EDUCATING THE EMOTIONS

by

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Educating the Emotions

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is intended as a philosophical contribution to the problem of whether it is possible for educators to engage in practices which contribute to the emotional improvement of their students. The thesis does not argue that educating the emotions is a distinct *type* of education, but rather that educators can improve the emotional lives of children principally by ensuring that students acquire as well-rounded a liberal education as possible. Special emphasis is placed on the study of literature in this regard.

The first chapter is an analysis of the nature of emotions. It is argued that emotions are passive states which have a significant cognitive dimension. They are passive states in two ways: firstly they are states of feeling (they are passional); and secondly, they are states in which the subject is affected by his situation (i.e., he is passive vis-a-vis his situation). Emotions can thus be distinguished from actions as well as from rationality dependent mental states such as beliefs.

Whether it is possible to educate emotions is contingent on whether it is possible to evaluate the

emotional lives of persons. The second chapter shows, firstly, that we can evaluate particular emotional states, such as Smith's love for Jones, in terms of their appropriateness. Secondly, it is shown that it is possible to evaluate a person's emotional life as a whole. Emotions can play significant roles in making important decisions and in self-improvement (regardless of whether they are appropriate), and we can evaluate a person in terms of the degree to which he allows his emotions to fulfill these roles.

Chapter III applies the work on the analysis and evaluation of emotion contained in the first two chapters to the problem of whether and how educators can contribute to the emotional improvement of their students. It is argued there that, firstly, educators can ensure that students receive a well-rounded education, including study in as wide a variety of disciplines as possible; secondly, educators can ensure that students learn various strategies of emotional control; and thirdly, educators can attempt to teach students to take their emotions seriously.

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INTRODUCTION

The central problem with which this dissertation is concerned is whether it is possible to educate the emotions, or in other words, whether it is possible to engage in learning activities which bring about an improvement in one's emotional life. The argument in this dissertation is that indeed it is possible to educate emotions, but that the education of the emotions is not much more than what we normally regard as education. That is to say, educating one's emotions is not some special *type* of education, but is largely a matter of ensuring that one's education is a complete or well-rounded one.

To talk of educating the emotions seems odd to many people. Emotions cannot be educated, it might be thought, because emotions are in the wrong category to be improved by learning. The emotions are sometimes thought to be opposed to reason and rationality, whereas

education addresses one's rational side. One who held a view such as this one, in which the emotions and rationality are thought of as opposing forces, frequently acting on us in contrasting ways, would rightly find it difficult to comprehend what could be meant by educating the emotions. Education, if one holds this view, might be thought to assist one in overcoming the emotions or in helping one's reason take a firm control over one's emotion, but this is not educating *the emotions*. Rather, it is educating *the person* so that one is able to limit the influence of the emotions. Views such as this one, which hold rationality and emotion to stem from opposing faculties of the person, leave very little room for anything which might properly be called educating the emotions.

Other people might find talk of educating the emotions odd for another reason. If we talk of educating the emotions, it might be thought, we suggest that the emotions are somehow separate from the remainder of a person's life. This suggests a fundamental schism in human life, similar to the one sketched in the previous paragraph, where people are driven by conflicting forces. Education, however, is supposed to be "of the whole person," and does not

address one or the other "side" of human life. Nor are there several different "educations," each improving a further dimension of a person's life, so that a person might require eight to ten different educations in order to lead a satisfactory life. A person becomes educated and this education pervades his entire life, transforming his life in nearly every aspect.

This dissertation offers a conception of the education of the emotions which neither places the emotions in necessary opposition to rationality, nor holds that educating the emotions is a separate type of education. The emotions, it is argued in Chapter I, are passive cognitive states, by which it is meant that (1) they are states of feeling (they are passional), (2) they are states of the person being affected or acted on by his situation (the individual is passive with respect to his situation), and (3) which have a significant cognitive dimension. This makes emotions intimately related to rationality, while separating them from our beliefs, judgments, opinions and expectations on the one hand, and our actions on the other. Emotions are conceived to be in part states of cognitive reaction to situations, and any talk of educating the emotions must bear this in mind. We can educate emotions by changing

the person so that he experiences appropriate reactions to the situations with which he is faced.

If we are to have a coherent account of the education of the emotions we must also have an account of how the emotional life of a person is to be evaluated. In Chapter II it is argued that there are two different components to the evaluation of a person's emotional life. There is, firstly, the evaluation of a person's emotions themselves; we can attempt to ascertain whether a person has appropriate or inappropriate emotions. In this chapter several ways in which emotions can be inappropriate are discussed. Secondly, there is the evaluation of the attention a person pays to his emotions. Our emotions ought not to be regarded, it is argued, as mere passing turbulence in an otherwise peaceful existence. Rather, our emotions perform important functions in our lives, especially with regard to the difficult and significant decisions with which every moderately intelligent person is faced.

In Chapter III the problem of whether emotions can be educated is addressed. It is argued that there are three overlapping components to the education of the emotions. Firstly, there is the increase of one's

general rationality and conceptual sophistication. This is for the most part what we usually refer to as education, though it is argued that the study of imaginative literature has a special role to play with respect to the emotions. Secondly, it is possible to learn to control one's emotions. This component of educating of the emotions addresses the passivity of our emotions. And thirdly, there is becoming more sensitive to one's own emotional states, so that one gets more out of one's emotions. The study of literature, it is argued, is important here also.

The central thrust of this dissertation is that the education of the emotions is possible as well as important. But in its principal aspects the education of the emotions is really simply a matter of doing what good educators have been doing all along, namely, ensuring that students are *transformed* through their studies of *all* the various disciplines. The need for talking about the education of the emotions is that much of what passes as education in the schools, at least in these modern technological times, tends to favor some fields of study (the sciences) over others (literature and the humanities).

CHAPTER I

THE CONCEPT OF EMOTION

This chapter will argue that the principal distinguishing feature of emotions is that they are passive states with a significant cognitive dimension. 'Passive' is here performing a dual function, indicating first that emotions are states in which the individual is affected by his situation (the individual is passive), and second, that they are states which involve feelings (they are passional). Emotions also have a significant cognitive dimension. Emotions are in these respects distinct from active (or what shall sometimes be referred to as "minimally rational") cognitions, such as beliefs, intentions, judgments, expectations and opinions; as well as from passive non-cognitive states such as physical pain and intoxication. This analysis also indicates a significant distinction between emotions and actions. In the final section of this

chapter the relationship between emotion and the expression of emotion will be addressed.

The Cognitive Dimension of Emotions

In this section it will be argued that emotions have a cognitive dimension, which is to say that they can be expressed as propositional attitudes. But it will also be argued here that they are not active (or minimally rational) attitudes such as belief, judgment, opinion, or expectation. Rather they are more akin to mere thoughts or matters of "seeing as." I shall begin by showing that emotions are indeed constituted by cognitions, and then I will show why the cognitions constitutive of emotions are not active cognitions.

To be angry is a paradigm case of experiencing an emotion. And, as is well known, it is not possible to be angry at nothing, (except perhaps when we refer to "angry young men," and no one confuses this use of 'angry' with being in an emotional state). One's anger necessarily involves a cognition of the form "This is wrong!"--it is not possible to be angry if one does not see that some wrong has been committed. Of course there are many possible causes for becoming angry, such as

being assaulted, being lied to, being kept waiting for an appointment, and so on, but such occurrences are not causes of anger unless they are seen as matters of wrong conduct. To be angry at Jones for doing *X* involves seeing his actions as wrongful. It is this "seeing as" which represents the cognitive dimension in emotion.

Another good example of an emotion is the state of being in love with someone. If one is in love with Jones, then one sees Jones in a certain light. At least one sees Jones as very special or even magnificent.

Again, if one feels awe (another emotion) at witnessing a particularly spectacular display of the aurora borealis, then one sees the phenomena in a particular light--one is seeing the phenomena as evidence of great power. If one were to look at the aurora borealis as if it were mere ordinary phenomena, then one could not reasonably be said to be in awe.[1] Examples such as these could be multiplied.

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[1]See John Wilson, *Education in Religion and the Emotions* (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1971), pp. 42-50. I leave it open whether the "great power" referred to here is an entity which might be the object of worship.

Many emotions, it should be noted, have cognitive preconditions, but such preconditions do not constitute the cognitive dimension of the emotion. A good example is the emotion of pride. If I feel pride at having passed the bar exam, then I must believe that I have passed the exam--we would not understand someone who said that he is proud of having passed the exam even though he does not believe that he has done so. But the belief that I am responsible for a given achievement is not the cognition implicit in pride, although it is a necessary condition of being proud. Instead, being proud depends on whether I see *my* achievement as an *impressive* achievement. In such cases we ought to say that one's belief of mere responsibility for the achievement plays a causal role in the formation and sustenance of one's pride, but the belief itself is not constitutive of one's pride.

An endless sequence of such examples would constitute only a partial argument for the claim that emotions are a species of cognition. There are other arguments available. The best argument for the claim that emotions are cognitions is that emotions are identified principally by cognitive criteria. For example, the best, if not the sole, means for

distinguishing envy and jealousy is to ascertain whether one feels one has a right to the object one covets. If one merely wants to possess the object, then one is envious; but if one in addition feels that one has a right to the object, then one is jealous. Jealousy involves an assumption of right whereas envy does not.[2] There do not appear to be any physiological differences between these two emotions, but even if neurology were to advance to such a state where these emotions could be distinguished on physiological grounds, it remains true that such criteria would not be the criteria for distinguishing the two, since the criteria alluded to above would have been presupposed in making such a discovery.

Also illustrative in this context are the distinctions between resentment and anger. Both of these emotions involve seeing another person or persons as having wronged one, but there is a distinction between how one sees oneself with respect to those who have treated one wrongly. To resent Jones' actions toward one involves seeing Jones as being of superior rank, prestige or power, but to be angry with him

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[2]Robert C. Solomon, *The Passions* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), p. 334.

involves seeing him as of equivalent or lower status.[3] Thus, a man is likely to be angry at his wife, but resentful of his employer, and a parent of a three year old does not typically resent the child for scribbling on the dining room wall. A parent might well resent the limitations on his freedom caused by the birth of a child, but this is not a genuine counterexample (of the claim that resentment involves seeing oneself as inferior) since there is a real sense in which the child is exercising power over the parent.

There have been some prominent thinkers who have not believed that emotions are principally cognitive states. One such thinker is William James:

> My thesis ... is that *the bodily changes follow directly the* PERCEPTION *of the existing fact, and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur* IS *the emotion.*[4]

On this view, it is conceivable that one experiences an emotion without the typically associated cognition. For instance, suppose one were to perceive some existing fact, such as the death of one's dog, and as an effect of this perception suffer various physiological changes,

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[3]Ibid., p. 267.

[4]William James, "What is an Emotion?" in *Essays in Psychology*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 170. (James' emphasis.)

such as tears and heart constrictions; then, according to James, the feeling of these changes is one's emotion. Any cognitions which one experiences in consequence are mere effects of the emotion. It is not necessary that one experience such thoughts as "I've suffered a great and terrible loss."

There does seem to be an important truth here. Whether a state is an emotional one depends on whether one is affected. Typically, emotions carry with them physiological affects, though as I shall argue in the ensuing section, such affects are not essential to emotion--other types of affect are possible. But James' view highlights the important fact that we can distinguish strong and weak emotions, and the single element in making such distinctions is the consideration of the extent to which one is affected.

Were the Jamesian theory of emotion correct, then the cognitions associated with particular emotions would at best be symptoms of the associated emotions. They would indicate, without being criteria of, the experience of particular emotions. As a consequence, identifying emotions by considering cognition would be at best an indirect way of identifying the emotion. But

in fact the opposite is true: identifying the cognition is logically necessary to identifying the emotion. James is quite ingenious in describing the physiological changes associated with various emotions, but nevertheless, his description of fear does not clearly distinguish fear from other emotions, say love:

> What kind of emotion of fear would be left, if the feelings neither of quickened heart-beats nor of shallow breathing, neither of trembling lips nor of weakened limbs, neither of goose-flesh nor of visceral stirrings were present, it is quite impossible to think.[5]

James' description is, I suspect, better than most people could offer for describing the physical attributes of the emotion fear, but he is not thereby able to distinguish fear from love, for the same attributes are present in the emotion of love.

James' theory, then, seems to account for the distinction between weak and strong emotional states far better than it accounts for the distinction of types of emotions from each other. We distinguish weak from strong emotions principally by ascertaining how one is affected, but we do not distinguish emotions from each other in this way.

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[5]Ibid., p. 174.

I am going to argue that the cognitive component of emotion is a mere thought or "seeing as," rather than a belief. Let me begin by distinguishing thoughts from beliefs.[6] Sometimes "I think that *p*" is very close in meaning to "I believe that *p*." For example, I could say that "I think that it is unwise for a novice to enter the stock market now," or that "I believe that it is unwise for a novice to enter the stock market now," and if there is a distinction here, then it is a very subtle one and not always observed by competent English speakers. Sometimes, however, "I think that *p*" suggests that one entertains somewhat more doubt than the corresponding belief statement. For example, if I claim that "I think that a spade will be the next card," I am committing myself to much less than if I had claimed belief. The latter sort of construction suggests that there is some sort of reason behind my claim, whereas the former suggests no more than a hunch or suspicion. At any rate the distinction between "I think that *p*" and

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[6]We speak both of "believing that" and "believing in." The first construction is the concern in this section. "Believing that" constructions take propositions as their objects; whereas "believing in" constructions take a more complex group of objects: I can believe in God, in Astrology, in the goodness of my children, in the value of psychoanalysis.

"I believe that *p*" is very subtle and varies from context to context.

But if we compare the concept of a thought to that of a belief, we see more significant differences. We say, for instance, that "while jogging yesterday I had a thought which might save our company some cash," but we could not substitute 'belief' for 'thought' in this context. Thoughts sometimes occur to one, one can be struck by them; whereas beliefs are tied much more closely to rational reflection.

An important distinction between thoughts and beliefs is that the former appear to have what is known as "genuine duration" while the latter do not.[7] It is very difficult to give a nice definition of this concept, which stems from Wittgenstein's *Zettel*,[8] but it is important to recognize that it is not the ordinary concept of duration. Many states of a person endure

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[7]For a discussion of the concept of genuine duration, see Norman Malcolm, "Consciousness and Causality," in *Consciousness and Causality: A Debate on the Nature of Mind*, by Norman Malcolm and D. M. Armstrong, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), pp. 79-82.

[8]Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, edited by G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright; translated by G. E. M. Anscombe (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967)

without having *genuine* duration. For instance, one's knowledge endures but does not have genuine duration. This is because it makes no sense to keep one under observation to get an accurate record of the particular times at which one knew *p*, (eg. Smith knew that dogs are mammals for twenty minutes on Tuesday evening, then did not know it for seventeen hours, until Wednesday afternoon when the knowledge recurred briefly twice, at three o'clock and then again at four-thirty). Toothaches, however, do have genuine duration. A dentist might be quite rational to ask his patient to raise his hand whenever pain is experienced. Pain can easily be intermittent and one could maintain a detailed record of the times when pain is experienced. Malcolm points out, in lieu of a definition, that:

> The concept of genuine duration is connected with the concepts of keeping something under continuous observation, or of focusing one's attention on something, or of being alert to note or report or signal, changes in the quality or state of something.[9]

Beliefs do not have genuine duration. I came to believe that the propositional calculus is closed under logical implication and logical conjunction several years ago and I have retained that belief ever since.

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[9]Norman Malcolm, p. 79.

This is true even though I have had this proposition in my consciousness seldom since it was accepted. It would make no sense to ask me periodically whether I am still believing that proposition. Thoughts on the other hand do have genuine duration. The thought that someone spat in the salsa either is or is not being entertained at any particular time. I can tell you whether or not I am experiencing that particular thought at any particular time. I might even have the thought intermittently, whereas the view that one might hold a belief intermittently is incoherent.

The main reason for this is that beliefs are not momentary, passing events in one's mental life, whereas thoughts are just that. Beliefs, because they are much more dependent on our rational abilities, are far more likely to be long term residents of an individual's mental life; thoughts are quite likely to be transients. To say that one believes *p* suggests at least some degree of rational reflection; it suggests that one has, at least to some extent, reflected on the appropriateness of *p* as an object of belief. It is incoherent to say that one believes that *p* even though one knows that *p* is an inappropriate object of belief. This is what is meant in saying that beliefs are

minimally rational mental states. But there is nothing at all incoherent in claiming that one is thinking the thought that *p*, even though one does not believe that *p*.[10]

Judgments and opinions are much more similar to beliefs than they are to thoughts. In fact, opinion requires even more reflection than belief. Judgments are formed, albeit sometimes very quickly, according to standards which one has accepted. Opinions are highly reflective states. To form an opinion requires the use of language--one cannot have an opinion which one could not express in language, nor could one have an opinion one takes to be inappropriate (it would be incoherent to claim that one holds the opinion that cop killers should be hanged, even though one believes that that opinion is wrong).

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[10]On the relation of thought to belief, Wayne A. Davis claims:

> "*S* is thinking the thought that it will rain" and *S* is thinking about rain" imply neither that *S* believes nor that *S* disbelieves the proposition that it will rain. "*S* is thinking the thought that *p*" is equivalent to "The thought that *p* is *occurring* to *S*," and is roughly equivalent to "*S* is entertaining the proposition that *p*." When a thought occurs to us, we say that it "comes" or is "brought" to mind, and that it "crosses" or "enters" our mind. ("Expression of Emotion," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 25, (October 1988): 283-4.)

The cognition implicit in emotion is a thought rather than a belief. Nothing so rational as belief is required in emotion, although there is no necessary conflict between one's thoughts and one's beliefs--which means, for example, that I can fear a snake, thinking the thought "it's bloody dangerous!" while holding the full blown belief that the snake is dangerous. But the argument for the claim that emotions imply thoughts rather than beliefs will be made by showing that there are at least some instances where one's beliefs are in conflict with the cognitive element in one's emotion. Such cases are atypical, but their existence shows that belief (or other minimally rational cognitions such as judgment or opinion) is the wrong category of cognition to be required in emotion.

