THE ACT OF READING AS A TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCE: EMOTIONS AND REFLECTIVE MORAL TRANSFORMATION IN LITERATURE

IPEK BUDANUR

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Department of Philosophy
Faculty of Arts
University of Ottawa

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Abstract

This thesis emphasizes the significance of readers' emotional engagement with characters in the process of reading novels which, in turn, plays a critical role in the reflective moral transformation of the reader. It approaches the analysis of the relationship between emotions, literature and ethics from the perspective of the perceptual theory of emotions. My claim is that our imaginative engagements with narrative fictions, and particularly realist novels, by triggering a critical reflection process through the arousal of our emotions, might prove to be a morally transformative experience. Reflective moral transformation is defined as a deepening of one's moral understanding that often involves a shift in one's perspective that comes about as a result of a critical reflection of one's existing moral beliefs. As such, it entails a willingness to scrutinize one's moral beliefs and to improve one's moral understanding. I put forward here a model that will satisfactorily explain how engagement with realist novels can serve to morally transform ourselves.

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1. Introduction

The relationship between literature and ethics has been one of the much debated issues in contemporary aesthetics (Nussbaum, 1990; Levinson, 1998; Carroll, 2001). The two central questions that contemporary debates revolve around are whether acquaintance with literary works can have a moral effect on readers and whether the moral character of a literary work is relevant in its aesthetic assessment. This thesis is concerned with the first problem.

In studies of literary texts although the ways literary works influence readers morally have been studied extensively (Beardsley, 1958; Beardsmore, 1971; Kieran, 1996), the role emotions play have largely been ignored. Recently, works focusing on readers' emotional responses to fictions published by a number of scholars have laid the groundwork for further studies concerning the relationship between emotion, literature, and ethics. Some philosophers emphasizing the role of imagination in producing emotional responses have developed psychological models for understanding the ways readers emotionally engage with fictions (Currie, 1995; Feagin, 1996). Various studies have examined how we learn from literature through our emotional responses in reading literary texts drawing upon different theories of emotion (Robinson, 2005; Nussbaum, 1990; Carroll, 2003). Martha Nussbaum, in her book *Love's Knowledge* (1990), argues that we learn morally through our emotional involvements with novels. She approaches emotions from a cognitive viewpoint and holds a variation of the judgement theory according to which emotions are value judgments and thus are propositional. Jenefer Robinson, in her *Deeper than Reason* (2005), discusses the roles of emotions in literature, developing a version of the non-cognitive theory of emotions. Robinson argues that emotions are dynamic processes that involve automatic and immediate non-cognitive appraisals

which initiate motor activity and prepare us for possible action. This initial response is, then, monitored by cognitive evaluations corroborating or modifying our affective appraisals.

The dichotomy between reason and emotion which has long pervaded our views on practical deliberation still holds power on our thinking. In recent decades, however, the importance of emotions for our moral lives has been increasingly emphasized. Moral philosophers have proposed that both reason and emotions play important roles in formulating our moral judgements (Greenspan, 1988; Jones, 2003). These proposals have also been supported by neuropsychological research (Damasio, 1994; Decety et al. 2001; Moll et al., 2002; Young & Koenigs, 2007).

Many theories have been developed to explain emotions. These theories have been very helpful in understanding certain aspects of emotions but they have also faced serious challenges. Non-cognitive theories have failed to account for the cognitive aspect of emotions focusing solely on the qualitative aspect of an emotion. The judgement theory of emotions, on the other hand, which is a version of the cognitive theory, ignoring the qualitative aspect of the emotions, reduced them only to judgements. According to the judgement theory, in order to have an emotion, one must have a relevant belief. Thus, if you are angry with a person, you believe that that person has intentionally wronged you. This view has also faced the objection that it fails to account for emotions of animals and pre-linguistic babies who are not capable of the linguistic capacities necessary for propositional thought (Deigh, 1994). One particularly important argument against the judgement theory is that it cannot explain the case of emotional recalcitrance which arises when an emotion conflicts with the judgement. One experiences recalcitrant emotions, for example, when one is frightened of a mouse, although she judges that it is not dangerous.

Another theory that has been developed is the cognitive perceptual theory of emotions. This theory, too, has its variants. The cognitive perceptual approach to emotions is advocated by de Sousa (1987), Roberts (2003), Goldie (2000), Tappolet (2003, 2012, 2016), and Döring (2008) among others. This theory successfully accounts both for the felt and cognitive aspects of emotions. Emotions, in this theory, are considered to be perceptions of values and as such they play an important role in morality.

This thesis approaches the analysis of the relationship between emotions, literature and ethics from the perspective of the perceptual theory of emotions and emphasizes the significance of readers' emotional responses in generating self-knowledge which in turn plays a critical role in the reflective moral transformation of the reader.

Perceptual theories have a number of strengths: First, they account for the phenomenology of emotional experience. According to perceptual theories, emotions do not necessarily have propositional contents. This being the case, they can also accommodate recalcitrant emotions: Just like in seeing the Müller-Lyer illusion, our visual perception (that the lines are of different lengths) conflicts with our judgement (that the lines are the same length), the content of our emotion conflicts with the content of our judgement in the case of recalcitrant emotions.

De Sousa (1987) argues that emotions are learned through 'paradigm scenarios'. Paradigm scenarios involve two aspects: "first, a situation type providing the characteristic objects of the specific emotion-type... and second, a set of characteristic or "normal" responses to the situation" which are determined by various biological and cultural factors (de Sousa, 1987, p. 182). We acquire these scenarios in our daily lives as young children. These scenarios are then reinforced by various cultural products we encounter. The emotional understanding we acquire

through paradigm scenarios early in life is later refined and supplemented by subsequent encounters with different paradigm scenarios.

According to cognitive perceptual theory of emotions, emotions represent evaluative properties and as value perceptions, they are closely related to morality, i.e., they can be helpful in our moral deliberations due to their epistemic functions. This means that the reasons of our moral decisions can also be derived from emotions among other cognitions. It is important to note that this emphasis on the role of emotions in morality does in no way suggest moral emotivism; that is, reducing moral judgements to emotional states. It also does not suggest that emotions should be the sole determinants of our moral decisions.

My claim is that the act of reading certain novels can transform the reader morally through the emotions aroused in the reading process, and can be thus a morally transformative experience. Thus, the two basic tenets of this thesis are: 1) emotions as perceptions of values play an indispensable role in our moral lives and 2) our imaginative engagements with fictions, and particularly novels hold the potential to transform us morally by triggering the critical reflection process through our emotions.

By reflective moral transformation, I refer to a shift in our perspective that comes about by critically reflecting on our emotions, desires, values, beliefs, and action tendencies taking into account the new perspectives and the various cases we encounter. As a result, we develop a critical awareness of our interpretive frameworks that we have endorsed reflectively or assimilated unquestioningly and realize how our point of view restricts the way the world appears to us. Consequently, we might be able to free ourselves from moral conventions or gender stereotypes that exert control over our lives which we probably have never questioned.

Reflective moral transformation entails coming to the awareness of one's beliefs and their limitations at least to some degree and the realization that there is always room for change. Reflective moral transformation does not only involve acquiring new moral beliefs or abandoning one's existing moral beliefs but also a deepening of moral understanding through a perspective shift. The individual may revise some of his moral beliefs or form a new gestalt by making new connections between the beliefs he has, from which sometimes a new moral belief may spring. My purpose is to formulate a theory that will satisfactorily explain how reading certain type of novels can serve to morally transform ourselves.

Literature, and particularly novels among all literary genres can contribute to our moral understanding as they often present us detailed descriptions of the characters' mental states, their emotional episodes and thought processes, as opposed to theater plays or short stories. Realistic novels, as they give us access to characters' psychological make-up, their inner thoughts, motivations, and emotions such as the novels written by Edith Wharton, John Steinbeck, Henry James, E. M. Forster and Joseph Conrad, are the types of novels I have in mind in developing this theory.

This study advances in five chapters. Chapter 1 explores the possibility of moral improvement through our engagements with novels, dealing also with the objections raised by various philosophers (Stolniz, 1992; Posner, 1997). In this chapter, I first outline the main objections raised against the view that literature can be cognitively valuable. Then, I proceed by developing an account of how novels can indeed have a cognitive role and play a valuable part in our moral education. Next, I address the problem raised against the role of literature in moral education posed by the concern that literary works considered immoral may have a morally corrupting influence on their readers.

Chapter 2 examines various theories of emotions and discusses the perceptual theory of emotions in particular. In the first section, I give a brief overview of the main theories of emotion. Perceptual theory, however, is dealt more extensively as I draw mainly on this theory in developing this thesis. In the second section, I explain the nature of emotions according to the perceptual theory of emotions. The third section concerns the role of emotions in morality. In this section, I discuss how emotions figure in our moral decisions in the framework of perceptual theory.

Chapter 3 tackles our imaginative and emotional engagement with fictions during the reading process and deals also with some problems concerning imagination. I start by introducing some terms that will be used in the subsequent discussions drawing on Wollheim's analysis of imagination in his *Thread of Life* (1984, pp. 62-96). Next, I examine the empathetic engagement and the mechanism of acentral imagination or what I will refer to as reactive engagement. Then, I discuss the paradox of fiction and the puzzle of imaginative resistance which are the two main problems concerning our emotional involvement with fictions.

Chapter 4 focuses on self-knowledge and failures of self-knowledge. In this chapter, I define self-knowledge as the knowledge of one's beliefs, values and assumptions that relate to one's moral outlook and practical life. Next, I discuss failures of self-knowledge which I refer to as self-ignorance and explained the ways self-ignorance can occur. Finally, I develop an account of how our emotions might play a role in providing important insights to us about ourselves.

In Chapter 5, I develop an account of how we can morally transform ourselves through our emotional responses by attentively engaging with characters and their situations in reading a novel. I first explain in what sense I use the term reflective moral transformation; then, give an account of a two-step model that proposes a way in which readers could go through a morally

transformative process triggered by an attentive emotional engagement with characters and their situations. The first phase in a reader's engagement with a novel which I call 'narrative immersion' occurs during the reading process and acts as the trigger for the reflective moral transformation of the reader. The second phase which I call the 'transformation process' involves, first, reflecting on the novel, events, characters, and their situations. The reader, based on this reflection can, then, try to arrive at a consistent interpretation of the novel. The reader can imagine, for example, what the protagonist's motive, which is not explicitly stated in the text, might be in doing a certain action. In a way, he fills in the gaps in the text. Secondly, this phase involves critically reflecting on our own values, desires, normative commitments and action tendencies in relation to the issues the novel presents. For example, readers might project themselves in a character's situation, and consider how they would act if they were in that situation. By reflecting on the issues presented in the novel and examining his currently held beliefs pertaining to these issues, a reader can clarify his beliefs, reconfigure his normative commitments and acquire a new perspective. Eventually he can emerge from his reading experience with a cultivated understanding.

I, then, illustrate this process by applying it to Edith Wharton's novel, *The Age of Innocence*. In *The Age of Innocence*, Wharton inquires into the nature of man through the central character of the novel, Archer who, as a complex character, is likely to arouse conflicting emotional responses in the reader. This work, I believe, will prove to be a good example to illustrate the reflective moral transformation process I lay out in my thesis.

At the end of the study, I hope to have successfully shown the important contribution novels can make in transforming ourselves morally through our emotional engagement with

characters in the novel by triggering a reflection process on our values, normative commitments, desires, and action tendencies.

2. Chapter 1: Literature and Moral Understanding

In this chapter, I will explore the possibility of getting moral education through our engagements with literary works. I will first outline the main epistemological objections raised against the view that literature can be cognitively valuable. Then, I will proceed by developing an account of how literary fictions, particularly novels, can indeed have a cognitive role and play a valuable part in our moral education. Next, I will discuss the problem raised against the role of literature in moral education posed by the concern that literary works considered immoral may have a morally corrupting influence on their readers.

2.1 Epistemological Objections to the Cognitive Value of Literary Works

Throughout most of history one of the functions of literature has been to inculcate individuals with moral values of the society they live in (Locatelli, 2008; Grabes, 2008). Ancient Greeks, for example, learnt about moral principles and ideals through Homer's epic poetry, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (Ahrensdorf, 2014; Croally, 2005). Later, