst men, despite their misogyny. Women frighten her more because they 'collect grievance, hold grudges, and change shape' and, unlike men, 'know too much, they can neither be deceived nor trusted' (p.379). Nancy knows these women, but as girls. Elaine, as adult and child, is defined by the speech and thought acts of others: her childhood friends, her parents, male and female intimates and acquaintances. Nancy, like Elaine, is an outsider, a peripheral figure who is accorded a central place only when she

<sup>329</sup>NE.VIII, IX. See also Sherman (1989:118-128); Nussbaum (1986).

<sup>330</sup>Elaine's young adulthood is set in Toronto when feminism was making its strident mark on the political, social and artistic scene. Elaine is a successful painter.

becomes the butt of others' jokes, derision or foul play. As outsiders, Nancy and Elaine provide a commentary, a critical perspective on the structures, social mores, conventions and social hierarchy of their real life and fictional contexts. Atwood's ambiguous anti-feminism is reflected in her art and psyche which is about denying gender categories, while documenting the life of women. Childhood, in liberal society, is often depicted as a time of anxiety, as a time in which femininity is constructed to subtly marginalize middle-class white girls through blame, failure to live-up to the expectation of the ideal woman. Hite (1995:138) observes that *Cat's Eye* is in some respects little different from *The Handmaid's Tale*; it is just that liberal societies are far more subtle in constructing gender on the basis of biology (see Chapter 5). The construction is more extreme in *The Handmaid's Tale*<sup>331</sup> where fertile women are enslaved to produce children. In *Cat's Eye* Elaine is an independent, detached, and observant 'I'; the cold, unblinking persona she develops to shield her from her friends' abuse and humiliation<sup>332</sup>.

Teaching the novel is also an excellent way to explore beyond the confines of literary construction, bringing to the reading a variety of interdisciplinary and intertextual contexts that can help open up the imagination. Indeed, Nikolajeva argues against the claim that intertextuality deprives the reader of pleasure:

Extensive exposure to various texts, verbal, visual and multimodal, historical and contemporary, highbrow and mass-market-related, stimulates readers to make connections between texts, recognize allusions, acknowledge recurrent features in books by the same author, and not least appreciate parodic play. The *déjà-lu* experience, the joy of recognition is the basis of all mature reading. (Nikolajeva, 2010:156)

The novels I have used in this thesis exemplify these points well. *HD* opens the mind to the brutality of racism and rapacious exploitation (see Chapter 4), telling us that depraved acts will deprave the soul and immiserate profoundly the recipients of contempt and loathing<sup>333</sup>. Proust is rich in commentary on the shallow social mores and habits of upper class French society, making innumerable references to the arts in the process. His meditations on the meaning of time, habit, the power of the imagination and selfish love, themes highly philosophical in nature, open up the reader's mind with wonder and awe at creative genius. A great history book, such as Michael Burleigh's (2001) on Nazi Germany, Eric

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<sup>331</sup> Another of Atwood's novels, arguably her most celebrated.

<sup>332</sup> And emotional adaptation to fear and anxiety.

<sup>333</sup> As is Kurt, in *HD*, who is corrupted by the terrible exercise of power over those he has conquered, he who is the 'progressive' and 'liberal' face of a 'civilized' empire that is in fact vicious and barbarous.

Hobsbawm's (1962) on the revolutions of the Enlightenment, or Conquest's (2000) Stalin's Terror, will fill our minds with images of what they depict, and may occasionally evince indignation or horror at what they tell us of these brutalities. The novel is, in my view, even more powerful, and may complement these fine works, saturating our minds with powerful images and emotions that endure to such an extent that these novels become lifelong companions.

*HD* set alongside a history of Enlightenment ideals of human progress<sup>334</sup>, makes each genre more accessible to imagination and intellect. The linear and factual nature of one may inform the creative, imaginative and emotionally evocative nature of the other. The contextual codes and intertextual meaning that this kind of reading can bring to the reader is enriching. The intertextuality of novels permits me, with Nancy, an examination of all of the key themes in this thesis: compassion, justice, autonomy, and gender disparities in different settings. And so, reading the novel can be an ethical endeavour that can have ethical consequences for the way we think about, reason about and construe the world. We see the world differently when we put the novel before us and read what it has to say about a particular world, in a particular place and in a particular time. We also see that world in deeper hues and colours if that reading is complemented by other kinds of reading or if we can connect the threads of the novel to other works of art, history, geography or to politics, for example. The novel also stretches the imagination, helping us, if we are so-minded, to perceive the world more generously, and to regard others, and perhaps ourselves, with greater sympathy and compassion.

I follow, amongst others, Nussbaum, Booth and Trilling's<sup>335</sup> arguments on the power of the novel to transform our moral imaginations and to extend our imaginative capacities. Following Steiner, 'literacy of feeling is a pre-condition to sane judgement in human affairs' (1972:623): a culture without a significant contemporary literature and a critical challenge is not fully alive<sup>336</sup>. The world is there for Nancy to explore, at least inside the pages of the books we have here. Importantly, too, novels, as invitations to imaginative enlargement, as contemplative activity on human emotions, choices, prejudices,

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<sup>334</sup>Kurt, as embodiment of the Civilised Europe, is the dark space of human potential.

<sup>335</sup>See, for example Trilling (1950, 2008); Murdoch (1970); Frye (1972); Booth (1988a,b); Nussbaum (1990, 1994a,b, 1998, 2001); Calvino (1997); Dadlez (1997); Adamson et al. (1998); Hogan (2003); Carr (2005, 2006, 2009); George (2005); Oatley (2011). The journal of *Philosophy and Literature* is a valuable resource which examines the relationships between philosophy and literature and what the disciplines can learn from each other.

<sup>336</sup>And see Leavis (1952:194-203).

perceptions, judgements, desires, preferences, in short to the human condition, can liberate us from present contingencies. In being so liberated, Nancy may learn over time to counter ‘the prefabricated, generalized and uniform’ (Oakeshott, 1989:33<sup>337</sup>) responses that come too readily into minds that are prepared to be ‘vacant’ (p.31) rather than learned and disposed to critical examination. However, we might now ask whether, if a just society needs just citizens as Rawls (1971) suggested, reading good literature can really help in the task of creating just citizens with emotionally appropriate concerns? Some, like Posner (1997,1998) would argue that such a transformation is unlikely. So why argue that we should read to be better human beings?

I have suggested that perspective-taking is aroused when the reader responds imaginatively enough to enter the novel’s world and that the emotions have the power to help us to reason well and to incite us to good action, provided they have been properly cultivated. Novels, I have now suggested, can help in that cultivation. They can support education that seeks to moralise the imagination and cultivate ethical regard for others. Ignorance can not be advanced as the reason for atrocity or cruelty or as reason to abdicate from responsibility. The novel, then, because it helps to awaken conscience, expanding and bending the imagination beyond its own frontiers and the borders of the self, can be a prophylactic for ignorance, deformed or stunted views. Of course, the novel alone, despite the ‘possibilities of life’ (Trilling, 2000:424) it contains, its powerful ability to convey the shape and condition of human existence, and the emotions consonant with those human events, will not make us good. However, the novel can give us moral help, because it asks us to focus on events which are valuable. The novel enables us to ‘see’ in the sense of having good vision so as to occasion good conduct as moral complexity is brought before our reason and our imagination. Fictional events describe the conditions under which people often make their choices. How well they act will depend on the quality of their emotional capacities, their virtues, the ethical climate in which they live, and the ‘quality

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<sup>337</sup>Oakeshott wrote the essays collected in *The Voice of Liberal Learning* in response to his concerns about the state of liberal education generally which he saw as being usurped for instrumental, purely practical, considerations. Pupils had to be given a period of time in which to escape from the quotidian, to immerse themselves in liberal learning so as to become more fully human. To be fully human meant an education in imagination, discovering what there is to be learned and who one is. Education also allows us to become free, that is better able to understand or misunderstand ourselves. The epithet ‘vacant’ may seem harsh, but Oakeshott was describing what he saw as the danger to liberal education if pupils could not pursue learning for learning’s sake: minds incapable of critical contemplative reflection would be unable to discern the fatuous, false or jingoistic, becoming instead, receptive to the ready-made and uniform. These concerns have hardly gone away. We become human by learning and learning is a task of individual responsibility. See *A Place of Learning* (1-34) in the same collection that was inspired by the debates on education in the 1980s which were dominated by, for example, Allan Bloom’s (1988) *The Closing of the American Mind* (and see Chapter 4 here).

of our habitual objects of attention' (Murdoch, 1970:54). In the novels considered here, Nancy and I can examine the ethical climate to ask if the protagonists made good choices and whether they habitually contemplated good things.

The ravaged environment that the boy and his father seek to escape in *The Road* never corrupts the child's goodness. Despite their slow death from starvation and the certain knowledge that it is death that awaits them, the boy cannot contemplate cruelty and will not succumb to cannibalism: such bad acts cause him anguish. He resists selfishness and his ravaging hunger to offer compassion and kindness whenever he can, and those occasions are rare. There is nothing in that world to re-orientate the boy and the father towards goodness: what they see about them is hell, a glaucomic and dying world choked with noxious pollution, peopled with survivors without whose torment has left them without souls. There is no light but that which is in the boy and it is by that inner light, his goodness, that the world is seen, and by which father and child are orientated. These are powerful images. Goodness exists in hell and hell is still a place where ethical choices can be made. The boy ascends<sup>338</sup> to the idea of good even while there seems to be no point to that virtue. But perhaps that is the point: we value virtue and we have 'intrinsic value or worth' with virtues goods in themselves with 'non-teleological character' (Carr and Steutel, 1998:14). Where virtue fails to exist, human beings can realise only their dark potential. They cannot flourish; their dignity cannot be preserved. The novel, as an 'excellent analogy of morals' (Murdoch, 1970:58), can enlarge our sensibilities, mine, Nancy's and other pupils', to perceive and contemplate the contours of our moral and emotional existence. We can take these analogies and hold them up to our own lives to ask, for example, questions about our own present 'hells', how we should act, and what emotions might be morally appropriate.

However, it might well be charged that novels such as *The Road* and *HD* are too dark. Are the novels too dark? Might Nancy not benefit from reading 'lighter', less serious novels than those I present her with here? She may. If she becomes a hungry reader she might also become an omnivorous one. In any case, the fear that dark novels might be too gruesome is confounded, perhaps, by Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* which is amongst the most popular teenage fiction in recent times<sup>339</sup>. Set in post-apocalyptic society, the novels

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<sup>338</sup>Plato's idea of ascent in *The Republic*.

<sup>339</sup>An NPR book poll lists *The Hunger Games* as the second most popular selection in their Teen Fiction Poll, see <http://www.npr.org/2012/08/07/157795366/your-favorites-100-best-ever-teen-novels> and see an article in *The Daily Telegraph* that suggests the 'market in teen fiction is dominated now by societies in breakdown.

(a trilogy) deal with severe hunger, poverty, war, oppression, ruthless exploitation and helplessness in a post-apocalyptic society. *The Hunger Games* are an annual event in which one boy and one girl aged between 12 and 18, from each of the twelve districts surrounding the capital city *Panem*, are selected by lottery to compete in a televised battle to the death. The heroine must not only kill the children in order to survive and to stop her family from starving, she must also appeal to the viewers to win gifts to survive. The morality of the novels is complex and compelling. *The Wall Street Journal*, in 2011, carried an article<sup>340</sup> which asserted that young adolescent literature is ‘rife with depravity’ and ‘so dark that kidnapping and pederasty and incest and brutal beatings are now just part of the run of things’ (Meghan Cox Gurdon, 2011). The responses to the claim were swift. Rather than encourage depravity, self-harm or suicide, such novels, ‘prevent rather than promote dangerous behaviour’ (*Publishers Weekly*, 2011), helping young readers to confront and understand difficult subjects. These novels also, according to one of the contributors to the debate (Maureen Johnson, 2011), tell vulnerable young people that that they are ‘not alone’ and that what they’re experiencing is ‘survivable ... There’s someone like me. There’s someone this happened to’.

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And it’s girls who are lapping them up’, at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/9143409/The-Hunger-Games-and-the-teenage-craze-for-dystopian-fiction.html>.

<sup>340</sup> ‘Are Teen Novels Dark and Depraved - or Saving Lives?’ by Karen Springen (June 9th, 2011). See the full discussion at <http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-industry-news/article/47570-are-teen-novels-dark-and-depraved-or-saving-lives.html>. Meghan Cox Gurdon started the debate with ‘Darkness Too Visible: Contemporary fiction for teens is rife with explicit abuse, violence and depravity. Why is this considered a good idea?’ in *The Wall Street Journal*, June 4th, 2011 at <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303657404576357622592697038.html>. See too David Boudinot on Violence and Fear in Folktales (2005, NB online journal with no page numbers ). Fear and violence in many forms have always and everywhere permeated societies, Boudinot (2005) points out, and it is to be expected that these themes will turn up in folk and fairy tales: ‘Tales of monsters eating children, parents beating their young, and witches putting spells and curses on beautiful maidens are only a few of the many fantastical examples of violence, cruelty, and fear evident in folk tales’. Fairy tales have been used to teach fear to exercise and caution, improve judgement and ‘sharpen critical thinking skills’. Fairy tales can allow children to ‘encounter existential challenges that we also battle with in adult life: betrayal, intrigues, overcoming fear, feuds, quarrels and jealousy. They are faced with the ugly sides of mankind but also learn to mobilize capabilities in order to deal with these dark forces’ (Guggenbuhl, 1996:7-8, cited in Boudinot, 2005). See, too, Carr and Davis (2007) who argue that there are ‘no valid educational arguments - at least in open democratic societies for denying young people access to works considered politically or religiously problematic’ (p.100). Indeed, Carr and Davis suggest that moralizing about art for its potential to corrupt the young is ‘wrongheaded and unsustainable’ (p.95) and they support authors such as Anne Fine and Melvyn Burgess who push the moral boundaries of what is acceptable in literature by discussing themes such as gang warfare and drug addiction (p. 97). See Anne Fine’s *The Tulip* (1997, about gangs) and *The Devil Walks* (2012, about family oppression and abuse). Fine is also Children’s Laureate for Literature. See, too, Melvyn Burgess’ *Junk* (1996, about heroin addiction) and *Kill All Enemies* (2011, about neglect, addiction and abuse).



The morality of the novels is complex and compelling. Pass by such popular but dark novels and, I suggest, we may reduce opportunities to discuss seriously the potential for emotional corruption or its converse, emotional flourishing. The novels may not confront us with the true meaning of horror and cruelty because reading novels emotionally is a vicarious experience, a simulacra of true emotional engagement. However, novels can reach into very 'dark places' (Steiner, 1971:32) of human barbarity and ordinary obtuseness and these are places where, morally, Steiner advised, we must encounter and confront ourselves. As Nancy will come to understand, there are numerous varieties of dark place to be found in any century, in any place or relationship, and with these, the imagination to bring misery and pain to victims. Pass by these dark places, Steiner warns, and we will be unable to discuss seriously the darkness of human potential and the limits of human behaviour. Pass by and, I suggest, we will not be able to discuss seriously the potential for emotional corruption or its converse, emotional flourishing. However, Steiner (1971) also suggested the need to refine the proposition that minds could be cultivated, nurtured and nourished, for the 'precise fabric of the relations between them' (p.61) was a complex one. Working to improve ourselves, cultivating our emotions to the right degree, is a lifelong endeavour, as Aristotle averred. Novels alone will, of course, never be enough for Nancy to develop and habituate a sustained belief in human potential to avert injustice and develop her own good character and emotional wellbeing. In order to continue the enlightenment goals of progress and human rights, the importance of the individual and her wellbeing, along with informed political action, is required, as is a broad liberal education that values learning for learning's own sake. Mariella Frostrup, the presenter of a BBC radio 4 programme, 'What the Scandinavians know about Children's Literature'<sup>341</sup>, asserted that Scandinavia's liberal tradition, the region's excellence in health, good governance and female emancipation, is due to the fundamental role of reading in these societies. The programme's contributors were unanimous in their view that children's books are emblematic of these humanistic, liberal ideals suggesting that the literature reflects the respect for the child that is so deeply rooted in Scandinavian culture. The *Moomin* books (Tove Jansson), *Pippi Longstocking* (Astrid Lindgren) or the novels of Hans Christian Anderson, for example, are subversive. Children's literature in Scandinavia does not shun difficulties. Instead, children's fiction embraces same sex families, bohemianism, independent adventure, dysfunctional families, and domestic violence, crossing the demographics of class, race, gender, age. Girls such as Pippi Longstocking are depicted as strong and independent, which may help explain why women have high status

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<sup>341</sup>Broadcast 26 March, 2012.

in Scandinavia and are well represented in political life. *'The Angry Man'*, a picture book by Norwegian author Gro Dahle, is a heartbreaking and harrowing story of a young boy, Boj, listening to his father beating his mother, praying for him to stop, while he apologises for causing the violence. What is revolutionary about this particular picture book, according to Agnes-Margrethe Bjorvand (2010), is the depiction of domestic abuse and violence in a book intended for very young children (it took ten years for it to be finally published in Sweden in 2009). One may posit that portraying domestic violence and its effects so graphically may be powerful in educating young minds about the harm of asymmetries of power leading to gender based violence and contempt for bodily integrity<sup>342</sup>.

#### 7.4 Future Research.

As a result of the research I have undertaken for this thesis, I am now drawn to further research in the following areas.

- Following the research of Wolff and de-Shalit (2007), on the fertility of the CA and further additions to the central capabilities, further research might usefully be conducted amongst both under- and post-graduate students studying, for example, in Social Sciences. Unlike Wolff and de-Shalit, however, I would work with the ten central capabilities, acknowledging that a key aspect of the research would be to make the capabilities accessible to, and understood by, the students. How would this cohort of largely young and generally aspirant students react to the list of ten central capabilities? Which capabilities would emerge as being absent from the list, be seen as redundant, surprising or fertile? Would emotions be architectonic? The second phase of this survey research might then be extended internationally with a focus on the teachers of tomorrow.
- Assuming that a well-developed course on emotions could be added to the teacher education curriculum, I could then follow a group of teachers, to see if a focus on the

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<sup>342</sup>This is not to suggest that literature of this nature will eradicate violence against women. The power of the novels lies in their stark illumination of violence and its effects. *The Millennium Series*, by Stieg Larsson (2005-07), is partly disturbing because it challenges the stereotype that Swedish women are the most gender equal in the world. Lisbeth Salander, its heroine, is subjected to appalling violence but she triumphs over her adversaries. Larsson, who witnessed the gang rape of a girl when he was 15 years old, denounces rapists and sadists in these phenomenally popular novels. His failure to help the girl led to his life-long loathing of sexual abuse. See Laurie Penny (2010) 'Girls, Tattoos and Men who Hate Women', *New Statesman*, 5<sup>th</sup> September at <http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/laurie-penny/2010/09/women-girl-real-violence>.

emotions significantly changed their attitudes and approaches. It would, additionally, be desirable to devise a longitudinal study on the impact of educators on the emotional wellbeing of those they teach. Of course, the assessment of such wellbeing is ubiquitously complicated but the work of those such as Ramos and Silber (2005), Anand et al. (2009) and Wolff and de-Shalit (2010) provides a sound starting point. Would the arguments I make in this thesis for the emotions, including compassion, stand up to empirical scrutiny?

- What impact does reading the novel in the way I suggested earlier have on moral character and the cultivation of emotions? There is very little research<sup>343</sup> on this, understandably, since it would be a difficult project to construct given the many variables at play in character formation. However, might a course in which teachers engaged with novels as an integral part of work on the emotions provide initial data on their attitudes and understandings? It would be feasible to work with such teachers to assess, initially, any changes they experienced and, then, to work alongside them investigating ways in which they used novels in their own classrooms.
- In this thesis, I looked at the implications of abuse for a girl like Nancy. Future research might also look at the story of Norman, her class mate<sup>344</sup> How do we educate Norman so that he is not complicit in the kinds of pervasive gender inequality I have presented here, not complacent about, but sensitive to, the ways in which knowledge about sex and gender is inherited and adapted to meet present cultural norms? How, alternatively, might Norman's story tell a narrative of sexual abuse on boys? Sex education might focus on, for example, how inequality is eroticised, and how eroticism maintains inequality. Both Nancy and Norman, and indeed all of their class mates, surely ought to be made aware of how the unquestioning acceptance of, and collaboration in, asymmetries of power may corrupt and harm very many of us.

## 7.5 Limitations of the Thesis.

My thesis sought to explore the emotions and the cultivation of morally appropriate emotions, particularly compassion, in education. Undertaking the PhD gave me, as I stated

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<sup>343</sup>See Keene (2007).

<sup>344</sup>I thank Gayle Letherby for this excellent suggestion. In the light of the recent abuse scandals in the UK, I am at present engaged in research with two colleagues on the role of sex education in schools. There is an urgent need, I suggest, to address such issues in schools, universities, prisons, and in institutions where the opportunity to educate on these issues is available.

in Chapter 1, ‘a way to explore my interests: gender, feminism, equality, justice and fairness considered through emotions’. It would be ‘fascinating stuff’, I decided, as I sought to unravel the questions I asked prior to embarking on the study. What do we know about emotions? How are we to understand them? What lies in an emotion? Those questions have, to a limited extent, been answered here in a thesis that does span studies from gender, feminism, equality, justice and fairness. Accordingly, this work is predominantly a thesis in the philosophy of education, but it draws extensively from other disciplines and is broad in scope. Whilst that will be a strength for some, and whilst it is consonant with my own interests and concerns to better understand the emotions, the breadth of the thesis may also be one of its limitations. A further, related limitation lies in a restricted word length and time. A great deal of useful literature and arguments had to be lost. There were lines of argument that could not be followed, such as sociological analyses of masculinity theories, and postmodernist analyses of emotions, sex, gender and justice, though what I had read in that field failed to convince of their merits. There is a large body of work from empirical psychology, noted earlier, that suggests, persuasively, that good character is no protection against the power of situations and institutions. These are important claims and should be set against the position I take here. Although I briefly introduced situational psychology in Chapter 6, further treatment of this rich theme was outwith the parameters of this study but is an important area for further research. Some might regard my own lack of empirical research as a limitation. I am of the view that this conceptual exploration of the emotions represents an essential prior stage without which empirical enquiry would be inadequately anchored.

Conceptually, a limitation of this thesis is that those who not interested in, or persuaded by, liberal feminist philosophy, will not take the arguments I make here seriously. The thesis is premised on an explicitly feminist and liberal approach, not one that will suit everyone’s intellectual stance, way of thinking or convictions, especially if they position themselves as Marxist, postmodernist or communitarian. For psychologists who claim that situations and institutions have the power to overwhelm the person of character, my claims may seem dubious, at best. Additionally, in a climate of economic austerity, the resources for the recommendations I make here may not be available. Schools of education in universities in the UK may not see the value of adding yet another course to their curricula with the staffing and resource implications that these recommendations imply. There are already policy statements, laws and proposed laws that can bring about, over time, what I recommend. However, without recourse to curricular study of the emotions, equality and

justice, we might be waiting too long. Cultures and attitudes do change, but slowly, and in the meantime women and children continue to be neglected and treated unjustly.

## **7.6 Impact of the Thesis.**

I am a still a girl from the Isle of Lewis. I still question how women are supposed to behave, and why, and the thesis has started to provide answers to the questions I raised in Chapter 1. How is it possible to help pupils come to terms with what may have happened to them if those who could help them do not seek to understand the nature of emotions? How do emotions motivate us to action? What does it mean if emotions are evaluations of self, others and self to others and, further, that emotions express our values, experiences and self-worth? How do we react to a girl who is sullen, uncommunicative and unpopular? Why can we not treat pupils with a little more compassion? Why do we expect and even encourage different emotions from boys and girls?

Murdoch suggests (1970:86) that intellectual disciplines are moral disciplines and I agree: they reveal the reality of our world, in seemingly random, complex detail, but detail upon which we must try to impose an honest unity, to see how concepts connect with each other, and with them, why morality is important to a life of excellence. In my case, these concepts included emotions, gender, justice, capability, equality, the extent to which these concepts interconnect, and why we should be concerned to defend such concepts as being essential to a just society. These are also important ideas in Scottish education or, at least, I have argued that they should be thus. Murdoch also wrote that the student requires honesty and humility not to pretend to know what she does not know and undertaking a PhD has demonstrated the power and veracity of these two virtues. The inspiration, as I suggested in the introduction to this thesis, for my interest in philosophy was the work of Martha Nussbaum and, importantly for me, her application of philosophy to real life. This is what I have sought to do in this thesis, learning a tremendous amount from the work of Ben-Ze'ev, Herman, Hampton, Korsgaard, Moller-Okin and Sherman, as well, of course, from Aristotle and Kant, on the journey. The empirical research has been illuminating and invaluable. I have, as a result, a keener perception of the problems that interest me and a stronger awareness of what I do not, yet, know. I have, too, a greater confidence to read difficult texts on my own, unassisted by secondary helpers, though it was a pleasure to return to secondary resources to see how the authors have interpreted and used the primary work I had just read.

Eighteen months ago, I had not read any work by Kant or Aristotle except via secondary sources. Two years ago, I read Rawls for the first time. Three years ago I had no idea how I would, today, be enthused and inspired by philosophy. The academic engagement the PhD demands, indeed that philosophy demands, has been stimulating and, often, revelatory. At its most basic level, philosophy asks why, how and what ought to be. From these three, seemingly simple, questions, the philosopher, the philosopher of education in my case, begins to strip away at each and every layer of what is familiar and taken for granted, picking away at the encrustations of habit and somnolent thinking, to begin constructing arguments, making and defending claims that employ critical scrutiny. From the stem of a single question, there may emerge the branches of an elaborate and sophisticated theory that has refined distinctions, examined concepts and detected fallacies. Whilst I have learned a great deal, I am a fledgling. A careful, but all too brief foray, into Kant's *Groundwork* or Rawls' *Theory of Justice*, is far too cursory with respect to what a scholar of these kinds of work needs to undertake. But philosophy has come to matter to me as a result of this enquiry. Practical philosophy can be a tool for the disempowered, excluded and harmed as I have sought to show. Because philosophy brings reality and theory together, when it infuses each with reason, insight and clarity, it makes the world, MacKinnon says (2006:34), accessible to understanding and change. For women the world over, for example, this means a better understanding of their status and plight, and the actions available to them to change imposed realities and rigidities. Philosophy, when it is not merely abstract and remote, the private domain of an elite cognoscenti, is on all fours, hunting amongst the flora and fauna of human existence, with magnifying glass in one hand, microscope in the other, examining the inscrutable and exposing the concealed. In other words, the kind of philosophy that I have engaged in is responsive to people's lives. It is a guide to good human conduct and a relentless critic of obtuse and harmful practices. But how is the researcher-educator to achieve a state of mind that is open and questioning, lively and imaginative, alert to new possibilities and ideas, whilst, predating on assumptions and stereotypes? Condensing complex philosophical arguments so that they remain clear and explanatory, true to the author's own argument, is a scholarly endeavour demanding honest application and intellectual rigour. Undertaking a PhD is a critical facilitator in this process, but it is just the start.

My research has also been about stepping behind the Veil, piercing it sometimes, to try and see the problem clearly and to expose my own ignorance and prejudices. The fascinating

and revealing aspect of the inter-disciplinary approach of this thesis is that there are clear lines of convergence on what it means to be a sex, to be a woman, to have supposed innate capacity and a defined moral character, to have and react to emotions, one's own and those of others. Subverting these lines so that they converge in some original way is challenging. One has to be willing to expose one's mind to difficult and unsettling ideas, to stretch the imagination to see problems with discernment and good judgement, to be able to dream what one cannot yet see. I also realise that controversial arguments of the kind I have made in my thesis will be difficult for many to accept, but it is not the job of a researcher to shy away from what might be mocked as ridiculous. It is easier to gaze upon false suns. I agree with Proust that sound ideas do transmit their force, even surprising, unsettling ones, if the idea has merit and contains the grains of truth.

With its share of the universal value of all mind, it [the idea] takes root among other adjacent ideas, growing like a graft even in the mind of someone whose own idea it rebuts; and this latter person, drawing some advantage from the new juxtaposition, may round the idea out or adapt it... But the ideas which leave no possibility of a rejoinder are those which are not properly speaking ideas, those which, by being supported by nothing, find nothing to attach to in the other's mind: on one side, no brotherly branch is held out, and on the other, there is nothing but a vacuum. (2003/2:137).

I have learned too, paraphrasing Mill (2006), that originality can only be attained by minds which have undergone elaborate discipline and are deeply versed in the results of previous thinking. What I have learned most of all, is that subjecting the intellect to imagination and examination, exposing it to seminal works is '... so nourishing, so beneficent, that I have all the immobility, gravity and placid gluttony of an infant on the breast' (Proust, 2003/2: 247).

One of the roles of moral philosophy, and an important role of the researcher, is to be 'critical, attentive and responsive to particularity while committed to explanation' (Nussbaum, 1990:239) in order to arrive at an ethical form of criticism. As we move through one work to another, moving through the concepts, through the ideas, following one thread to link it with another, we entwine these to create discernibly new concepts, and to view old problems in a new light. It has become even clearer to me that cultivating a healthy emotional landscape is crucial to social justice, to wellbeing and functioning. And from this I claim that education must play a role in the cultivation of social justice by enabling every individual to flourish and to live a life worth living, a life of dignity. As I

close this thesis, I am more than ever convinced that emotions have a significant role to play in education and that they deserve and demand greater scrutiny and attention.

### 7.7 The Last Word ... For the Moment.

*My favourite book, like, is The Lion, the witch and the wardrobe. I got it from the library and read it in class. Why? Cos I wanted a wardrobe that took me to another world, ken? It was just so magical. When the teachers were nippin' me, or ma dad and mum were at it, sometimes I'd disappear into Narnia.*

*Edmund was an idiot, really got up himsel'. He disnae believe Lucy that there is this other world and just take the mince o' her. Typical, eh? Thinks she stupid and a daft lassie but she proves him wrong, like. But he gets nasty, thinkin' he can do what he likes cos he's got the Queen supportin' him so he betrays his bre'hers and sister for lumps o' Turkish Delight. He e'in lands the faun in it! Cos the faun takes pity on Lucy and disnae hand her over tae the Queen, he's turned tae stane. Power's gone to his heid! I'd like to turn ma dad to stane, that'd shut him up. Could gie him a smashin' for a change!*

*Aye she's wicked like, has a lot o' power. Wants to hold on tae it. Frozen she is, no feelin' just what she wants, so it's winter o' the time. Imagine? A could gie ma dad some Turkish Delight and get him tae dae my mum's bidding. I dinnae like the wolf, naw, he just does what he's told and hunts people for the Queen so she can freeze them. Aye, it's usually the other way about...no women wi' power, its men, but ma teacher told me it was tae dae wi men being feart o' women.*

*I cried when they trapped Aslan. I loved him. He was so big, kind, so dead nice, how could they kill him? But they knew he was guid<sup>345</sup> like, and he wanted to end her evil power. But he's resurrected. Ma teacher told me he's like Christ, died fur Edmund cos he was sorry for what he did. A wouldnae hae. I liked him cos he liked kids, wouldnae dae them no harm. He was wise, so guid, I wanted to ride on his back, bury ma fis in his mane...aye I wanted tae be protected by him. Funny, a imagine ma mum being sweet and protectin', like Aslan, an' ma dad. But they're no.*

*I'd like to be Aslan. No likely though. He's got power, a've nane. He's so compassionate.*

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<sup>345</sup> Guid - good.



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