In order to establish that some emotions are inconsistent with one's own beliefs, it is essential that it is possible to identify one's beliefs independently of identifying one's emotions. If it is necessary to examine an individual's emotions to ascertain what beliefs he holds, then it would be logically impossible to show that there are genuine cases of emotion-belief conflict. Therefore, if we are concerned, as we are, with the possibility of emotion-

belief conflict, then we must not assume that we can determine an individual's beliefs by examining his emotions.

It is possible, too, to provide an argument for the claim that we cannot determine an individual's beliefs by identifying his emotions. The argument is that if there is a relationship between the identification of a person's emotions and the identification of his beliefs, then it is *not* that we can identify his beliefs by looking at his emotions, but rather the converse, that we can identify his emotions by looking at his beliefs. Let us suppose that the claim that beliefs are essential constituents of emotions is true. Fear, for instance, would be constituted in part by the belief that there is a risk of harm; anger would be constituted in part by the belief that a wrong has been committed. If belief is implied by emotion, then ascertaining whether an individual is truly angry requires ascertaining whether he believes that he has been wronged by *X*. No belief--no anger. This is analogous to trying to determine whether Smith is a bachelor. In order to do so, we must learn whether Smith is unmarried, since only if he is unmarried is it possible that he is a bachelor. It would be silly to attempt to learn whether he is

unmarried by making inquiries about whether he is a bachelor, because the concept marriage is logically simpler than the concept bachelor, and so if we have knowledge that he is a bachelor then we already know that he is unmarried, (whereas the converse is false). Similarly, on the assumption that emotion implies belief, there is no way of knowing that Smith is afraid unless we know that he believes something to be dangerous. We could take Smith's word about what emotion he is feeling, but he could only know what emotion he is feeling if he has knowledge of his own beliefs. But if we can agree that he has knowledge of his own beliefs then it would make no sense to raise a question about what he believes. The upshot of this is that even if particular beliefs are necessary conditions for particular emotions, it does not follow that we can determine what a person believes by looking at his emotions.

Fortunately, there are reasons which one might offer for the claim that one believes that *p* which are independent of identifying one's emotions. The first, and most obvious type of reason, is that as with many mental states one has privileged access to one's own beliefs. In other words, one is in the best position to

determine exactly what one believes. But this is not to say that an individual's beliefs about his beliefs are incontrovertible. Just as an ice hockey referee might be in the best position to judge whether or not the puck has crossed the goal line, and even so make an error in calling a goal, so it is possible for an individual to make an error in the identification of his own beliefs. It is not at all hard to find situations in which one might have difficulty in identifying one's own beliefs. One such situation is when one has a great deal to lose in rejecting a long held belief. For instance, an individual who has lived all his life according to the tenets of a particular religious faith might have a great personal investment in holding those beliefs. Were he to abandon his creed he might find that friends and family shun him; he might experience regret, embarrassment or even shame at having lived so much of his life according to unverifiable doctrines; he may even feel a loss of security and comfort. It is not hard to imagine that in such a situation he might have a great deal of difficulty in ascertaining what, if anything, he believes. He may in fact err in forming a belief regarding his religious beliefs. The problem is not that he lies to himself (as in self-deception) about

what he believes, (though that may well have occurred), but far more simply that his reflection on this matter is severely distorted by his strong motivation to hang on to his religious beliefs. This idea of privileged access to one's own beliefs does not, therefore, mean that one is always correct about one's beliefs. But privileged access does place the onus of justification on those who want to claim that an individual is wrong about his own beliefs.

Another form of evidence which might be brought up in support of the claim that one believes *p* is the ability to provide good reasons in support of *p*. In general, the better the grounds one has for believing that *p*, the better the grounds for believing that one believes *p*. Again, this is not conclusive support for a claim to belief, but it is strong support. Since reason-giving is appropriate with respect to belief,[11] and since we desire to believe all and only those propositions which are true, then the ability to provide good reasons in support of *p* (barring, of course, the ability to provide better evidence for the contradictory of *p*) is good reason to attribute the belief that *p*.

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[11]One might want to argue that belief requires at least some, however weak, "reason to believe."

For example, the fact that Smith is able to provide strong support for the claim that the operation of the internal combustion engine contributes to global warming, is good reason for claiming that Smith believes that claim.

The fact that one can provide good evidence for a proposition cannot be taken as conclusive evidence for the claim that one believes that proposition. This is because there are genuine cases of irrationality. An example would be a man who is studying the philosophy of religion for the first time. In the course of his studies he encounters many good arguments for rejecting his present belief in the existence of the Christian God. In fact, by his own reckoning, there is far greater reason to believe that God does not exist than to believe he does exist. But the student is irrational and cannot bring himself to accept, in his heart of hearts, the consequences of his own reflection. While he could give strong evidence against the belief in God (and will do so on his final examination) he yet does not believe that God does not exist.

An important point to make at this point is that while neither of these two sorts of reasons which can be

raised in support of the claim that *S* believes *p* are individually conclusive, together they provide a very strong inductive argument for the claim that *S* believes *p*. In other words, if one admits that one believes *p*, and if one can offer very good evidence in support of *p*, then it is highly likely that one in fact believes *p*; moreover, if one does not acknowledge the belief that *p* and if one could not offer a shred of evidence in support of *p*, then it is very probable that one does not believe that *p*.

There is a third sort of evidence for the claim that one believes *p*, and this is the length of time one has claimed to believe that *p*. The reason that this counts as evidence for belief is that the longer one has claimed to believe *p* the more likely that one is to have overcome self-deception or errors in judgment about one's beliefs. This form of evidence is, it is admitted, rather weak, and at best adds some support when the previous two forms of evidence have already been met.

In conclusion, all three sorts of evidence, taken together, provide a very strong inductive argument for

the claim that one believes *p*.[12] Inductive arguments are, to be sure, controvertible, but it is difficult to imagine what could support the claim that one does not believe *p*, given that all three sorts of evidence have been acquired. At any rate, all that needs to be shown for our purposes here is that we are sometimes entitled to claim that we know that "*S* believes *p*" quite apart from any beliefs we have about *S*'s emotions.

It is now important that we get a clearer idea about what it means for a belief and an emotion to be in conflict. A necessary condition of the possibility of emotion and belief conflicting is that emotions are at least in part cognitive states. We have seen that this is in fact true, since emotions are distinguished principally by cognitive criteria, by their constitutive propositional attitudes. An emotion and a belief conflict, we can say, when three conditions are satisfied:

1. One experiences an emotion *E*
2. The experience of *E* implies the existence of cognition *C*

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[12]See Cheshire Calhoun, "Cognitive Emotions," in *What is an Emotion? Classic Readings in Philosophical Psychology*, ed. Cheshire Calhoun and Robert Solomon, (London: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 332.

3. One believes that the negation of *C* is true

It should be noted that we can distinguish a weaker form of emotion-belief conflict, but that the weaker form is of no great significance for those who hold belief to be an essential constituent of emotion. The weaker form of emotion-belief conflict is evident in the situation where one does not believe the negation of *C* but rather another proposition, *C'*, such that *C'* implies the negation of *C*. From a logical point of view, this is just as much a contradiction as the conflict between *C* and its negation, but it is not a direct contradiction, and nor is it capable of throwing any doubt on the claim that emotions imply beliefs. It is a commonplace that individuals, even rational individuals, do not work through all the logical consequences of their beliefs--were an individual to do so he would very likely notice some contradictions. But we need a more direct contradiction, preferably one where an individual *knowingly* satisfies the above conditions. There is nothing logically incoherent about such a state of affairs, and examples of its instantiation can be given.

Suppose that Smith, who was brought up in a devoutly religious home, comes to believe that it is

false that the God in whom he was indoctrinated to believe exists. He has come to his disbelief after a painstakingly difficult and comprehensive study of all the classical and modern arguments both for and against the existence of God. Smith rejected his belief years ago, and yet even now he feels occasional pangs of guilt when he thinks about various religious obligations which he no longer observes--for example, when he elected not to send his children for religious instruction, when he eats pork chops, or when he commits minor acts of blasphemy.

His feelings of guilt, if they are truly feelings of *guilt*, imply the cognition that he has done wrong, that he has fallen from some standard which he himself has accepted. But taking, for instance, eating pork chops as offensive, implies taking that not eating pork chops is an obligation. But Smith does not believe that there is an obligation not to eat pork. Indeed, he believes that pork consumption is quite acceptable.

Emotion-belief conflicts arise due to an inconsistency between what one believes and what one's emotions presuppose to be true. Such situations are unusual, but they do occur: the man who believes that

women ought to be free to try to attain their own versions of the good life, but sometimes feels resentment when he is compelled to perform various household chores; the woman who believes that her twenty year old son is capable of taking care of himself, but worries terribly until he is safe at home; the atheist who on his deathbed experiences fear that he will suffer eternal damnation.[13] All such conflicts are, it is

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[13]An example from literature of an emotion-belief conflict is the nihilist Basarov's love for Odintsova:

> His blood caught fire at just the thought of her; he could have easily subdued his blood, but there was something else taking root inside him--something he did not tolerate at all, which he had always jeered at, and which aroused all his pride. In conversations with Odintsova, he expressed his cool contempt for all romanticism more strongly than ever; but when alone, he recognized the romantic in himself with indignation. Then he would head for the woods and walk through them with long strides, breaking fallen branches and softly cursing her and himself; or else he would climb in the hayloft in the barn and, obstinately shutting his eyes, make an effort to sleep in which, of course, he was not always successful. He would suddenly imagine those chaste hands twining around his neck one day, those proud lips responding to his kiss, those intelligent eyes tenderly--yes, tenderly dwelling on his, and his head would swim and he would forget himself for an instant before boiling with indignation again. (Ivan Turgenev, *Fathers and Sons*, trans. Barbara Makanowitzky, with an Introduction by Alexandra Tolstoy (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1959), pp. 89-90.)

admitted, indicative of a mental schism and irrationality,[14] but they are not logically impossible.

The most reasonable alternative to calling these scenarios emotion-belief conflicts is to claim that what we are really faced with here are two beliefs conflicting with each other. The individual in each of these situations, it might be thought, is holding contradictory beliefs. Now this way of treating the cases does not, however, deny the existence of emotion-belief conflicts, but merely denies that such conflicts are of great significance. For example, Smith, it might be said, experiences guilt when he does not follow his previous religious convictions because he both believes and disbelieves that God exists.

This approach to the problem ought to be rejected, however, because, in denying the minimal rationality of belief, it weakens the concept of belief considerably. If this approach is adopted, then it is possible to hold directly contradictory beliefs, such as the beliefs that mushrooms are fungi and that it is false that mushrooms are fungi. But it would be incoherent for an individual to claim that he believes both propositions--we could

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[14]See Chapter II.

not be sure what, if anything, he believes. This is because the concept of belief has standards of minimal rationality built right into it.[15] In other words, the belief must meet certain basic levels of non-contradiction, plausibility and coherence. An individual who in one sentence professed belief in both a proposition and its negation would clearly fail to meet standards of minimal rationality. Given this requirement of minimal rationality on believers, we can say that any evidence for the claim that Smith believes that *p* is equally evidence for the claim that Smith does not believe the negation of *p*. It is possible for us to say that Smith *thinks* he believes both *p* and its negation, but he is wrong about at least one of these beliefs.

It might be thought that the argument that the cognition implicit in emotion is not *necessarily* a belief does not show that emotions *never* include

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[15]The necessity of presuming rationality in the ascription of belief is discussed in many papers, including: Donald Davidson, "Psychology as Philosophy," in his *Essays on Actions and Events* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), especially page 237; Donald Davidson, "Rational Animals," *Dialectica* 36, No. 4, 1982; Dagfinn Follesdal, "The Status of Rationality Assumptions in Interpretation and in the Explanation of Action," *Dialectica* Vol. 36, 1982, especially page 312.

beliefs. Perhaps it will be granted that my argument has shown that there are some emotions which do not involve beliefs, but, it might be objected, this does not prove that there are no emotions which take beliefs as their principal cognition. This response, however, misses the point. My argument, in showing the existence of emotion-belief conflicts, establishes that belief is the wrong category of cognition to be implicit in any emotion. *Any* emotion, in other words, might conceivably be in conflict with one's minimally rational cognitions. Emotions do not involve the minimally rational embrace of a proposition which is required by belief. Of course, as I commented above, it is possible that one's beliefs coincide with one's emotions, but emotion achieves its special significance precisely because it is not a minimally rational state.[16]

If we take the cognitive element in emotion to be mere thoughts then there is no incoherence in talking about emotion-belief conflicts. It is true that experiencing thoughts which are in conflict with one's beliefs are and ought to be a cause for some concern,

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[16]The fact that emotions have a significance which is distinct from that of belief and other minimally rational cognitive states will be discused in Chapter II.

since such conflicts indicate a mental schism, but there is nothing incoherent about the claim that someone has emotions which are inconsistent with his beliefs, whereas there would be were emotions constituted by beliefs.

It might be thought that there is a problem with the claim that the cognitive component of emotion is constituted by thoughts because in extreme cases of emotion it becomes very difficult to think at all. It is possible for me to be thinking "it's bloody dangerous!" on seeing a snake in my bathtub, but the actual articulation of this sentence is not necessary. I might, for instance, be paralyzed by my fear, unable to form anything so coherent as a well-formed thought. Indeed, we might say, with Collingwood,[17] that the more emotional one is, the less likely one is to be able to form a completed thought. Being emotional is frequently an obstruction to clear thinking, and that being so we have a paradoxical situation: if emotions are

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[17]R. G. Collingwood, *The New Leviathan or Man, Society, Civilization and Barbarism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1942). Collingwood claimed, "a man really frightened can neither syllogize nor plan. His mind goes numb," (p. 68).

constituted by thoughts, then the stronger emotions qualify less fully as emotions.

The problem can be resolved, however. It is not necessary that the cognition in emotion is an articulated thought. Instead, an emotion may include poorly or incompletely articulated thoughts. The emotion of fear, for instance, does not require that one consciously experience a well-articulated thought of the form "it's bloody dangerous!" but merely that one sees the object of fear *as* dangerous. This may or may not include the experience of a complete and well formed thought.

The argument that emotions are not constituted by beliefs does not rule out that one can experience emotions which are in perfect agreement with one's beliefs. Indeed, we should expect that most emotions do not conflict in any way with one's beliefs. Most often, we see things as we believe them to be. It is rare to see objects which one believes to be harmless as dangerous, although such cases are described in the psychoanalytic literature (for instance, the well known example of the man who fears a rabbit). But, while it is unlikely, it is logically possible for any emotion to

be in conflict with one's beliefs. I can be ashamed of what I believe to be unshameful; I can fall in love with what I believe to be unlovable; I can feel joy over what I believe to be not joyous. In the following chapter I will discuss what these emotion-belief conflicts suggest about the human psyche. But now I turn to a discussion of the passive dimension of emotion.

The Passivity of Emotion

Now not all thoughts are emotions. Smith can have the thought that it is going to rain but not be at all emotional. Jones can see the actions of Smith as offensive without being angry. Emotions are distinguished from other thoughts by virtue of the facts that when one experiences an emotion one is passive with respect to various aspects of one's situation, and that emotions are feelings. In other words, emotional states are states in which one is *affected passionally by something*. This aspect of the concept of emotion is suggested in such expressions as "falling in love," "driven by rage," "paralyzed by fear," "plagued by jealousy," and so on. These expressions are misleading, however, in that they appear to suggest that it is the emotions which affect us, whereas by referring to such

states as "emotions" we are drawing attention to the fact that the subject of the emotion is being affected in some way. To say that Smith is feeling the emotion of fear, for instance, is to draw attention to Smith's being affected, "fearingly," as Broad[18] would say, by something. One is not passive with respect to the emotion, but with respect to events or situations.[19] As R. S. Peters comments:

> Reference to *e.g.* fear, anger, always implies an appraisal by the subject of a situation as affecting him in an agreeable or disagreeable way.[20]

A good example of a non-emotional passive state is that of frozen water.[21] When water freezes it is acted upon by an external agent--the water does not "just

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[18]C. D. Broad, *Ethics*, edited by C. Lewy (Dordrecht: Martin Nijhoff, 1985), p. 22.

[19]Robert Gordon, *The Structure of Emotion: Investigations in Cognitive Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 118-119.

[20]R. S. Peters, "Emotions and the Category of Passivity," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* (1962): 129. Peters takes the cognitive element in emotion to be an appraisal. But appraisals are very similar to judgments in being rationality-dependent. The basic distinction between judgments and appraisals is that the latter, but not the former, are necessarily evaluative.

[21]'Passive' here does not refer to a feeling state, of course, but merely to the state of being acted upon by an external agent.

freeze," (nor, obviously, does it freeze of its own volition). The water is not acted upon by "freezing," as though freezing were itself an agent. Rather, when water is frozen it is being acted on and affected by the temperature. The cold affects the water, causing various physical changes, which result in the water hardening into ice. This is a state of passivity in that it satisfies three criteria:

1. There is a subject (Water)
2. There is an agent which is distinct from the subject (Coldness)
3. The agent causes a change in the state of the subject (Freezing)

In order for criterion three to be satisfied, it must be true that the subject is capable of being acted upon by the agent. In other words, it is a necessary condition of a subject being passive with respect to an agent that the subject is open to the kind of force exerted by the agent. What this means is that the agent can cause a change in the subject only if the subject has met certain preconditions. When we turn to cases where a person experiences an emotion this feature will turn out to be very significant.

Active states differ from passive states in that in active states the subject and the agent are identical. In other words, in active states the agent causes a change in its own state. This capacity to change one's own state is called autonomy or self-rule. Now being autonomous is not equivalent to choosing one's own state, nor is it equivalent to being in control of one's own state.[22] Autonomy is not a simple matter of doing what one wants to, but is rather a special case of acting on a rule or law which one has set for oneself. Kant explicates the concept of autonomy as follows:

> The will is thus not only subject to the law but subject in such a way that it must be regarded also as self-legislative and only for this reason as being subject to the law (of which it can regard itself as the author).[23]

The idea of an autonomous mental state can be illuminated by considering the concept of belief. One neither chooses one's beliefs nor does one control one's beliefs. Suppose Smith is a detective involved in a murder investigation. As Smith works he uncovers

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[22]cf. Robin Barrow and Ronald Woods, *An Introduction to Philosophy of Education*, third ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 1989)

[23]Immanuel Kant, *Philosophical Writings*, edited by Ernst Behler: *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, translated by Lewis White Beck; Foreword by Rene Welleck (New York: Continuum, 1986), p. 96.

various clues: the murdered man was very wealthy; he was stabbed by a left-handed person probably six inches shorter than the victim; the victim's wife is left-handed and exactly six inches shorter than her husband, and moreover she is the victim's sole heir; finally she was seen at the murder scene and her fingerprints were all over the murder weapon. Smith *forms* the belief that it was the wife who committed the crime. He does not choose this belief--where is there any choice for Smith? Smith sees the evidence and forms a belief on the basis of what he takes to be good grounds for believing that *A* murdered *B*. Neither is it true that Smith is in control of his belief, as though Smith's beliefs are wild animals which ought to be tamed and harnessed. On the contrary, Smith's beliefs have no existence except that which Smith himself bestows on them--they have neither powers nor wills of their own. One can possess beliefs only if one is to some extent autonomous; i.e., capable of modifying one's existence according to internalized rules. In particular, belief requires the internalization of rules of belief acceptance,[24] such as

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[24]For our purposes there is no distinction between belief formation and belief maintenance, and consequently I shall refer to both under the general rubric "belief acceptance."

consistency with one's other beliefs and high probability or certainty in virtue of evidence. It is this factor which entails that beliefs are active or minimally rational states. If Smith were caused to say "I believe that snow is white" through some process of hypnotism or behavioral modification, it would be wrong to say that Smith has a belief here, since he has not accepted the proposition that snow is white on the basis of his understanding of the standards of belief acceptance.

Emotions have a very different genesis. Suppose that Smith learns that his son has taken the family car after being clearly forbidden from doing so. Now if Smith reflects on the situation and concludes, as a result of his deliberations, that his son had no right to take the car without prior permission and that therefore the son has committed an offense and must be punished; then, if this description tells the whole story, it is inappropriate to say that Smith is angry. Smith has merely formed the belief that his son has committed a punishable offense. Smith has not been affected personally by the situation--it is as if he has undertaken syllogistic reasoning of the following form:

1. Any person who does *X* is guilty of an offense and ought to be punished
2. *S* has done *X*
3. Therefore, *S* is guilty of an offense
4. Any person who is guilty of an offense ought to be punished
5. Therefore, *S* ought to be punished

To the extent that Smith's verdict is the conclusion of reasoning such as this we would be reluctant to refer to him as emotional.

The issue is not whether Smith's verdict satisfies the criteria for a good judgment, but whether it is through the use of his reason that the verdict is, in fact, being held. A single verdict could be held as a *reaction* or as a *response* to the perceived situation: if one reacts non-reflectively, then we would be inclined to describe the state as one of anger, but if one responds on the basis of one's reflection then we would be hesitant in referring to the state as anger.

Typically, but not essentially, anger involves various physiological disturbances, such as flushed face and clenched teeth, but there are non-physiological disturbances possible, such as the motivation for

revenge (as opposed to justice) and intense focus on the offense. But the important point in distinguishing instances of anger is not whether one experiences physiological disturbance, but whether the cognition is *felt*, or in other words whether the cognition has, in the words of C. D. Broad, "one or more specific forms of a certain generic kind of psychical quality which we call *emotional tone*."[25] Such "psychic feelings," as they are called by Michael Stocker,[26] are essential to calling a particular cognition an emotion because without them one could not describe oneself as having been *affected* by one's situation. Physiological disturbances, if there are any, are indicative of the *degree* to which one is affected by a situation, and, as

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[25]C. D. Broad, p. 22, (Broad's italics).

[26]Michael Stocker, "Psychic Feelings," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 61 (March 1983): pp. 5-26. Psychic feelings are not necessarily caused by physiological disturbances. For example, one might enjoy a game of chess without being physiologically disturbed in any way. Some psychic feelings, however, are less easily severed from the bodily feelings which give them life--rage, for instance, is felt both physiologically and psychically.

suggested by Sartre,[27] such disturbances are important in one taking the emotional thoughts seriously.[28]

It is worthwhile considering how one of the so-called "calm passions" displays the quality of passivity. Imagine the quiet joy one might feel on listening to Vivaldi. Here, there is no sense that one is out of control or overcome with physiological disturbance, as one typically is in experiencing anger, fear or grief, yet even here there is a distinction to be made between reflecting that the music meets

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[27]Jean Paul Sartre, *Sketch For a Theory of Emotions*, trans. by Philip Mairet, with a Preface by Mary Warnock (London: Methuen and Co., 1962).

[28]Sartre's analysis of emotion suggests a possible way that the body is related to cognition in emotions. In explicating and defending a Sartrian account of the role of the body in emotion, Bruce Baugh states that in fear:

> ... one relates felt physiological changes to an object in such a way that the object is endowed with affective qualities. For that reason, there is no straightfoward way of relating the affective apprehension of the feared object with the reasoned belief that it is not dangerous: the reasoned belief and the emotion belong to different ways of apprehending the world. ("Sartre and James on the Role of the Body in Emotion," *Dialogue* XXIX, (1990): 367.)

While Sartre makes a plausible claim in saying that the physiological changes are important in ensuring that the individual is taken up into his emotional cognition, it is far less plausible to claim that the physiological changes are effected through behaviour, albeit pre-reflective, which the individual engages in as part of a mechanism of escape.

standards of good music and *feeling* joy on listening to the music. In the former case one is not *affected* by the music; one's cognition has no emotional tone, it is without any psychic feeling. The difference is, to be sure, subtle, but that is because it would be unusual to make the judgment that the music is great without also feeling joy. If we imagine, however, a music student who is compelled to write a paper on Vivaldi, and that the student has recently suffered a great loss, (such as the death of a family member), then it is easy to understand a lack of passion. In such a case the thought that the music is great is not emotional.

Although emotions are passive, it is possible to cause oneself to experience an emotion. One can, for instance, cause oneself to be angry by concentrating on injustices perpetrated by *S*. There is a sense in which one chooses to be angry here, but one does so by thinking about the injustices, concentrating on them, and thereby causing the feelings of anger to come over one. In other words, one causes oneself to be angry by employing one's knowledge of various causal regularities: one knows that by concentrating on

injustices, and especially on how they are related to oneself, that one is likely to feel angry.[29]

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[29]We might say that indirect volitionism, but not direct volitionism, is possible with respect to emotion. Volitionism is an important subject within the philosophy of religion and the philosophy of mind more generally. At issue is the role of the will in belief, although here I am applying the concept to emotion. Direct volitionism is the position that our beliefs are the result of our resolutions. Its most well-known advocates are Augustine, Descartes and Kierkegaard. Its basic problems are summed up by Louis P. Pojman:

> Voliting seems (following Hume) psychologically aberrant and (following Williams and Swinburne) conceptually confused. It is psychologically problematic because of its feature of demanding full-consciousness which attaches to acts of will. It is conceptually confused because it neglects the evidential aspect of consciousness, belief, acquisition and sustainment. (*Religious Belief and the Will* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), p. 179.)

Indirect Volitionism holds that there are activities one can perform in order to either create or destroy belief. Pascal and William James are its most well-known proponents. The thesis is expressed in Pascal's comment:

> The will is among the principal organs of belief; not that it effects belief, but because things are true or false according to the view we take of them. The will, which prefers one viewpoint to another, turns the mind away from considering the qualities of whatever it does not like to see; and thus the mind, moving in accord with the will, stops short at consideration of the view it likes, and therefore judges by what it sees. (*Pensees*, edited with an Introduction and Notes by Louis Lafuma, trans. John Warrington (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1960), p. 101.)

Indirect Volitionism is consistent with the account of beliefs I have offered in this chapter.

The Causal Structures of Emotions and Actions

In *The Structure of Emotions* Robert Gordon claims that there are important distinctions between the causal structures of actions and emotions, and consequently, that there is a distinction between the role which reason can play in changing emotions and that which it can play in changing actions. Let us begin by getting clear about what is meant by the "causal structures" of actions and emotions.

Whenever one performs an action, *A*, or experiences an emotion, *E*, one performs *A* or experiences *E* as a consequence of one's mental states at the time. Specifically, one's beliefs and one's attitudes or values cause one to perform *A* or experience *E*. The relationship between the beliefs and attitudes which cause one to perform *A* or experience *E* is called the causal structure of *A* or *E* respectively. The relationship between these beliefs and attitudes and the ensuing action or belief is causal, rather than logical, because they stand in a relationship to the respective action or emotion such that lacking any of these beliefs and attitudes, the ensuing action or emotion would not occur. The relationship is not a logical one, because

these mental states do not actually "enter into" the ensuing actions and emotions.

Examples will help here. Suppose that Paul is concerned to get a place in law school. He believes that it is necessary for him to achieve a fairly high grade point average in order to do so, he believes that it does not matter in which subject one gets one's undergraduate degree, and he believes that in psychology it is relatively easy to get high grades (at least for him). As a consequence of his beliefs and his attitude towards getting a place in law school, Paul enrolls in psychology courses as an undergraduate. It is *because* he has these beliefs and this attitude that he enrolls in psychology--but his belief and his attitude neither define nor describe what he is doing--he could perform exactly the same action without having any of these beliefs or this attitude. It is true that these beliefs and this attitude also together constitute a *reason* for Paul to enroll in psychology, indeed they together constitute *his reason* for enrolling in psychology, but these points do not undermine the claim that his mental states cause his action.

A similar point holds for emotions, though with respect to emotions it is not plausible to construe the cause of the emotion as a reason. Suppose that Paul enrolls in three psychology courses, again with the understanding that such courses are relatively easy and ought to boost his grade point average. But instead he finds that two of the courses turn out to involve relatively small amounts of memorization for the purpose of answering multiple choice examination questions--these courses involve abstract thinking, which Paul finds rather difficult. Paul worries about his performance, so much so that he develops problems with insomnia and overeating. Now here Paul suffers the worry because he attaches a great deal of importance to obtaining a high grade point average, and because he believes there to be a strong likelihood that he will not be able to obtain high grades in two of his courses. Together, these factors *cause* Paul to worry. They do not, however, provide Paul with a reason to worry. The causal structure of Paul's worry differs from the causal structure of his enrolling in psychology courses in that the causally relevant mental states of the action say something in favor of the action itself, while the causally relevant mental states of the emotion say

nothing in favor of worry. The beliefs and attitudes relevant to Paul's worry are not about his worry *per se*, but rather the possibility that he will not do well in something very important to him.

Summarizing his views on the differences between the causal structures of actions and emotions, Gordon says:

> Very roughly, the difference is that when one *acts for a reason*, one's action is caused by attitudes and beliefs that are related in the following way: *Given* the attitude, what is believed (the content of the belief) "says something in favor of," or "argues for" so acting. On the other hand, the attitudes and beliefs that underlie, say, embarrassment, are not so related: It is not true that given the attitude, what is believed "says something in favor of," "argues for" *being embarrassed*. For the underlying attitudes and beliefs concern the "object" or "content" of the embarrassment, that is, what one is embarrassed about--not the state of being embarrassed.[30]

The principal point of this distinction between the causal structures of actions and emotions, besides the fact that it clarifies the distinction between action and emotion, is that it leads to a greater understanding of the role of criticism with respect to actions and emotions respectively. Moreover, it leads to an increase in the understanding of the sorts of criticism

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[30]Robert Gordon, p. 122.

to which emotions are amenable. In fact, clarifying the causal structure of emotions in this way supports what common knowledge would tell us: that emotions are not necessarily amenable to criticism of the emotional state itself, but often only to criticism concerning the sustaining beliefs and attitudes. Importantly, actions differ from emotions because they *are* open to criticism concerning whether the action is indeed good.

For instance, Paul could be persuaded not to enroll in psychology courses by having it pointed out to him that the action he is considering is not really a worthwhile action. It could be shown to him that enrolling in psychology courses is not wise because, contrary to his assumption, psychology courses are not likely to be that easy; it could be shown to Paul that law schools are not altogether indifferent to the courses in which one enrolls; or it might be pointed out to Paul that his attitude towards the career of a lawyer is an indefensible one, since lawyers spend a great deal of their lives with crooks and other undesirables. Finally, one might show Paul that even if his beliefs and attitudes are rational, there might be stronger reasons not to enroll in the easiest psychology courses imaginable: Paul might be shown for example that there

are great reasons, not related to one's chosen career, for not being ignorant and for acquiring a strong liberal education; or it might be shown that one's quality as a a lawyer will be increased as a result of studying philosophy courses in ethics and logic. The upshot is that one will change Paul's actions by persuading him of the inappropriateness of his intentions.[31]

Emotions quite often cannot be changed by criticism of the appropriateness of the emotion itself. Such criticism may sometimes work, as will be shown below,[32] but a negative evaluation of the emotion will not *necessarily* have the effect of changing the emotion. Typically at least, emotions will not be changed by such criticism. Paul's worry, for instance, is not likely to

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[31]It is true that it is not essential that one's actions change as a consequence of a change in one's intentions, but that is not a strong criticism of the view being advanced here. Actions can occur with or without a given intention. One might go to the opera because one intends to listen to a new contralto, or one might go because one wants to impress a young lady one has just met, or because one has been assigned by one's editor to write a review of the performance. No single intention is necessary to perform the action. But there must be some intention if "going to the opera" is to be described as an action. The concept of action is inextricably bound up with that of intention.

[32]Chapter III.

dissolve as a consequence of pointing out to Paul that there is nothing to be gained by worrying.

As a matter of fact the criticism of emotions is only possible in an indirect sense. Paul's worry is caused by his attitudes and beliefs, but is not supported by his attitudes and beliefs; so convincing Paul of the inappropriateness of worrying in the given situation does not entail that his emotion will change. Changing his emotion is best achieved by removing some of the sustaining causes of his emotion, in particular by changing the relevant beliefs or attitudes, or by changing some of the background conditions of the emotion. Were Paul's attitude about the importance of obtaining a high grade point average rejected, then one of the sustaining causes of Paul's worry would be removed, and Paul's worry would, *ceteris paribus*, dissipate; were his beliefs about the likelihood of not doing well rejected, then similarly his worry would dissipate.

The Expression of Emotion

Typically one expresses one's emotion, though the forms in which one can express an emotion are highly varied.

Anything from a wild scream to the composition of a sophisticated dramatic tragedy could constitute an expression of emotion.[33] But regardless of what behavior constitutes the expression of emotion, there are at least three senses we can attach to the expression of emotion.[34]

The first sense is the naming or description of an emotional state by employing a linguistic expression which refers to the emotional state or at least describes it. 'Anger', 'jealousy', 'awe', and 'sadness', are linguistic expressions which can sometimes be used to refer to particular emotions. Consequently, there is a sense in which they can be used to express emotions. Now, if Smith utters the words "I am angry," then he is not truly expressing his anger--

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[33]While it is possible to express, say, one's grief over the death of one's father by the creation of a work of art, this is not to embrace the view that works of art are necessarily or even principally expressions of emotion. That view, which was held by Tolstoy and Dewey among others, is clearly wrong. A work of art can be expressive of sadness without it being an expression of the artist's sadness. To counter a claim that a particular composition is sad it would not do to argue that there is good evidence, taken from the composer's psychiatric records, that at the time of the composition the composer was actually quite happy. There is no reason to suppose that a happy artist cannot produce a work with sad qualities.

[34]Wayne A. Davis, pp. 279-280.

more correctly, he is expressing the proposition that he is angry. So what we should say, in the interest of clarity, is that the word 'anger' is an expression which can be used to refer to a particular type of emotional state.

There is, secondly, what might be called the natural expression of emotion. For example, if Smith learns that his daughter has died in an automobile accident, part of his reaction might be to cry. His tears can be taken by an audience to mean that Smith is in grief, (just as dark clouds can be taken to mean rain), and it can be said that his tears are expressions of grief. With respect to the natural expression of emotion, there is an absence of intention, on Smith's part, to indicate that he is experiencing a given emotion. This sense of expressing an emotion requires that particular behavior can be taken as indicative or symptomatic of the experience of particular emotions; moreover, it is essential that Smith himself has not intentionally enacted the crying behavior.[35] If the tears are intentionally caused by Smith, then we have

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[35]This sense of expression is analogous to what H. P. Grice referred to as natural meaning. "Meaning" *The Philosophical Review*, LXVI, (1957).

not the natural expression of emotion but the intentional expression of emotion.

The third sense in which emotions can be expressed, then, is intentionally. In this sense, it is the individual who expresses the emotion, and the expression is carried out through the performance of particular symbolic actions.[36] The idea is to get others to believe that one is feeling an emotion of a particular sort and strength by engaging in actions which are likely to bring others to the belief that one is feeling that emotion. Naming an emotion seldom has this effect, because there is more to the experience of emotion than what can be picked out by the labelling of the implicit cognition. If one were to say, very coldly and apathetically, that one is very angry at Jones, one would not be expressing one's anger, even if it is true that one is angry at Jones. Such behavior is not going to get an audience to believe in one's anger.

I said in the preceding paragraph that the intentional expression of anger is carried out by performing symbolic actions. This means that one must

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[36]This sense of expression is analogous to what Grice referred to as non-natural meaning. Ibid.

have a knowledge of various cultural conventions in order to express one's emotions. From a logical point of view, virtually any behavior could be symbolic of any emotion, but in fact, whether *A* is symbolic of *X* is contingent on the existence of cultural conventions. In most European societies, widows are likely to wear black clothes to express their grief; but in many Asian societies white garments are deemed more appropriate. If a widow wants to express grief at her spouse's funeral, therefore, she must have a knowledge of the conventions accepted by a large portion of those in her audience.[37]

It is a necessary condition of expressing emotions in either the second or third senses that one actually experiences the emotion. This implication stems from the etymology of 'express', which suggests "pressing out."[38] One cannot "press out" what does not exist. Of

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[37]Cultural conventions are sometimes involved in the natural expression of emotion too. For example, some Iranians reacted to death of the Ayatollah Khomeini by beating their heads (though it might be argued that this was an intentional expression of emotion) and Calhoun and Solomon report that there are instances of people who laugh when sad and cry when happy (p. 34).

[38]See Alan Tormey, *The Concept of Expression: A Study in Philosophical Psychology and Aesthetics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 28.

course one can pretend to feel an emotion, and one does so by engaging in behavior as close as possible to either the natural or intentional expression of the particular emotion, but in doing so one does not express an emotion. Consider an actor playing the role of a jealous husband. The actor does not express, say Othello's jealousy, which would imply that the actor feels Othello's jealousy, but rather the actor portrays Othello's jealousy. In lying, one might want one's audience to believe that one is sad, but one does not express one's sadness; rather one acts as if one is sad.

At the outset of this section I commented that typically we express our emotions. Some thinkers, such as R. S. Peters[39] and Robert Solomon,[40] hold that emotions are necessarily expressed in action. It seems to me, however, that there are many instances where persons succeed in suppressing the expression of some emotions, even though they feel the emotions very much. An officer might feel great fear prior to an attack, but

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[39]R. S. Peters, "The Education of the Emotions," in *Education and the Development of Reason,* ed. R. F. Dearden, P. H. Hirst and R. S. Peters (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974).

[40]Robert Solomon, "Emotions as Judgments," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 25, (April 1988).

suppress the expression of the fear so that he avoids adding to his soldiers' anxiety. In any case, in the third chapter I shall argue that there is much to be learned by expressing the emotions and that teaching people to express their emotions better is an important part of the education of the emotions.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has tried to clarify the concept of emotion. In the main, I have been concerned to show that emotions are passive cognitive states. This distinguishes emotions from beliefs and judgments as well as from actions. I have not, however, addressed the problem of the evaluation of emotions. Nor have I begun to look at the significance of emotions. And yet, any talk of educating the emotions can be meaningful only if it is coherent to talk of improving an individual's emotional life. Whether such talk is coherent will be the focus of the ensuing chapter.

CHAPTER II

THE EVALUATION OF EMOTIONS

In this chapter I will examine the evaluation of emotions. In particular, I am going to argue that emotions can be inappropriate in several ways, including various forms of irrationality, and furthermore, that regardless of whether an emotional state is rational, irrational or in some other way inappropriate, emotions gain their greatest significance from the fact that they provide one of the best avenues to self-knowledge and self-improvement. These results have obvious relevance to the question of whether and how the education of the emotions is possible. I begin by describing various ways in which emotions can be inappropriate.

Inappropriate Emotions and Their Causes

Emotions can be, and in daily life are, evaluated. The experience of a particular emotional state (or, as we shall see, not experiencing a particular emotional state), can be the subject of criticism. We do not assign our praise and blame to the emotions themselves, of course, but rather to the person who experiences the emotion, and we do so even though the emotions are states in which the individual is passive, and are typically non-voluntary on the part of the person experiencing them. It was not Anna Karenina's intention to fall in love with Vronsky, and in an important sense she could not help herself, but these facts in no way prevent us from describing her emotion as inappropriate.

Many, although not all, inappropriate emotions are irrational. To many ears the claim that an emotional state is irrational, (or more accurately that an individual is irrational to experience a particular emotion) sounds very odd. Emotions cannot be irrational or rational, it might be objected, because they are feelings, and feelings can be neither rational nor irrational. It is true, of course, that we often use the terms 'feeling' and 'emotion' interchangeably,

(there is little distinction between advising one to "trust his emotions" or to "trust his feelings"), but an emotion is a special type of feeling. Emotions are very dissimilar from other feelings, such as sensations, in that emotions have a cognitive dimension. It is because the implicit cognition can be either rational or irrational that it is coherent to call the emotion itself either rational or irrational.

In this section I am going to describe five, not necessarily distinct, ways in which emotions can be inappropriate. My intention is to offer possible explanations of these inappropriate emotions. If we can isolate the different sorts of causes of inappropriate emotions, then it will be possible to suggest some ways in which education can help to lessen the degree to which individuals are subject to such emotions. The five ways in which emotions can be inappropriate are:

1. Emotions can be caused by irrational cognitions
2. Emotions can be of inappropriate intensity
3. Apathy
4. Emotions can be inconsistent with other cognitions
5. Emotions can lack sophistication

These over-lapping problems shall be discussed below.

Emotions, because they are passive phenomena, should be seen as reactions. When I experience an emotion I am reacting to my situation. My reaction depends on two factors: firstly, it depends on my cognitive state, including my beliefs, values, thoughts, perceptions, suspicions, hopes, desires, expectations and intentions (on what I "think"); and secondly, it depends on my physiological state, which might be one of hunger, weariness, intoxication or hormonal imbalance. Let me begin by discussing cases where one's emotions are caused by irrational cognitions.

Emotions caused by irrational cognition. There are some emotions which cannot be experienced unless one holds given beliefs. For example, it is inconceivable that Smith could be proud that his daughter has high moral integrity unless he believes that she has high moral integrity. Smith's belief is part of the cause of his emotion. Now if the belief which plays such a role is an irrational belief, formed on the basis of fallacious reasoning or on legitimate reasoning from another irrational belief, then the ensuing emotion is likewise irrational. Suppose that Smith's belief was formed on the basis of fallacious reasoning from insufficient

evidence. Smith observed his daughter on a single occasion when she refused to accept a bribe, and concluded, wrongly, that his daughter is a woman who will not accept bribes. Because Smith's belief was formed irrationally, on the basis of a faulty generalization, it is also irrational for him to be proud of her integrity.

A similar case can be made for the irrationality of emotions caused by irrational values. If Smith places a great deal of value on the opinions of his neighbors, as many people do, then he holds an irrational value (unless his neighbors happen to be Bertrand Russell or Albert Schweitzer). The value is irrational because there is no reason to think that his neighbors are apt to be more correct about what, for instance, is moral or immoral, than he himself is. As a consequence of his values, Smith might feel guilty about some conduct which is not immoral, such as homosexual activity, the eating of pork chops or the fact that he allowed his daughter to marry a Jew. Smith's guilt, caused as it is by his irrationally placing value on living up to his neighbors' expectations of right behavior, is itself irrational.

Emotions too can play a causal role in the experience of other emotions. If the initial emotion is irrational in some way, then the ensuing emotion can also be said to be irrational. Suppose that a mature philosophy professor is infatuated with a silly sixteen year old girl. Then it is quite possible that there are many occasions when he experiences a degree of jealousy, such as when he sees her at a nightclub with a boyfriend. Now if we agree that the professor's infatuation is irrational, then we should be willing to say that his consequent jealousy is likewise irrational. His is an irrational jealousy because it is caused by an irrational emotion.

Another way in which emotions can be caused by irrational cognition is to be caused by irrational thoughts. Some cases of the fear of mice seem to have this quality. When Mrs. Smith sees a mouse in her basement she cannot help thinking that the mouse will attempt to run up her leg. She can "almost feel" the tiny legs scurrying along her thighs, in spite of the fact that she well knows that there is a very small probability that the mouse will attempt such a dangerous and unpromising maneuver. Still, she cannot help thinking that that is the mouse's intention. Such

thoughts may play a causal role in Mrs. Smith's fear, and because the thoughts are irrational we should say that she is irrational to fear the mouse.

In all the above cases we would be willing to say that the emotion caused by the irrational cognition is itself irrational, but it is also clear that the principal problem is not with the emotion itself, so much as it is with the causing cognition. In cases of these sorts, there is an important sense in which the emotion may indeed be appropriate, given the particular cognitions one holds. Analogously, a belief formed on the basis of an earlier irrational belief is itself irrational, but could be seen as appropriate, given the individual's prior beliefs.

Inappropriate emotional intensity. In emotion, as I argued in the preceding chapter, we are necessarily affected, but it is possible to be affected to varying degrees. I might, for instance, be very afraid, moderately afraid, or scarcely afraid of mice. Now in some cases the strength of an emotion is actually a relevant consideration in its classification. It is not at all clear what it would mean for someone to suffer a touch of gloom or despair, for instance.

Significantly, emotions can affect the individual too little or too much, and in either case the emotion would be described as inappropriate.[1] Sometimes inappropriate emotional intensity would be described as irrational, whereas in other cases the problem is not at all cognitive. Whether we call an emotion of inappropriate intensity irrational or not is contingent on the cause of the inappropriate intensity.

Let me offer two examples of inappropriate emotional intensity. Firstly, a man who wins ten dollars in a lottery may well be pleased with his luck, but it would be inappropriate, without some special explanation, to be overjoyed with this rather puny bit of luck. Secondly, it would be entirely inappropriate to feel only mild guilt after killing a teenage convenience store clerk in the course of a robbery. What we must see in these two examples is that the individual who experiences the emotion has appropriate cognitions but is affected to an inappropriate degree.

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[1]Robert Nozick offers the example of a man becoming ecstatic after finding a dollar bill:

> But finding a dollar isn't *that* wonderful a thing; the strength and intensity of the feeling should bear some proportionate relationship to the evaluation of how good a thing finding a dollar is--to the measure of the evaluation. (*The Examined Life* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1989), p. 89)

Now inappropriate emotional intensity might be described as an instance of irrationality, if it is caused by placing either too little or too much value on something. Suppose that Smith places an inordinate degree of importance on the obedience of his children. Not only does he think that it is a good thing for small children to obey their parents, but he believes that the obedience of children is the most significant factor in child-parent relations. Consequently, when Smith's child disobeys a rule made by Smith, even if the rule is not of great significance, Smith responds not with mild or even moderate anger, but with intense rage. The high value which Smith places on obedience plays a causal role in the intensity of his anger. Because his value is irrational, so is the ensuing emotion. Such situations are very closely related to the situations where one experiences an irrational emotion due to an irrational cognition.

Another factor which might contribute to inappropriate emotional intensity is the degree to which one has been affected by other emotions in the recent past. A woman who has lost her entire family in an automobile accident may find it difficult to share her friend's anger when the latter's husband has been

flirting with his secretary. She might be what we call, colloquially, "emotionally drained." A professor who has been irritated by several students requesting extensions on the due date for term papers might react very intensely to the twelfth such request, merely because he has "had enough."

It is also very important to recognize that emotional intensity can be increased or decreased by physiological factors. This is an area in which there is a great deal of on-going empirical research, but my interest here is not with accounting for all such factors, but merely with pointing out that this is a significant factor in determining how strong one's emotions will be. As a matter of fact, of course, one need not be a brain scientist to know that people experience more or less emotional intensity depending on physiological factors. Consider the influence which alcohol exercises on one's emotional intensity. A man might shout at his wife in anger while sober, but if intoxicated he may actually strike her. The alcohol is a contributing factor in determining how strongly he will react to the situation. Some other drugs also have

the effect of altering one's emotional intensity.[2] Another way in which physiological factors can influence emotional intensity is through hormonal disturbances. Adolescents undergoing puberty are apt to experience a great deal of emotional upheaval. In addition, women experiencing pre-menstrual syndrome sometimes respond more intensely to irritation, anger and depression than at other times during their menstrual cycles.[3] Even such simple physiological factors as physical tiredness might affect one's emotional intensity. Children who are very tired over-react much more easily than they do when they are well rested. Again, the point here is not to isolate all the physiological factors which might contribute to inappropriate emotional intensity, but merely to claim that physiological factors can influence our emotional intensity.

Apathy. Not becoming emotional in a situation might also be deemed an instance of inappropriate emotion, if it would be more appropriate to be emotional in the given situation. In fact, apathy may be classified as

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[2]Tranquilizers are obvious examples.

[3]Nico H. Frijda, *The Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 398.

one extreme of inappropriate emotional intensity. If Jones learns that his children have been tortured but is not affected in any way by this, then barring explanations in terms of the unconscious repression of his emotions, we would say that Jones is apathetic, at least in this case. He is not suffering enough, given the gravity of the situation.

Because apathy is at the extreme of inappropriate emotional intensity, we can explain it in very similar ways. Firstly, apathy might be caused by irrationally placing too little value on something, most likely on one's life as a whole. Secondly, it may have psychological causes, such as too much prior emotional experience or the suffering of a great loss, leaving him emotionally exhausted. Thirdly, physiological factors, such as drug or alcohol addiction, hormonal imbalance, or neurological defects, might contribute to one's apathy. Determining the specific cause or causes of apathy can be a very important factor in its correction.[4]

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[4]Some cases of apathy do not stand in need of correction, such as one caused by a dose of morphine. Such apathy will wear off as the drug wears off.

Emotion-cognition conflicts. Sometimes an emotion can be said to be inappropriate if it is inconsistent with another cognition. Of course, it does not follow from the fact that an emotion is inconsistent with another cognition that it is the emotion which is inappropriate. It might just as well be the belief, the value or the other emotion which is at fault. Moreover, we should bear in mind that such inconsistency indicates that at least one cognition is inappropriate, but does not rule out that both are inappropriate--we cannot infer that emotion *A* is appropriate, even if we know that it is inconsistent with cognition *B* and that *B* is inappropriate. I have already argued for the possibility of emotion-belief conflicts in Chapter I, so here I will extend that argument by showing that emotion-value and emotion-emotion conflicts are also possible.

To see how emotions can conflict with values and other emotions, let us consider an example. Suppose that Jones has been a Roman Catholic priest for twenty-two years. He is a staunch believer in the importance of celibacy in a serious Christian life. He has a firm belief in God, Jesus, and the importance of the Church. Moreover, if he were to break his vows he would feel

very much a diminished man, who has neglected his spiritual aspirations in favor of temporal benefits. The thought of enjoying sexual relations without marriage could never occur to Fr. Jones. Now, in his work as a parish priest, Jones has formed a strong attachment to a young lady. He has fallen in love with her and frequently falls into thinking about how wonderful it would be to spend the remainder of his life with her. This love he has for the lady is in very clear conflict with his clear and conscious values. Moreover, his love is in clear conflict with some of his emotions, such as the deep sense of honor he feels for having heard and followed a "calling." It is likely, of course, that Jones will suffer greatly as a consequence of this conflict, and it is quite possible that in the end he will either reject his values or overcome his emotions.

It is important that we attempt to make explicit what the possibility of emotion-cognition conflicts implies about the human mind. I am going to argue here that such conflicts can be most reasonably taken as evidence that there are cognitive states which are less rationality-dependent than beliefs and values, and that these cognitions are often causally significant in the

experience of human emotion. This feature of our minds suggests some ways in which emotion can be seen as significant in human life, as will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

It is difficult to find an ordinary English expression to refer to the type of cognition which is required for the experience of emotion-cognition conflicts, but I will rest content with "association." By an association, in this context, I mean two or more ideas that have become connected, not necessarily rationally, in the mind of the individual. An example: an Asian family in Nairobi, during the 1982 coup attempt, suffered a particularly horrible injustice. A group of military men, involved in the uprising, compelled a husband and his children to witness as his wife was gang-raped. After this incident, the victims experienced a general fear of African men and especially of African soldiers. It is possible, of course, that this family had come to believe the universal claim "all African soldiers are gang-rapists," but they may never have thought that at all. In fact they might entirely reject that claim, recognizing that such a belief would rest on fallacious reasoning from a rather small sample. They might recognize that such acts of violence are

typical of many military actions and that the Kenyan military is probably no worse than many others. But regardless, the ideas of African military men and sadistic racist violence have become, for them, strongly associated.

Now it is common, since Freud, to refer to such associations as unconscious beliefs. Ultimately I have no objection to this, provided we bear in mind that this is a metaphorical sense of 'belief'. Firstly, beliefs, while not necessarily conscious, are capable of being brought to consciousness. "I don't know what I believe" usually does not mean that I do not know the content of my own beliefs, but that I do not know what I ought to believe. Secondly, the questions of evidence for an unconscious belief do not apply in the same way as for ordinary beliefs. If asked why I believe *p*, I should ordinarily take the question as a request for my reasons in support of *p*; whereas for an unconscious belief (assuming that I somehow know that I have this belief), the question would have to be taken as a request for the causal explanation of the origin of the belief. Thirdly, considerations of rationality have much less force with respect to unconscious beliefs than they do to ordinary beliefs. If my ordinary beliefs are

inconsistent, and if the inconsistency is pointed out to me, then I will reject at least one of the beliefs, or minimally accept that there is a flaw in at least one of the beliefs. It is possible to have inconsistent beliefs, but not to consciously believe both *p* and its negation: the utterance "I believe that *p* and not-*p*" is incoherent, and indicates not so much that one has inconsistent beliefs but that one has failed to understand the concept of belief. Beliefs are, as I said in Chapter I, minimally rational, meaning that one cannot knowingly and without reservation hold inconsistent or entirely unfounded beliefs. No such condition applies to unconscious beliefs.

While unconscious beliefs are not open to evidence and other rational considerations in the same way as ordinary beliefs, it is possible that the causal history of an unconscious belief includes rational reflection. An unconscious belief may have been formed as an ordinary belief and subsequently repressed. For example, a young girl who has been raped by her father might form the belief that her father is evil, and afterward, (due to the distress caused by her inability to reconcile the love he appears to offer sometimes with his sexual assault), repress the belief. Once the

belief is held unconsciously, it is no longer open to rational criticism, unless it is brought into consciousness through psychoanalysis.

There is another reason why I hesitate to call the associations which play a causal role in the experience of emotion subconscious beliefs. These associations may be far too vague to be plausibly called beliefs in any sense. These associations may be mere habits of focus and attention, (or "patterns of intentional salience" as Amelie Rorty[5] called them). John Wilson talks about "models which dominate our thought, our talk, our feelings, our actions, in short our lives,"[6] which can be brought to light through professional psychoanalysis or the amateur psychoanalysis of friends. Cheshire Calhoun refers to "an unarticulated framework for interpreting our world" which is only "pre-reflectively held,"[7] and which plays a causal role in emotion-belief

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[5]Amelie Rorty, "Explaining Emotions," *The Journal of Philosophy* LXXV (1978): 150.

[6]John Wilson, *Education in Religion and the Emotions* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1971), p. 275.

[7]Cheshire Calhoun. "Cognitive Emotions?" in *What is an Emotion? Classic Readings in Philosophical Psychology*, ed. Cheshire Calhoun and Robert C. Solomon (London: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 338.

conflicts. These "patterns" or "models" or "frameworks" may have some propositional content, but they need not be principally propositional. Rorty talks about

> ... patterns of focusing on aspects of woman's behavior construed as domineering or hostile rather than as competent or insecure.[8]

and of

> ... focusing on the military defensibility of a landscape, rather than on its fertility or aesthetic composition.[9]

Such patterns of focusing are not beliefs or even subconscious beliefs. For instance, the military strategist need not consciously or unconsciously believe that military defense is the most significant feature in a landscape, but may simply have come to focus on those aspects as a consequence of his professional concerns. A geologist may believe that the aesthetic qualities of a vista are extremely important, but nevertheless, due to his professional and intellectual interests, have a habit of concentrating on the geological history of the landscape.

The acquisition of a culture is best understood as consisting in part of the acquisition of such patterns,

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[8]Rorty, p. 150.

[9]Ibid.

frameworks or models. One's cultural inheritance is not constituted only by beliefs and values, nor is it typically fully articulated. Indeed, it may come to be articulated only after one is placed in an alien cultural environment or possibly after deep and serious anthropological study. One takes one's own culture for granted, so to speak, until confronted with a different culture, and one sometimes then comes to see the arbitrary elements in one's own. One's cultural "roots" are developed fairly early in one's life, and are often carried with one throughout one's life. The environment one takes to be homely, the type of food one prefers, the attitudes one has toward gender roles in the family, one's religious orientations, and so on, are inherited largely as a result of having been brought up in a particular culture and community. These attitudes, perspectives, tastes and orientations are partly learned and partly just acquired,[10] but what is essential to

[10]The *locus classicus* of this distinction between learning and acquisition is Wittgenstein's *On Certainty* (ed. G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, trans., Dennis Paul and G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1969; reprinted with corrections and indices 1974). For a good discussion of it, see Tasos Kazepides, "Indoctrination, Doctrines and the Foundations of Rationality" in *Philosophy of Education 1987: Proceedings of the Forty-Third Annual Meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society*, (Normal, Illinois: Philosophy of Education Society, 1988), p. 238.

them is that they are not formed fully rationally. We can and do change them, of course, but such change is often difficult and involves one in the kind of conflicts written about in Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*. It is not unusual to hear of men and women who, while claiming that they do not believe in adhering to traditional gender roles, later, after a few years of marriage, find themselves falling into traditional marriage practices. Adopting more rational ways of life is seldom a matter of merely seeing the rational superiority of a different way of life. Each of us has his own personal history which exercises its influence on one's thought and practice long after one has seen the inheritance to be irrational or arbitrary.

One way of thinking about these associations which play a causal role in our emotional lives is as being cognitions which lack the minimal rationality characteristic of beliefs--they are in important ways *like* beliefs and values, but they do not meet all the criteria for a full fledged belief or value. These lower level cognitions can exercise a profound influence on one's life, and yet they lurk for the most part beneath consciousness. They can sometimes, through self examination, psychoanalysis, or interaction with

distinctive cultures and viewpoints, be brought to consciousness, but they are less amenable to rational reflection than are one's beliefs and values.

Now if it is correct that our mental lives are in part constituted by the cognitions which do not adhere to minimal rationality, then we have a plausible explanation of the anomalous emotions which conflict with one's beliefs and values. Such associations can play a causal role in the experience of one's emotions, and consequently it is possible that, if one's associations conflict with one's beliefs and values, then one's emotions might also be in conflict with one's beliefs and values. Suppose that Smith had been the victim of a violent and sadistic rape by a city policeman. Subsequently, and even fifteen years later, he feels great anxiety bordering on fear whenever alone with a policeman, especially one in a uniform. He no longer believes that all or most policemen are dangerous; on the contrary, he believes that, in Canada at least, one is more likely to be raped by an acquaintance, and yet he feels disproportionate anxiety with respect to policemen. In such a situation it is quite reasonable to suppose that his undergoing the rape

fifteen years previously plays a causal role in his fears to this day.

Explanations which make reference to such associations cannot merely be *ad hoc*, at least if they are to be deemed good explanations. We cannot, in other words, legitimately infer the existence of an association solely on the basis that the individual is suffering an emotion-belief or an emotion-value conflict. In addition to evidence that the individual is in fact experiencing such a conflict, we also require independent evidence that the supposed association is harbored. This evidence will be biographical. In order to justify the claim that Jones harbors association *A* we supply details of how Jones got that association. We might point out significant events in his upbringing (such as the early death of his father or his mother's promiscuity) or to facts about his cultural heritage or the community in which he was reared.

John Wilson, speaking about the explanation of "Freudian slips," similarly points to the need for biographical evidence for the formation of unconscious beliefs:

> ... if I type to my girlfriend 'I don't think I need to be mithered any more', this is intelligible

> as a straightforward mistake for 'mothered', since the letters 'o' and 'i' adjoin each other on my keyboard. But if I type 'I don't need to be smothered any more', one suspects a piece of unconscious communication. Perhaps I believe that girls, like my mother, are apt to smother me. But this is no more than a (plausible) suspicion. To verify it, we would need to have observed me formulating this belief in childhood, or to enable me to admit or remember having formulated it...[11]

John Wisdom, too, claims that psychoanalytic explanations require that we acquire evidence about the subject's past:

> The psycho-analyst tries to describe the present in terms which do not merely connect the present with the present but also connect the present with the past. For example, suppose we say 'Jack regards every woman as a Cressida'. This won't satisfy the psycho-analyst. What we have said is well enough as a description. But it explains nothing. *Why* does Jack regard every woman as a Cressida? He has never himself been deceived by Cressida. Nor by anyone like her. But is this last true? For hasn't he known a woman who gave him all the love and all the good in all the world and then too often suddenly withdrew it and gave it to another? He has--in his mother's arms.[12]

These thinkers are talking about the use of psychoanalysis to justify explanations of behavior (including emotions) in terms of unconscious beliefs. But importantly, because the explanation of an emotion-belief conflict may make reference to attitudes, perspectives, tastes and orientations rather than

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[11]John Wilson, p. 128.

[12]John Wisdom, *Philosophy and Psycho-Analysis* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969), p. 276.

unconscious beliefs, psychoanalysis may not be required. It may sometimes be sufficient to point out elements in an individual's cultural heritage. A South Asian immigrant to Canada confessed to the author that he could not help feeling resentful of his wife in Canada. While he believed in principles of gender equality, and he even resolved to perform a share of the household chores, he nevertheless resented her demands that he do what he still thought of as woman's work. Moreover, he himself offered an explanation for what he admitted were inappropriate emotions: he referred to his Indian heritage, claiming that "when and where I grew up, men just didn't do those chores."

Now it might be objected that the claim that there exist such associations is mere speculation. No hard empirical support has been offered for their existence. I would respond, however, by claiming that the existence of these states is actually supported by the analysis of emotions offered in Chapter I. It was argued there that emotions are cognitive states and that they are caused, in part, by various states of the person. A person reacts, partly cognitively, to situations. The simplest and most conservative explanation of a person's anomalous cognitive reaction is that he harbors

associations which cause him to see the situation as he does. Sometimes such states are explicable in terms of a person's beliefs, while at other times we must resort to explanation in terms of a person's (non-minimally rational) associations.

In situations where one experiences inappropriate emotions due to such associations we are faced with the problem of emotions caused by irrational cognitions. An irrational cognition, though of lower order than an irrational belief or value, plays a causal role in the experience of an emotion which is itself irrational. The problem of how to improve this situation will be taken up in the next chapter.

Emotional unsophistication. In "The Arts and the Education of Feeling and Emotion,"[13] Hepburn discusses the idea of "emotional freedom." The basic idea is that the range of possible emotions open to one is limited by one's degree of conceptual sophistication. In a very important sense a person with a very low degree of conceptual development is not free to experience many

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[13]R. W. Hepburn, "The Arts and the Education of Feeling and Emotion," in *Education and the Development of Reason*, ed. R. F. Dearden, P. H. HIrst, and R. S. Peters. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972).

emotions. Consider a very young child. He has some conceptual development, but he has no understanding of moral rightness or moral duty. Such a child is quite simply unable to feel guilt, since the emotion of guilt involves the cognition that one has committed a moral wrong. A member of a tribe which has no institution or even conception of private property is not able to feel jealousy or envy.[14] The inability to feel emotions such as jealousy or envy amounts to a limitation of one's personal freedom.[15]

Generally, the increase of conceptual sophistication increases the range of possible emotions one can feel. This increase can occur in two ways: Firstly, there are some emotion-types, such as guilt, which presuppose particular concepts, such as duty or obligation. Secondly, for particular emotion-types it is possible to increase the range of possible objects of that emotion-type. For example, the range of things toward which an educated person can feel guilt is far

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[14]We can disregard the questions of whether such a group is possible and of whether one actually exists.

[15]R. W. Hepburn, p. 488. Hepburn's use of 'freedom' here is essentially equivalent to Isaiah Berlin's "positive freedom." See Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," in his *Four Essays on Liberty* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969).

greater than what an ordinary teenager can feel guilt toward, due to the former's more developed understanding of morality.

Summing up. Now so far in this chapter I have distinguished five ways in which emotions can be defective, but the causes for defective emotions can now be seen to fall into four groups. There is, firstly, irrational cognition, including irrational beliefs, values, emotions and thoughts. Secondly, physiological factors including hormonal disturbances, neurological phenomena, the use of drugs, and one's general physical well-being (including fatigue). Thirdly, one's emotional history might increase or decrease the likelihood that one will react to events. Fourthly, one might be caused to experience inappropriate emotions due to one's lack of conceptual sophistication. In the ensuing chapter, I will discuss the role which education can play in combating the influence of these causes. For now I want to turn to the problem of why emotions are valuable in human life.

The Significance of Emotion

The fact that emotions are often caused, not by one's full-blown beliefs and values, but by lesser developed cognitions such as tastes, orientations, attitudes or unconscious beliefs, suggests important places for emotions in the living of a good life. In this section I am going to argue that emotions have a significance above and beyond any rationality or appropriateness they might possess, and that it is possible to evaluate, not only the emotion itself, but also the attention which one pays to one's emotions. I will advance two arguments for this claim. The first argument is that paying close attention to one's emotions is the best avenue for making some difficult personal decisions. The second argument is that attentiveness to one's emotions provides an important means of increasing one's self-knowledge, which is in turn an important element in self-improvement.

Decisions under conditions of rational uncertainty. It is an important fact about human life that we are often compelled by circumstances to make decisions under conditions of rational uncertainty. In other words, there are significant times in human life when one is

compelled to choose a course of action, even when rational considerations fail to dictate which course of action ought to be selected. My suspicion is that by far the majority of the very significant decisions in an individual's life are made under these conditions of uncertainty. The decisions of whether and whom to marry, the decision of whether to rear children, to pursue a higher level of education, to move to a new city, province or country, to accept a new offer of employment or to resign from one's present post, to take early retirement, to get a divorce, to trust a friend, to assist in the military defense of one's country, all involve, at least most of the time for most people, an element of rational uncertainty: the choice cannot be made entirely on the basis of reason alone. Moreover, occasionally one is confronted with a genuine moral dilemma, such as whether to assist one's spouse who has Alzheimer's disease to commit suicide. Another group of situations in which one is forced to go beyond the use of reason is in emergency situations, such as when one must decide whether to enter a burning building to save the life of a small child. I want to argue that, at least sometimes it is rational for an individual in these situations to allow himself to be swayed by his

emotions, to pay attention to what he feels, in making his choice. Sometimes it would be downright irrational for a person to ignore his feelings in such situations.

William James discusses a particular group of decisions which must be made under conditions of rational uncertainty in his *The Will to Believe*. James is concerned with the question of whether "faith based on desire is ... a lawful and possibly an indispensable thing."[16] I do not want to enter into a discussion of whether James is correct about decisions to believe a proposition on the basis of one's desires, but rather I want to employ his concept of a "genuine option." James claims that there are three dichotomies by which we may classify options. The first is that an option is either living or dead, by which it is meant that a given option may or may not be a "real possibility to him to whom it is proposed."[17] It is a real possibility that I give up my study of philosophy of education to become a chef, but it is not a real possibility that I give it up to join the Hare Krishna sect, so, for me at least, the former is a living option while the latter is a dead

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[16]William James, *The Will to Believe* (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), p. 119.

[17]Ibid.

option. Whether an option is living or dead is a personal matter--some philosophers of education might feel that it is conceivable that they give up their intellectual pursuits to follow the Hare Krishnas. The second dichotomy is that options are all either forced or avoidable, by which James means that for every option either we are required or we are not required to choose. The option of whether to get married next week is a forced option, since I either will or will not get married next week--there is no third alternative. But it is not required that I choose between getting married next week and becoming a Benedictine monk. Since there are many other alternatives besides these, the option is avoidable. Finally, options are all either momentous or trivial. A momentous option is one which holds great significance for one's life, such as the option of accepting a football scholarship at the University of Notre Dame. Such an option is momentous insofar as it is not likely to reappear again in one's life, and inasmuch as it is likely to influence one's pattern of life for a considerable period of time. However, whether to go to a movie on Saturday is (typically at least) a trivial decision because such decisions seldom are significant for one's life as a whole. The third

dichotomy is a matter of degree (we can recognize a continuum running from extremely trivial to extremely momentous decisions), whereas the first two dichotomies are exclusively disjunctive.

James' position is that when one is faced with a genuine option, i.e. one which is living, forced and momentous, one may be required to resort to one's "passional nature":

> Our passional nature not only lawfully may, but must, decide an option between propositions, whenever it is a genuine option that cannot by its nature be decided on intellectual grounds; for to say, under such circumstances, "Do not decide, but leave the question open," is itself a passional decision--just like deciding yes or no--and is attended with the same risk of losing the truth.[18]

Now James is concerned with the problem of whether one ought to believe some objectively uncertain propositions, and particularly with the question of whether one ought to will oneself to believe in the Christian religious creed, and one may well reject the claim that the Christian faith is a genuine option (it

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[18]Ibid., p. 108. A major criticism of James' view is that it presupposes that our intellectual activity ought to be directed toward increasing the number of true propositions one believes, whereas one might instead argue that our intellectual life ought to be directed toward reducing the number of false propositions one believes. James' position is in this way at odds with the skeptical tradition in western thought.

was not an option for Bertrand Russell, for instance) or the claim that it is possible to will oneself to believe some propositions. But these problems need not concern us here because our problem is more general: What does the rational person do when confronted with a genuine option under conditions of rational uncertainty? James asks,

> Objective evidence and certitude are doubtless very fine ideals to play with, but where on this moonlit and dream-visited planet are they found?[19]

Clearly, there are many situations in which one is faced with a genuine option, and in which the agent is supplied with inadequate grounds to make a reasonable decision.

Let us consider a genuine option, in particular the option of whether to get married or not. Jones has been offered a proposal of marriage by Smith, and now she must choose. The option is living in that Jones has not ruled out marriage, nor has she ruled out Smith as a possible match. The option is also forced in that there is no way to avoid the option--either she marries Smith or she does not. Finally, the option is momentous in that the proposal is unlikely to be repeated, since

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[19]Ibid., p. 110.

Smith has accepted a professional appointment in a distant city and is very sensitive about rejection. Moreover, the option involves a great decision about the course of her life as a whole. How is Jones to decide?

If she is rational at all, then Jones will set out to consider all the reasons pro and con accepting Smith's proposal. But suppose the reasons are inconclusive either way. The evidence is about even (to Jones' mind) on both sides, and Jones would really like to have about eighty per cent certainty prior to making a decision of this magnitude. But every time she adds a reason for or against marrying Smith, she finds an equally compelling reason swaying her in the opposite direction. The situation seems hopeless.

I will argue that in her predicament Jones is best advised to consult her emotions, to determine which emotions she feels toward Smith and the idea of marrying him. Suppose Jones finds herself very much afraid of marriage. By itself, this emotion is not sufficient to rule out marriage, but it ought to motivate Jones to engage in a little self-examination. What is it which causes her to be frightened, even moderately frightened? According to my arguments in Chapter I and in the

previous section, her fear will be explicable in terms of her cognitions, including the ones I have referred to as associations. In effect, her emotions are telling her things of which she might not herself be aware: "The heart has its reasons, of which reason knows nothing," as Blaise Pascal said.[20] Jones herself may not be able to ascertain what is causing her to feel fear, to experience the recurring thought that getting married to Smith is a hazardous undertaking, but depending on the strength of her apprehension, she might be well to reject the proposal. Something is "telling her" to be very wary. It may be, for instance, that the thought of marriage has very unpleasant associations for Jones, due to the very stormy and unpleasant marriage her parents shared; or it may be that she harbors vague suspicions, not consciously formulated, regarding Smith's sexual preferences. Her associations, and consequently her fear, might be appropriate or inappropriate, but they mean that something is amiss, and Jones would be foolish

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[20]Blaise Pascal, *Pensees: Notes on Religion and Other Subjects*, edited, with an Introduction and Notes by Louis Lafuma; translated by John Warrington (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1960), p. 59.

to get married without taking care of her reservations.[21]

Now in the best of all possible worlds Jones will somehow succeed in learning why she is feeling this fear, from what associations it springs, and either reject the associations or render them full-blown beliefs and values. She would thereby increase her rationality. But even if she is unable to come to discover the root of her fear, the emotion is still valuable for her in this predicament--given her clear apprehension, again supposing that it is sufficiently intense, she ought to avoid taking the plunge.

On the other hand, if Jones is positively over-joyed at the proposal and has only a few minor fears and misgivings, the correct course of action might be different. Suppose that she loves Smith and seldom feels unpleasant emotions toward him. And when she does get angry with him she knows exactly why she is angry and she understands the significance of the anger. It is not being argued here that she should marry him simply because she loves him, since her love could be

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[21]cf. Patricia Greenspan, *Emotions and Reasons* (New York: Routledge, 1988).

entirely unfounded, but only that the investigation of her emotions offers her a possible means of resolving her conflict.

In general, I am arguing that there are some situations, namely in cases of genuine options, when, after taking an intelligent and rational investigation of the issue, one is justified in trusting one's emotions, given that one's rational reflection has proved inconclusive. Indeed, not paying attention to one's emotions in such situations is downright irrational. Of course our emotions could be entirely misplaced--they often are--but because emotions are caused in part by one's associations they reveal facts about oneself of which one might not be aware. They ought not to be first considerations in coming to a decision, but they ought to be, in many cases, consulted. They might be the best means one has for resolving a genuine option. If it is correct that few important decisions in one's life can be made entirely on the basis of rational considerations, then it can be said that it is very important that people acquire sensitivity to their own feelings. Trusting one's emotions presupposes that one is right about the emotions one has.

Emotions and self-understanding. Now it should not be thought that I am arguing that one's emotions will always be decisive when one's rational reflection is not. Often one's emotions are just as inconclusive as one's reason. One might have what are sometimes called "mixed emotions." What if Jones had felt both intense fear and great joy? Then what she ought to have done? Clearly she cannot trust her emotions here, for they would have her moving in conflicting directions. In such a situation Jones could be described as harboring an unresolved conflict, and we could say she has an important need for mental improvement.

I want to argue that paying attention to one's emotions plays an important role in the increase of self-understanding, and that consequently emotions play an important role in improving oneself. Anomalous emotions, such as those which conflict with one's other cognitions, provide the clearest examples of the need for self-improvement, but many other emotions too, if one troubles to explain their occurrence, can lead to significant insights about one's cognitive life, which in turn can play a role in self-improvement.

Let us begin with an example. Suppose that Smith finds that he is very resentful of being offered advice by a sixteen year old girl. Such an emotion, like all emotions, suggests something about the subject. It indicates that he is seeing the situation in a particular way, that in fact he is seeing the girl as having committed some injustice toward him and as having some power over him. It is this second aspect of the way he views his situation vis-a-vis the girl that distinguishes his emotion as resentment rather than anger. If Smith manages to ascertain that he is seeing the girl as having power over him, then, if he wants to understand himself better, he will attempt to explain his seeing the girl in this way. Typically, grown men do not believe that teen-age girls are their superiors (in any significant way), so he will be concerned to know what has caused him to see the girl in this light.

It is possible that Smith is able to ascertain easily what is causing him to see the girl as his superior. Perhaps he has recently suffered a significant failure and is being nagged by feelings of incompetence and inferiority. The emotion of resentment is explicable more easily in terms of Smith's own self-esteem, rather than any judgment about the girl. If

this explanation of his state is correct, then Smith would have felt a similar emotion even had it been offered by a teen-age boy, a lower rank colleague or a friend. He generally is suffering a bout of low self-esteem and is consequently susceptible to feelings of resentment. Now it is possible that Smith had hitherto been unaware of how greatly he had been affected by his failure and that it is his examination of his emotional state which made this clear to him.

On the other hand, it might be that after much soul searching and self-analysis, he is still unable to offer a cogent explanation for this peculiar orientation toward the young girl. In such cases Smith might require the assistance of a psychoanalyst, who might help him develop insights into himself. For instance, Smith's analyst might help him see that he has not quite overcome the effects of his adolescent awkwardness. Teen-age girls have always had a disproportionate influence on Smith, especially when they speak with confidence and authority. Of course, this is only one conceivable explanation, and could not be accepted without further support. But the particular correct explanation is not my present concern. Rather, I want merely to claim that it was Smith's emotion which,

firstly, led him to see that he has some irrational attitudes toward the girl; and secondly, led him to engage in various strategies of self-examination.

Emotional states can frequently be explained only by the discovery of underlying associations of which the subject is not fully aware. Such associations guide or misguide one's experience, including one's emotional experience. Paying careful attention to one's emotions is one of the best ways to get access to these lesser cognitions.

Concluding Remarks

Emotions can be inappropriate in several ways, but even an inappropriate emotion can play a significant positive role in human life. Inappropriate emotions are of course to be avoided or overcome, but the person suffering such an emotion will, if wise, use such emotions as possible indicators of underlying cognitive problems. In fact, while an appropriate emotion is less likely to indicate cognitive problems (it might, if it conflicts with an irrational belief) it is nevertheless worth examining. Self-examination is an important part of the living of any rational life, especially given

that our cognitive lives are constituted by many cognitions of lesser development than beliefs and values; and endeavoring, as much as possible, to ascertain whether these cognitions are rational and worth preserving, is significant in the general increase of rationality.

I turn now to the application of the work in this and the preceding chapter to the problem of whether and how emotions can be educated.

CHAPTER III

EDUCATING THE EMOTIONS

It is now possible to turn our attention to the problem of whether and how emotions can be educated. If it does make sense to refer to the education of the emotions,[1] then it must be true that it is possible to engage in various learning activities which are likely to improve our emotions. This conditional is actually a consequence of the facts that education is a normative concept and that being educated involves learning. If we say that Jones is educated, then at least we are committing ourselves to regarding Jones' achievements as in some way worthwhile, and that they have been achieved through learning.

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[1]It should, perhaps, be said at the outset that, literally speaking, we do not educate emotions. Emotions are in the wrong category to be educated--rather, we educate persons. Educating emotions involves the person engaging in activities likely to bring about improvement in his emotions.

In the first chapter it was argued that emotions are passive cognitive phenomena, and that they are not amenable to criticism in the same way as beliefs. A belief, it was argued, is necessarily changed once one sees its inappropriateness. Judging that a particular belief is inappropriate necessarily alters it; if it seems not to, then what we are faced with is not a full fledged belief. Conscious irrationality is impossible for belief. Emotions, on the other hand, are reactions. Consequently, even if one sees that one has inappropriate emotions, one cannot simply stop having the emotion. Emotions are not amenable to that sort of criticism alone. Rather, inappropriate emotions must be altered by rectifying the person having the emotion. Instead of changing the emotion directly, what we change is the person who has the emotion--a different person will have different emotions. In other words, we change the emotion indirectly, by changing the person who is reacting inappropriately. In effect, what this means is that educating emotions is going to be a matter of bringing about various states of improvement in the person himself. These states of improvement in the person will contribute to a better emotional life.

The first section of Chapter II, *Inappropriate Emotions and Their Causes*, was an account of the many ways in which emotions can go wrong. We saw that inappropriate emotions can be caused by various forms of irrational cognition, by various physiological disturbances, and by conceptual crudity. If we are to improve a person's emotions, therefore, we must engage in activities which contribute to (a) diminishing the amount of irrational cognition, physiological disturbances[2] and conceptual crudity to which a person is subject; and (b) to reducing the effects of these causes when they cannot be easily removed.

The second section of Chapter II, *The Significance of Emotion*, took a more positive look at the emotions. Here it was argued that emotions play an important role living one's life. Emotions are not mere interfering spasms in otherwise reasonable lives. They are, at least sometimes, significant factors in rational decision-making and self-improvement. It was argued that there are many occasions in which ignoring one's emotions is very foolish, especially those situations

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[2]Not much will be said here about the overcoming of physiological disturbances which play a causal role in the experience of emotion, since the remedy for such defects is not going to be educational.

which were referred to as genuine options. Also, through the examination of one's emotions one can get insights into the underlying associations which influence one's life. Therefore, (c), learning to take account of one's emotions, while not really part of the education of emotions *per se*, is an important task for educators. Becoming sensitive to one's emotions does not necessarily involve improving one's emotions, but it does involve improving an individual's life more generally.

For the most part the education of the emotions is just a matter of becoming a more well educated person, as shall be argued in the next section of this chapter. In the ensuing sections, it will be argued, firstly, that there is the possibility of learning to control one's emotions, and secondly, that one can learn to be more sensitive to one's emotions and thereby to make greater and more profound use of one's emotions in living one's life.

Emotions and the Educated Person

The education of the emotions largely consists in becoming an educated person. There are two arguments

for this. Firstly, as one becomes a more well educated person one reduces the amount of irrational cognition to which one is vulnerable, and secondly, one increases one's conceptual sophistication. It is clear, of course, that there are people, ostensibly educated, who suffer all sorts of emotional imperfections. But this need not worry us. There are also many people, seemingly well educated, who hold all sorts of irrational beliefs, but such beliefs do not imply that their possessor is not educated. Being educated is consistent with the holding of *some* irrational beliefs, values and other cognitions, although there is clearly a limit to the degree to which an individual can be subject to such irrationality and still be an educated person. Too much irrationality and a person loses his ability to know anything,[3] and it is difficult to imagine reasons for saying that a person who suffers general irrationality is nevertheless living a worthwhile life.

The first argument for the claim that acquiring an education will contribute to a better emotional life is

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[3]Too much irrationality would make a person incapable of assessing evidence and holding beliefs, for instance.

that the acquisition of knowledge and understanding diminishes the degree to which one is subject to irrational cognition. Becoming educated implies acquiring a great amount of knowledge and understanding from a wide range of disciplines. The acquisition of knowledge from a particular disciplines is going to make it less likely that one will experience irrational cognition with respect to that discipline. For instance, it is not at all surprising to meet ordinary gamblers who fall prey to the Monte Carlo fallacy, but to meet a probability professor who falls victim would be far more unusual. The knowledge he has acquired has made it far less probable that he will believe or even entertain certain propositions, such as the proposition that "if red numbers have won for ten spins in a sequence, then the likelihood that red will win next is 1 in 1024." The professional mathematician is far more likely than an ordinary person to recognize that, on an unbiased table, for any spin the probability that black will win is one in two. Similarly, a psychiatrist is far less likely than a peasant to believe that insanity is a consequence of demonic possession. The psychiatrist knows too much about the many genetic, neurological and social causes of the various psychoses

to find a need to resort to non-explanations such as the infiltration of evil spirits. In both cases the knowledge acquired causes a reduction in the likelihood that one will suffer irrational cognitions.

To be sure, even a mathematician who has a good understanding of the Monte Carlo fallacy may, in the midst of a string of losses at the roulette table, find himself thinking that black is more likely to win next because red has won ten times running. In other words, even a good mathematician might fall victim to irrationality with respect to mathematical claims. But my point is merely that one's knowledge in mathematics makes such irrationality less likely.

In the preceding chapter it was argued that emotions can be inappropriate because they are caused in part by irrational cognition. Given that it is correct that the acquisition of knowledge reduces the likelihood of experiencing irrational cognition, it follows that the acquisition of knowledge reduces the likelihood of experiencing irrational emotion.[4]

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[4]Below (pp. 110-127), I extend this argument by showing that the study of literature has special significance in correcting the irrational cognitions which influence our emotional lives.

The acquisition of education can help to prevent another sort of emotional defect, namely emotional crudity. This is because the acquisition of education requires the individual to undergo a great increase in conceptual sophistication. This is especially obvious when a student is beginning work in an entirely new field. A young child learning arithmetic, for example, must acquire many new concepts, such as the concepts of unit, equality, set union and number. The grasping of even the basic ideas of arithmetic presupposes at least a partial understanding of these concepts. Similarly, the elementary science student must acquire many new concepts in the acquisition of scientific knowledge. He must, for example, learn the concepts of mass, force, velocity, and acceleration if he is to acquire any understanding at all of Newtonian mechanics. Even philosophy requires the acquisition of many new concepts, such as the concepts of necessity, contingency, possibility, contradiction, contrariness, implication and simplicity.

Conceptual sophistication is, as argued in the preceding chapter, an important precondition of the experience of many emotions. The small child cannot feel either guilt or shame, and, if the stories about

tribes without the concept of personal property are true, then the members of these groups would be incapable of experiencing jealousy or envy, for the idea of property is essential to these emotions. Given that increasing one's conceptual sophistication is essential to increasing the sophistication of one's emotions, it seems that, in general, becoming more educated is going to enable one to experience more sophisticated emotions.

Even in fields such as mathematics and pure logic this can be seen. Mathematicians frequently talk about the elegance or the beauty of a proof. Feeling joy over the construction of such a proof requires a great deal of mathematical sophistication--ordinary people simply cannot experience such emotion because the object is quite outside their ken. The sciences can also lead to increased emotional sophistication: an amateur ornithologist will find that as his knowledge of birds increases, so does the emotional pleasure he takes in this activity. He can be surprised by much more than the ignorant person; he can experience joy with respect to far more than a novice.

The role of literature. I want to argue here that some areas of intellectual inquiry are more important than

others in increasing the appropriateness of one's emotions. Mathematics and the sciences are very valuable and worthwhile pursuits, but they pale in significance to the study of literature when it comes to the important emotional defects to which people fall prey. The reason that some intellectual pursuits are more significant for one's emotional life than others is that not all studies equally address the significant issues in human life. The most momentous problems in human life cannot be resolved purely scientifically or mathematically. Many problems require reflection on the good life, on what makes life worth living. All the genuine moral dilemmas, such as whether it is appropriate to assist terminally ill patients in the commission of a suicide, and whether it is permissible to sacrifice an individual's acknowledged right for the increased happiness of a large number of people, are momentous problems. But moral dilemmas are not the only momentous problems facing persons in their lives. For instance, there are problems associated with how to deal with the death of a loved one, how to survive personal failures and tragedies, how to overcome or at least cope with one's weaknesses. There are also more general problems such as what one should do with one's life.

Ought one to aspire to an ascetic life or would it be preferable to attempt to amass great wealth in business? Ought one to marry or can a better life be achieved through bachelorhood? Will chastity lead to a happier life than one in which sexual activity plays a significant role? Such problems require deep and extensive reflection. They cannot be resolved purely by turning to so-called experts or professionals, although this is not to deny that there are occasions when the assistance of someone who has had experience with similar problems would be of great value. Here I want to argue that the study of imaginative literature can, more so than other subject areas, contribute to a very high degree to the improvement of one's emotional life. This is not to say that study in the humanities and social sciences does not also have the potential to contribute, but that there are reasons to believe that literature has special merit.

The study of literature is a worthwhile pursuit for many reasons, and it should not be thought that it is being argued here that the principal merit in its study is that it is useful in improving one's emotional life. But because literary works typically deal with significant themes, studying them can help one in

overcoming the irrationalities which cause many inappropriate emotions. There are, of course, other fields, including the study of other art forms, which address the significant themes in human life, but literature has a pair of virtues which together place it in the best position for correcting significant irrationality. The first is that the study of literature, including drama, frequently involves the emotional engagement of the reader. The second is that literature is able to describe significant human problems with far greater clarity than other art forms such as music, painting or dance.

First of all, literature, being an art form, engages the reader emotionally. The understanding of a particular literary work requires the appropriate engagement of one's emotions. David Best asks us to:

> Imagine someone who came from a country where there was no activity of drama, or anything like it, watching Shakespeare's *King Lear* several times. He comes to realize that the actors do not really die, and that members of the audience know this. Yet the latter, every night, are profoundly moved emotionally by what they see. And what they see is, according to his conception, someone who just pretends, every night, to die--and they *know* he is merely pretending. Hence, he concludes, their emotional response is simply irrational, for how

> could they, if they were rational, be moved by a situation which they know to be false?[5]

The alien, lacking prior initiation into the experience of drama, is unable to experience the emotions which are essential to a genuine experience of the play, and consequently he is unable to respond appropriately to it. No one could be said to understand *King Lear* or any other excellent work of literature unless he experiences appropriate emotions toward the work. One who responds with amusement to the scene in which Lear is holding Cordelia's dead body could not be said to have understood the play. This is not to say that there is only one legitimate response to a work of art, but that some emotional response is necessary and indeed some responses are downright illegitimate.

There are thinkers who argue that understanding aesthetic works requires not getting emotionally involved with the work however. For instance, Roger Scruton holds that it is part of the purpose of artistic

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[5]David Best, *Feeling and Reason in the Arts* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1985), p. 6.

conventions to "overcome emotional involvement."[6] In an essay on the medieval literary genre fabliaux, Norris Lacy claims that "esthetic distance" is essential to the humor of these tales which "center on cruelty, deceit, infidelity, and violence."[7] Esthetic distance involves the suspension of identification with the characters in the story, so that one can find humor in situations which should scarcely be funny in ordinary circumstances. (Consider the final scene of *The Miller's Tale*, where a red hot fire poker is forced up Absolom's anus by Nicholas:

> And he was redy with his iren hoot,
> And Nicholas amidde the ers he smoot.
> Of gooth the skin an hande-brede aboute,
> The hote culter brende so his toute,
> And for the smert he wende for to dye.[8]

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[6]Roger Scruton, *Art and Imagination: A Study in the Philosophy of Mind* (London: Methuen and Company, 1974), p. 130.

[7]Norris J. Lacy, "Types of Esthetic Distance in the Fabliaux," in *The Humor of the Fabliaux: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Thomas D. Cooke and Benjamin L. Honeycutt (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1974), p. 107.

[8]Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed., from numerous manuscripts by Walter W. Skeat, (London: Oxford University Press, 1912, reprinted 1962), p. 466. Nevill Coghill renders this into modern English in the following way:

> But his hot iron was ready; with a thump
> He smote him in the middle of the rump.
> Off went the skin a hand's-breadth round about
> Where the hot coulter struck and burnt it out.

This would be a downright serious event were it to occur in Vancouver tomorrow!) At least sometimes, it would appear, there is need to distance oneself from the literary work if one is to properly understand it.

However, Best points out, while it is true that aesthetic appreciation requires that, for instance, "one does not run up to the stage to save Desdemona," all this means is that there is a difference between appropriate emotional response to real life situations and to dramatic situations. Scruton is right that it is one's understanding of aesthetic convention which prevents such inappropriate responses, but it would be incorrect to infer that aesthetic experience requires the absence of emotional response.[9] It is, rather, that aesthetic conventions channel one's emotional response:

Such was the pain, he thought he must be dying (Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales, An Illustrated Selection Rendered into Modern English*, by Nevill Coghill, (London: Allen Lane, 1977 (first published by Penguin Books 1951, revised 1958)), p. 125.

[9]Scruton himself did not believe that emotion is inappropriate in aesthetic experience, as Best suggests. On the same page as his claim that one purpose of convention in art is to overcome emotional involvement, Scruton comments:

> For not only is it clearly true that aesthetic experience involves emotion, it is also true that if it did not involve emotion, or something like emotion, we would be unable to indicate its value. (Scruton, p. 130)

> The artistic conventions do not overcome, but rather determine the *character* of the emotional involvement, so that, for instance, one does not respond to a situation in a play as one would to a real life one.[10]

With respect to fabliaux and other genre which require that one forego any identification with the characters, we must recognize that the value of such stories for the edification of the audience is minimal, whatever their general literary merit might be, precisely because they do not afford the opportunity for the complete engagement of the reader's emotions. Generally speaking, tragedy, as opposed to comedy, requires greater identification with characters.

The fact that understanding some literary works requires the engagement of our emotions is very important because emotional engagement implies personal involvement. Only if one somehow gets personally involved in the literature can one respond emotionally to it. One cannot view a work of literature from a purely detached attitude and still respond to it emotionally. In effect, understanding some literary works requires a personal investment, by which I mean that one must identify with or take the stance of some

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[10]Best, p. 134.

of the characters. One must see Lear's fate as somehow one's own if one is to appreciate the tragedy.

It is because the experience of some good literary works requires identifying with some characters (or the narrator or the voice in a poetic work), that the experience of literature has the potential to increase one's rationality about important personal matters. In identifying with a character one typically extends one's understanding of other points of view. This is especially evident in a writer such as Anthony Trollope, who is able to put the reader "into the lives" of characters who have experiences very diverse from one's own. Becoming involved in the trivial internal politics of an insignificant nineteenth century see in England, taking the side of more or less ordinary people with quite different concerns, beliefs and values, and indeed becoming impassioned with these petty concerns is to live, albeit vicariously, the lives of those people.

In fact, experiencing emotions through literature has a virtue over experiencing emotions in daily life, and that is that in literature one retains some distance from the characters. While one shares Lear's emotions, one does not literally become Lear. The reader or

audience does not merely participate in Lear's emotions, but also is able, with a degree of objectivity not usually possible in one's own life, to examine Lear's situation and the events which led to its occurrence. The reader is caused to question what it is about Lear which precipitated his fall. And because one is involved in Lear's situation one is also compelled to question the extent to which one is in possession of the qualities which led to Lear's fall.

The experience of literature is particularly efficacious with respect to correcting irrational associations, such as those discussed in the preceding chapter. The form of one's emotional response to a particular work will frequently reveal one's lower-level cognitions. One's response to Gide's *The Immoraliste*, might reveal unacknowledged prejudices against homosexuality, for instance. While it is true that simply being aware of an irrational bias is not sufficient to reject it, at least it offers the possibility of improvement.[11]

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[11]Studying literature in groups helps one to see the arbitrariness of some responses. In a group, one is able to compare one's own responses with others, and thereby stands a better chance of noticing the associations which give one's emotions life.

A second reason why the study of literature is preferable to study in other arts is its precision in discussing human situations. Painting, music and dance pale in comparison to the literary arts in this regard. This is not to disparage non-literary art forms, but merely to point out the obvious: such media are far less able to present with clarity, precision and completeness, the many facets of complex human problems.[12]

The fact that imaginative literature is, at its best, very precise, has important ramifications. R. W. Hepburn discusses what he calls an "emotion-cliche" and its prevalence in the emotional lives of most people. An emotion-cliche is a stereotypical emotional response:

> ...like opinions and judgments of value, emotions too are characteristically blurred and hackneyed, are emotion-cliches, determined or conditioned by popular culture. In day-to-day life it is continually suggested to us that *'this* is what one feels, in *this* situation'. And the 'this' (both times) stands for something blunted, generalized and crude.[13]

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[12]Opera is an obvious exception here, though its ability to address significant problems in human life due to its partial literary character. Often opera is, from a literary view, fairly lightweight, though there are exceptions, notably the music-dramas of Wagner.

[13]R. W. Hepburn, "The Arts and the Education of Feeling and Emotion," in *Education and the Development of Reason*, ed. R. F. Dearden, P. H. Hirst, and R. S.

The careful study of good literature can help to eliminate one's reliance on emotion-cliches by helping one to see the particularities in the situations with which one is confronted. Good novelists get the reader personally involved in *precisely* described situations. Tolstoy presents to us the stories of Anna and Levin, getting us personally involved in both characters' situations. And because Tolstoy is able to describe their situations with an ability far beyond that of ordinary folk, he succeeds in expanding our ability to see our own situations. Tolstoy is able to describe fictional situations so clearly that they seem as or more clear to the reader than the reader's own experience. In effect, a good novelist teaches[14] one to see one's situations better by carrying one through fine descriptions of fictional situations. Similarly, an excellent poet such as Yeats is able to describe, and

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Peters (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972) pp. 486-7.

[14]The "teaching" of a novelist is very much like the teaching of a formal logician. In logic class the instructor will try to teach his students how to construct a proof or derivation by presenting proofs or derivations to his students. The students themselves will, if all goes right, come to see how premises can be used to support a conclusion. In other words, a logician will teach partly by carrying his students through various proofs; while a novelist will teach by carrying his readers through various descriptions.

consequently create, for his audience feelings which are far beyond that of more pedestrian souls.

Of course, none of this is to say that the reading of good literature necessarily leads to improved ability to see one's situations. It is very important that one read literature seriously--one can be superficial in one's reading of anything, and the absence of personal involvement precludes changing the reader in any significant way.

Emotion-cliches are caused, in part, by the crude and imprecise perception of one's situation. Popular culture, Hepburn rightly points out, is a contributing factor in one's inability to see situations for oneself. By its very nature, since it is meant to appeal to most people, popular culture is not intended to challenge the audience's ability, or at least not very much. Popular culture, including television, popular music, and most films, relies on standard ways of viewing the world and our place in it. Were it to challenge its audience too much, most of its audience would disappear, and consequently it could not turn a profit. (This is not a complete rejection of everything that we call popular art--there are degrees of aesthetic merit within popular

art, but in general, the more popular a work of art, the less the aesthetic merit.) The experience of good literature, on the other hand, is, while frequently quite enjoyable, often difficult and disturbing. It might be quite acceptable to say of the newest hit on popular radio that one likes it, but it is difficult to know what it would mean to "like" a great work of literature, such as *Women of Trachis*, *Othello*, or *Portrait of a Lady*. At any rate, whether one likes or dislikes a particular artistic work is less significant than what one gets from it, since even a disturbing or horrifying tale could contribute to one's understanding of and sensitivity to the human condition.

A good example of how literature can help the reader correct his irrational cognition is John Stuart Mill's discovery of Wordsworth. In his *Autobiography* Mill describes a "crisis" in his "mental history." Briefly, Mill's difficulty stemmed from an inability to feel the value of the ends towards which he had been striving:

> All those to whom I looked up, were of opinion that the pleasure of sympathy with human beings, and the feelings which made the good of others, and especially of mankind on a large scale, the object of existence, were the greatest and surest sources of happiness. Of the truth of this I was

> convinced, but to know that a feeling would make me happy if I had it, did not give me the feeling.[15]

Mill suffered from this crisis for a period of approximately two years, during which time he failed to take any great pleasure in his work. Having lost the conviction that the achievement of the ends toward which he was working would bring him great happiness, he ceased to take pleasure in attempting to bring about those ends. At this time Mill came to accept that there is a great need for the cultivation of feeling and that the education he had received was significantly wanting in this regard:

> I had now learnt by experience that the passive susceptibilities needed to be cultivated as well as the active capacities, and required to be nourished and enriched as well as guided. I did not, for an instant, lose sight of, or undervalue, that part of the truth which I had seen before; I never turned recreant to intellectual culture, or ceased to consider the power of analysis as an essential condition both of individual and of social improvement.[16]

Mill's crisis, then, was an effect of too much emphasis on what he calls his "active capacities," to the neglect of his "passive susceptibilities." His was a genuine emotion-cognition conflict, in that he believed that

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[15]John Stuart Mill, *Autobiography*, edited with an introduction and notes by Jack Stillinger (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 83-4.

16Ibid., p. 86.

certain activities and occupations were of extreme value and yet was incapable of feeling any pleasure in their performance. The claim that this is a genuine emotion-cognition conflict is supported by the fact that Mill did not fall into so great a state of depression that he was not able to perform his usual activities, although he now performed them "mechanically, by the mere force of habit."[17] It turned out to be the arts in general and Wordsworth in particular which finally succeeded in bringing Mill out of his crisis.

> What made Wordsworth's poems a medicine for my state of mind, was that they expressed, not mere outward beauty, but states of feeling, and of thought coloured by feeling, under the excitement of beauty. They seemed to be the very culture of the feelings, which I was in quest of. In them I seemed to draw from a source of inward joy, of sympathetic and imaginative pleasure, which could be shared in by all human beings; which had no connexion with struggle or imperfection, but would be made richer by every improvement in the physical or social condition of mankind. From them I *seemed to learn* what would be the perennial sources of happiness, when all the greater evils of life shall have been removed. And I felt myself at once better and happier as I came under their influence. There have certainly been, even in our own age, greater poets than Wordsworth; but poetry of deeper and loftier feeling could not have done for me at that time what his did. I needed to be made to feel that there was real, permanent happiness in

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[17]Ibid., p. 84.

> tranquil contemplation. Wordsworth *taught me* this...[18]

Mill was brought out of his apathy by the close reading of a poet known for recreating intense passion in moments of calm reflection.[19] His testimony is very important to us because Mill had been given an upbringing which was particularly intense in its emphasis on the more intellectual pursuits, but was conspicuously short in the more imaginative fields. In a word, Mill had not learnt to feel, and it was ultimately a very unintellectual poet who taught him to

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[18]Ibid., p. 89, (italics mine). Note that Mill describes Wordsworth's poetry as involving the expression of "thought coloured by feeling," which is roughly equivalent to what C. D. Broad referred to as "emotional tone." Note also that Mill focuses wrongly on Wordsworth's expression of feelings, rather than on Wordsworth's capacity to invoke feeling. Finally, (italicized phrases) it is interesting to see that Mill describes Wordsworth as having "taught" him. Wordsworth's teaching amounted to carrying Mill through various descriptions which invoked in Mill various emotions and which created increased understanding.

[19]Wordsworth's own words on the nature of poetry: ... poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity: the emotion is contemplated till, by a species of re-action, the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. (*The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*. Edited, with Preface, Notes and Illustrations, by the Rev. Alexander B. Grosart. Volume 2. (London: Edward Moxon, Son, and Co., 1876; Reprinted by New York: AMS Press, 1967), p. 96.

do so, by creating objects designed expressly for the purpose of invoking emotions in his audience.

To sum up the argument in this section: Becoming educated includes the increase of one's rationality and of one's conceptual sophistication, and it is for these reasons that a large portion of what we call the education of the emotions is really part and parcel of education. *Part* of what we are doing in drawing attention to a need for educating emotion is indicating that education can be lop-sided, over-emphasizing the sciences to the peril of the humanities and the arts. Mathematics and the pure sciences are extremely valuable pursuits, and not merely in instrumental ways, but these studies do not address the deep and perennial problems of life so directly as the studies which focus on the living of a human life. The study of literature in particular can be seen to be very important in the education of the emotions. Through literature one can be made to experience situations which one has never before experienced, and importantly, to experience very reflectively what one has lived through unreflectively. In simple language, literature allows the reader or audience to participate in emotions, while at the same time to maintain some objectivity toward those emotions.

Learning Emotional Control

It might be thought that the proposition that the individual is passive with respect to emotions implies that there is no way in which they can be controlled by the person experiencing them. In this section I will argue that there are several ways in which emotions can be controlled, despite their passivity. At least sometimes it is possible for a person to learn techniques for the control of his emotions, and where such learning is possible it is reasonable to refer to it as educating the emotions.

In his *The Structure of Emotions*[20] Robert Gordon compares the states of embarrassment and intoxication. He compares these two states because if it can be shown that intoxication, which is a passive state, can be controlled, then there is reason to believe that embarrassment can be within an individual's control. This is because the state of intoxication has what might be called a "brute noncognitive cause,"[21] by which he

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[20]Robert Gordon, *The Structure of Emotion: Investigations in Cognitive Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987)

[21]Ibid., p. 115.

means that the effects of drugs do not depend on the existence of any particular beliefs or other cognitions on the part of the subject. One will get drunk, given a sufficient amount of alcohol, regardless of whether one has any beliefs at all--even dogs or monkeys can get drunk. If even passive states with brute noncognitive causes can sometimes be controlled, then there is good reason to believe that passive states with *cognitive* causes, including emotions, can sometimes also be controlled.

There are four ways in which an individual might retain some control over the action of an intoxicant, and each of these ways has significant analogies with emotional states. The first is that while it is clearly true that one cannot simply "intoxicate," it is not true that there is nothing one can do in order to "cause oneself to be intoxicated."[22] Most people become acquainted with various techniques which can be used to intoxicate oneself, such as ingesting too much alcohol. This is indirect voluntarism, in that one does not directly intoxicate oneself; rather, one engages in other activities which have the effect of causing

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[22]Ibid.

intoxication. Closely related to causing oneself to be intoxicated is preventing intoxication by avoiding the ingestion of intoxicants. Analogously, by determining one's situation one can prevent or cause the occurrence of particular emotional states--a man who suffers extreme worry about public appearances can avoid such appearances, to use a trivial example.

A third way of controlling oneself with respect to states of intoxication is to control the degree to which one reacts to a given intoxicant. Even after an intoxicant has been ingested it is sometimes possible to eliminate or diminish its effects. This can be achieved in either of two ways. Firstly, there is the possibility of an antidote. With respect to alcohol there is no complete antidote, but it is sometimes possible to weaken some of the effects of low dosages by drinking coffee or by taking a stimulant. Analogously, one can diminish the emotional effects of particular situations by taking various medications, such as tranquilizers. Secondly, it might be possible to weaken the effects of an intoxicant through a "training program." One might build up a tolerance to the effects of alcohol, or learn to "hold one's liquor," after consuming alcohol for several months or years.

Similarly, individuals who are compelled to speak to large audiences frequently often come to feel less anxiety, partly as a result of their increased confidence in their ability to perform competently, but also as a result of learning techniques of relaxation, (such as the inhalation of deep breaths).

Another way in which one might retain control with respect to an intoxicant is to control the effect it has on one's overt behavior. A man who has consumed a weak dosage of alcohol might be able to limit the degree to which his behavior is affected by the drug. He might feel quite giddy while at the bar, but quickly regain his composure when challenged to a game of billiards. Especially at lower doses, some drugs such as alcohol will not cause an individual to relinquish *all* control of his behavior.

Gaining control over one's behavior when in an emotional state is largely a matter of reducing the degree to which one engages in the natural expression of one's emotions,[23] and increasing one's intentional

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[23]Patricia Greenspan describes cases where the individual has inhibited the degree to which he is affected by an emotional state as "tamped-down affect" (*Emotions and Reasons* (New York: Routledge, 1988), pp. 21-22.

expression of emotion.[24] In this regard Peters claims that,

> In the case of many appraisals, such as those connected with hate, fear and lust, we would be in a very sorry plight if there were no intermediary between quivering in the passive state specific to the appraisals in question and launching into the relevant actions of murder, flight and rape. The mechanism of 'sublimation' is of obvious relevance here. Much of civilized life, including poetry, manners, wit and humour, consists in devising and learning forms of expression which enable us to deal with emotions in a way which is not personally disturbing or socially disruptive.[25]

There is a great deal which can be taught in this regard, especially in aesthetic activity. While it is true that we do not assess works of art on the basis of their effectiveness in expressing the artist's state of mind, this does not rule out that an individual can express his state of mind through an aesthetic production. Wordsworth's poetry, according to Wordsworth himself, stems from emotions which the poet had actually experienced, though again, even here, we should be reluctant to evaluate his poetry by attempting to determine how closely they depict his emotional states.

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[24]See Chapter I.

[25]R. S. Peters. "The Education of the Emotions," in *Education and the Development of Reason*, ed. R. F. Dearden, P. H. Hirst, and R. S. Peters (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 482.

It is important to recognize that the passivity of emotion does not rule out the possibility of controlling one's emotions. Even passive states which involve brute noncognitive causes can be controlled in several ways to various extents. When a man becomes angry and strikes his wife, we rightly do not accept his emotion as an excuse, just as we do not accept intoxication as an excuse for killing a pedestrian. It would be very naive to think that one becomes afflicted with anger, and that the affliction is quite outside one's control, as in the case of Homer's Achilles. There is much that one can do to maintain control over one's anger. Firstly, it is possible to avoid thinking about the offending incident. Secondly, one can avoid those situations where one is more likely to become angry, for instance by avoiding the consumption of alcohol. Thirdly, it is possible that one can, if one is generally irascible, take medication which will pacify oneself. Fourthly, one can attempt to become a more tolerant person, permitting a far greater degree of injustice prior to being angry. Fifth, it is possible to control the degree to which one's anger affects one's behavior--one need not express one's anger in violent action for instance.

On the other hand it is not always good to control one's emotions, as has already been indicated in the previous chapter. Sometimes emotions, even unpleasant emotions such as anger, serve important functions in our lives, and one prevents them at one's peril. To maintain too much control will often have the effect of inhibiting our emotions from fulfilling their important functions, thereby contributing to a more impoverished form of life.

It is important that people can learn to control their emotions, and those bringing up children ought not to neglect this. Children must learn *that* they can control their emotions to some extent, and they must learn *to* do so. This is in fact the other side of the education of the emotions--we must learn to feel in more sophisticated and appropriate ways, but along with this we must learn to control the way in which we are affected by situations. There is sometimes tension here, but it is offset by the fact that controlling one's emotions seldom involves abandoning them.

Sensitivity to One's Emotions

Emotions, it was argued in Chapter II, fulfill important functions in human life. They are very significant in the making of important decisions and they play an important role in an individual's attempts to know himself better. These facts cannot be ignored in any discussion of the education of the emotions. One must learn to be sensitive to one's emotions, which means examining them consciously and reflectively, with an aim to ascertaining what they indicate about one's mind and one's situation, if one is to live a coherent and worthwhile life.

Exercising interest in and concern for one's emotions is a precondition of not being what might be called a victim of one's emotions. Emotions frequently cloud one's judgments and often play a causal role in confused and irrational conduct. But unless one is aware of what one is feeling one can do nothing whatsoever to ensure a more rational and coherent form of life. Not knowing what one is feeling will typically lead to acting on emotions unreflectively. In this regard, the psychotherapist, Nathaniel Branden writes:

> The man who is afraid of his emotions and represses them, sentences himself to be pushed by

> subconscious motivation--which means, to be ruled by feelings whose existence he dares not identify.
>
> If, then, a man is to avoid repression, he must be prepared to face any thought and any emotion, and to consider them rationally, secure in the conviction that he will not act without knowing what he is doing and why.
>
> Ignorance is not bliss, not in any area of a man's life, and certainly not with regard to the contents of his own mind. Repressed material does not cease to exist; it is merely driven underground, to affect a man in ways he does not know, causing reactions he is helpless to account for, and sometimes, exploding into neurotic symptoms.[26]

Our emotions, Branden points out, cannot be repressed.[27] At most we can repress the cognitive cause of an emotion, thereby preventing the occurrence of an unwanted emotion, or the repression can occur subsequent to the onset of the emotion, by refusing to acknowledge

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[26]Nathaniel Branden, *The Psychology of Self-Esteem: A New Concept of Man's Psychological Nature* (New York: Bantam Books, 1971), pp. 87-88.

[27]Actually, Branden contradicts himself on the question of whether emotions can be repressed. See the first quotation above, for instance. But I think we should accept that he speaks elliptically whenever he refers to the repression of emotions. The following statement clearly indicates that he does not believe that it is emotions themselves which are repressed:

> But it is not emotions as such that are repressed. An emotion as such cannot be repressed; if it is not *felt*, it is not an emotion. Repression is always directed at thoughts. What is blocked or repressed, in the case of emotions, is either evaluations that would lead to emotions or identifications of the nature of one's emotions. (p. 79)

When Branden refers to the repression of emotions he is referring to one of these phenomena.

the emotion. In the first case, we do not repress an emotion at all but rather a cognition--we prevent emotion; in the second, we merely repress knowledge of an emotion.[28] (The truth of this claim is actually a consequence of the fact that emotions are states of being affected in some way or other, as was argued in Chapter I.) It is the second sort of repression with which we are concerned with here, the repression of knowledge of one's emotions.

Branden offers several examples, and it is worthwhile looking at one of these examples to see both how repression works and why it can be so destructive.

> A man finds himself spending more and more time with a married couple who are his friends. He does not note the fact that he is far more cheerful when the wife is present than when he and the husband are alone. He does not know that he is in love with her. If he knew it, it would be a blow to his sense of personal worth--first, because he would see it as disloyalty to the husband; second, because he would see it as a reflection on his realism and "hard-headedness," since the love is hopeless. If brief flashes of love or desire enter his awareness, he does not pause on them or appraise their meaning; their significance does not register, the normal process of integration has been sabotaged. He no longer remembers when the first dim thoughts of love rose to disturb him, and his mind slammed tightly closed before they reached full awareness, and a violent "No!" without object or explanation took their place in his consciousness. Nor does he know why, when he

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[28]Ibid., p. 84.

> leaves his friends' home, his life suddenly seems unaccountably, desolately arid.[29]

While it is difficult to know exactly what sense we ought to make of the metaphor "his mind slammed tightly shut," the actual scenario is quite easily imaginable. A man begins to feel emotions which are irreconcilable with his sense of morality, and though he succeeds in preventing awareness of those emotions from becoming conscious and clear, he nevertheless suffers the effects of his emotions. In fact, his repression of knowledge of the emotions increases his suffering from them, since the fact that he is unconscious of his emotions effectively prevents him from doing anything to remedy his situation.

Besides the repression of the awareness of one's emotions, which involves an, albeit quick and unreflective, decision on the part of the person who experiences an emotion, there are also instances of simple emotional inattentiveness. We often do not so much repress our emotional states as we are careless regarding them. One's emotions become mere passing occurrences in a quickly flowing stream of consciousness. One feels regret here, anger there, love

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29Ibid., pp. 84-85.

here, jealousy there, but none of these emotions are given anything but momentary regard. They are not made the object of reflective self-analysis or concern. Such lack of concern is indicative of not taking emotions to be explicable in terms of one's underlying character and cognitions. If emotions are not seen to be caused, at least in part, by various states and qualities of the person who experiences them, then it is much easier to ignore them, just as it is relatively easy to ignore minor aches and discomforts while exercising. In other words, we do not pay sufficient regard to our emotions because we do not see that they are significant, that they can reveal important features of the person who experiences them.

The ignorance of one's own emotional states, then, indicates either of two defects. On the one hand, there is the clear repression of knowledge of one's emotional states, and on the other hand, there is simple emotional inattentiveness. But regardless of its cause, ignorance of one's emotions, creates a situation where one is affected without the possibility of control. One is caused to react in various ways, but these causes remain outside one's awareness, and consequently outside the control of one's will. One suffers feelings and engages

in behavior which seem, at least to oneself, truly inexplicable. Yet such behavior seems inexplicable only because one has not succeeded in becoming aware of what one is feeling.

We must, consequently, learn to give our emotions the regard they deserve. This can be achieved through two groups of activities: firstly, one can learn more *about* the emotions and their significance, so that the experience of emotional states are seen to be significant states of oneself, worthy of careful and deep investigation; secondly, one can learn *to* investigate one's own emotional states. Let me discuss each of these groups of activities separately.

The study of emotion. Many people look upon emotions as unfortunate disturbances in an otherwise peaceful and rational life. We have already seen that such a view is inadequate, and that it has particularly hazardous consequences for the living of a coherent life, so it behooves us as educators to do what we can to combat this view. People must learn to see that the emotions fulfill important roles in human life and that one ignores them at one's peril. Two disciplines which can contribute to a more correct conception of the emotions

are psychology and philosophy, especially philosophical psychology. In both these disciplines the emotions are sometimes the object of intense objective study. Study of the psychology of emotion and of the analysis of the concept of emotion can and should lead to greater knowledge of how emotion influences human life.

The examination of one's own emotions. Equal to the importance of knowing that emotions play significant roles in human life is the importance of learning to evaluate one's emotional states. In other words, we must develop habits of self-examination.

Part of what is involved in learning to investigate one's emotional states is learning that they are worthy of examination. But habits are not acquired in such a purely intellectual way. Children do not learn to brush their teeth frequently simply by learning the importance of the brushing of teeth. Adults might know very well the importance of physical exercise for good health, but not be in the habit of exercising. Typically, a habit is formed after repeated practice. One engages in the practice of brushing one's teeth, and after some time of intentional and self-conscious practice it is engaged in with far less thought. One brushes one's teeth out of

habit. At first, one engages in an exercise program due to a conscious decision to improve one's health and general well-being, but eventually does not have to employ great amounts of will-power to begin one's exercises--after a relatively short period of time one acquires routines and the maintenance of physical fitness becomes easier and less a matter of fighting with oneself to get to the gymnasium, pool or track.

Importantly, we can also acquire mental habits. A critical thinking instructor hopes that his students learn that there are many fallacies and other deviations from clear thinking, but he also hopes that his students learn to use their increased knowledge to improve their own thinking and to examine the writings of those with whom they come into contact. In other words, it is hoped that students learn to engage in criticism of the many claims and arguments with which they are confronted, as well as of their own claims and arguments. Learning to subject claims and arguments to critical scrutiny is not, of course, an unintelligent habit, but it is a habit nonetheless.[30]

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[30]John Passmore argues that teaching a person to be critical cannot be a matter of inculcating habits. He argues, (uncritically following William James) that habits necessarily involve a diminishment of

Analogously, people should acquire habits of examining their emotions, of intelligently raising questions about the cause and appropriateness of what they are feeling. This is done in two ways. Firstly, people have to come to see the importance of the examination of their emotions. This means two things: they must see the importance of emotions in human life, as was discussed in the previous subsection; and they must see that the examination of their own emotional states effects real improvements in their own lives. In other words, people will see the importance of the

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consciousness, and that since critical thinking will always involve consciousness, critical thinking cannot be habitual. But Passmore's examples are all caricatures:

> A person can be drilled into uttering stock criticisms. He can be taught to say, whenever he sees a non-representational painting or hears jazz, 'That's decadent.' Or whenever he hears a certain type of philosophical view put forward, 'That's nineteenth-century materialism,' or 'That's old-fashioned rationalism.' Such a person has not been taught to be critical. Passmore, John, "On Teaching to be Critical," in *Education and the Development of Reason*, ed. R. F. Dearden, P. H. Hirst, and R. S. Peters (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 416.

It is not, however, the actual thinking constitutive of criticism which is properly described as habitual, but rather it is one's engaging in criticism which is deemed habitual. The critical thinking instructor clearly does not intend that his students simply respond to claims and arguments with critical *sounding* utterances, rather he wants his students to form a habit of raising reflective questions about what they read or are told; he wants his students to learn to examine what they are told before they accept it.

examination of their own emotional states through (a) formal study of psychology and philosophy, and (b) practical experience of the worthwhile achievements wrought through the examination of one's emotional states. Secondly, people must actually engage in the examination of their emotional states. Habits are acquired through repeated practice, and consequently one must actually engage in the examination of one's emotions if that practice is to become habitual.

Teachers can do a great deal to encourage students to examine their own emotions. One important way is through the study of literature, which requires the examination of one's emotional responses. As was argued in an earlier section of this chapter, the experience of works of art requires emotional response. But unless one looks carefully at one's emotional response and critically examines that response, the emotional experience remains nothing other than a mere pleasant or unpleasant experience, without any genuine value. Both the aesthetic evaluation of the particular work as well as its value in the increase of one's own self-understanding depend on the investigation of one's emotional response. The evaluation of a particular work of literature requires that one ascertains how one feels

towards various events, characters and descriptions in the work, and furthermore, that one investigates why one feels as one does. In effect, this means that one must engage in the examination of one's emotional responses if one is to come to a reasonable critical assessment of a literary work.

It is because the aesthetic evaluation of works of art requires investigating the causes of one's responses that literature and the arts can be employed in the attempt to make students more sensitive to their own emotional states. Indeed, increasing one's sensitivity to one's own emotional states is a prerequisite of the improvement of one's abilities to construct cogent criticisms of literary works.

Another way of increasing students' sensitivities to their emotional states is through creative projects, such as painting and writing. At least sometimes, poetry involves the expression of feeling, and virtually always it involves invoking feeling in an audience. The intimate connection which exists between feelings and artistic creation renders it necessary for artists to be attentive to their feelings. This is not to say that a poem which is sad, or invokes sadness in an audience,

must express the artist's sadness. A contented and satisfied poet might succeed in composing a sad poem through an act of imagination. One possibility is that the feeling created in the audience was not the intention of the artist--it may have been invoked by chance, for instance. Another possibility is that by imagining sad situations or experiences a poet might be able to invoke feelings of sadness in his audience. But it would be amazing for a person who has neither experienced nor conceived of sadness, even vaguely, to succeed in constructing a sad poem or a sad painting. And especially with regard to poetry, the invoking of a particular feeling without a prior understanding of that feeling, would be a truly miraculous achievement.

The reason for this is obvious: the artist invokes feeling by creating objects which are likely to become objects of emotion. To do so well and with forethought requires that the artist has a fairly vivid understanding of what feelings he is attempting to induce. If he lacks a conception of the emotion he is inducing, then he will be quite at a loss to construct an object which invokes that feeling. For instance, a poet might be extremely affected by the wickedness of war, and his composition of a poem intended to invoke

his sense of war will require that he has some conception of that feeling. He must know the feeling he hopes to induce if he wants to construct an object which is likely to induce it. (Of course, it is not actually necessary for him to be able to name the feeling, since the feelings he hopes to induce will in all likelihood be more complex than can be described in a single expression such as horror or disgust.)

Getting students to engage in artistic creation is beneficial in getting them to be more sensitive to their emotions because aesthetic activities involve awareness of one's feelings. Furthermore, improving one's aesthetic abilities is at least in part a matter of becoming more sensitive to what one feels. This is because engaging in aesthetic activities compels one to investigate one's feelings to see whether what one is creating is a sufficiently clear invocation of those feelings.

Summing up

In this chapter it was argued that there are three components in the education of the emotions. Firstly, there is becoming a more well-educated person, which

essentially means improving oneself through the acquisition of a great amount of knowledge from the extant forms of knowledge. Becoming an educated person will increase both one's rationality and one's conceptual sophistication, and a deficiency in either will, at least sometimes, play a causal role in the experience of various inappropriate emotions. Secondly, it was argued that it is possible to learn to control our emotions, and that at least sometimes the control of one's emotions is a requirement of civilized life. Thirdly, it was argued that, because emotions often reveal significant underlying cognitions, it is essential that individuals learn both *that* emotions are significant and *to* examine their emotional states.

I argued that the study of literature can contribute significantly to all three components of the education of the emotions. Close study of literature, first of all, can help one to overcome irrational cognition and to increase one's conceptual sophistication. Secondly, the study of literature can contribute to learning better, more civilized and non-destructive means of expressing one's emotions. Thirdly, the study of literature, as well as aesthetic

activity, can contribute to an increased awareness and concern for one's emotions.

In closing, it is important to remember that emotions are passive phenomena, and derive their significance precisely from this fact. This renders them very different from beliefs, judgments and opinions which are active cognitive states, and are significant precisely because they are within a person's direct responsibility. A person is at best indirectly responsible for his emotions, and consequently the existence of inappropriate emotions cannot be taken as a failure of education, in the same way as the existence of inappropriate beliefs can be taken as indicative of an educational failure. Emotions, unlike beliefs, are not open to direct educational improvement, and a teacher, despite his best efforts, might be able to do next to nothing to improve the emotional life of some students. Teaching a student might not be enough to improve his emotional life, because often an individual's emotional difficulties stem from non-cognitive sources outside a student's control, such as physiological disturbances. In such cases, the student will have to seek the assistance of psychiatrists or other medical professionals.

CONCLUSION

I began by wondering whether it is possible to educate the emotions, with the question of whether it is possible to engage in learning activities which can contribute to the improvement of one's emotional life. The solution to the problem is that indeed it is possible to educate the emotions, but that educating emotions is, by and large, really just educating the person. It would be entirely wrong to think that there is a special area of education called emotional education, and that we had better set up programs in our teaching training facilities to ensure that there are sufficient well trained teachers to fill this need. The education of the emotions ought not to be thought of as a special discipline, alongside the more traditional disciplines such as science, mathematics, history, philosophy and literature and the fine arts. There is no need for students to sit for exams in the education

of the emotions, and even extra sessions on the topic are unnecessary. Rather, the upshot of this dissertation is that for the most part educating the emotions is really just education. Special programs in educating the emotions are unnecessary because *all* education ought to be an education of the emotions. The science teacher for instance, if he is good, will not want the students to be unemotional about science--the best scientists are very passionate about their work. They experience great joy in verification and are often surprised by their discoveries.[1] Moreover, it is clear that a necessary condition of being a good scientist is a passionate regard for truth and evidence, which will issue in, amongst other things, horror at the witness of others fudging their research data and shame at doing so oneself. Having a disposition to experience certain emotions is, therefore, a necessary condition of being educated, and therefore ought to be thought of as a concern of all educators.

We are forced to talk about educating the emotions because many schools are not producing educated people. In modern times all over the world there is a tendency

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[1]Israel Scheffler, "In Praise of the Cognitive Emotions," *Teacher's College Record* 79 (1977): 171-186.

to emphasize schooling which is "practical," by which it is usually meant that a child's schooling ought to prepare him so that some employer can make use of his skills for a fee. The suggestion is that schools are there to prepare children for public life, but that the students' own sense of who and what he is, of the value of his life and his relationships can safely be left to parents, to clergy, to television and rock and roll, or to chance. As a result, literature and the humanities are neglected more and more in our schools, since the significance of these disciplines for acquiring skills useful to employers is minimal (or at least less obvious). Such schooling could not seriously be regarded as educational, because it does not regard the individual's own life as significant. Schooling of this sort contributes to a disunity of self, to a fundamental incoherence in the life of the individual. Students are not taught, with sufficient seriousness, that there is a long tradition of attempting to answer the deep and perennial problems of human existence. As a consequence, students may not themselves be able to think rationally about the significance of what they do in their own lives. Alienation and apathy are obvious consequences.

This dissertation can be regarded as a plea for education. Education, or the worthwhile transformation of the person through the acquisition of knowledge and understanding from all the extant forms of knowledge, is the single most significant factor in living a rational, coherent and meaningful life. The argument of this thesis is that the emotions, which are clearly significant determinants of one's quality of life, are also improved by the acquisition of a well rounded education.

Suggestions for Further Investigation

Several topics are worthy of further research and I take this opportunity to mention some of these. Firstly, the analysis of emotion offered in the first chapter could be extended by a discussion of the relations between emotions and desires. Some emotions, such as anger, typically carry with them certain desires, such as the desire for revenge. We would find it odd for Jones to claim that he is extremely angry at Smith but that he feels no desire to inflict any damage on Smith. On the other hand, some emotions involve no characteristic desires. There are no desires implicit in sadness, for instance.

Also, it would be interesting to engage in more detailed research on what empirical psychologists say about the emotions. At this time, the empirical studies of emotion suffer from too little conceptual sophistication, as Ellen Berescheid shows in her "Contemporary Vocabularies of Emotion."[2]

A third suggestion for further research which springs from Chapter I of this thesis is on the cultural variations in emotional response. It is interesting to note that not only do diverse peoples express their emotions in diverse ways, but also that there are differences between what emotions distinctive cultural groups feel. In Rom Harre's *The Social Construction of Emotions*[3] there are several essays dealing with cultural determinants on the emotions. By and large, such studies seem to offer support for the cognitive analysis of emotion advanced in this thesis.

The second chapter argues that emotions are significant aspects of human life. Nothing, however,

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[2]Ellen Berescheid, "Contemporary Vocabularies of Emotion," in *Affect and Social Behavior*, edited by Bert S. Moore and Alice M. Isen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 22-38.

[3]Rom Harre, (ed), *The Social Construction of Emotions* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

was said about emotivism as an ethical theory. Accordingly, one might wish to study whether emotivism is strengthened or weakened by the account of emotions supported in Chapter I.

With respect to Chapter III it would be valuable to undertake research on the question of whether the Values Clarification movement might have anything to offer in the education of the emotions. This movement might well be extremely confused as a theory of moral education,[4] but nonetheless valuable (to some degree at least) with respect to the education of the emotions. At the very least, the Values Clarification proponents insist that students become clearer about how they feel, and this thesis has argued that such self-understanding is important in the improvement of children's emotional lives. The overly relativistic conception of values held by the Values Clarification proponents is, however, problematic: it would be wrong to assume that any emotion felt by a student is acceptable.

Secondly, the discussion of the value of studying literature in correcting irrational cognition was

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[4]See Tasos Kazepides, "The Logic of Values Clarification" *The Journal of Educational Thought* 11, (1977): 99-111.

carried out at a very general level. In particular, I did not offer specific suggestions for classroom practice. It would clearly be very worthwhile to actually work out programs in which this aspect of literary studies is emphasized.

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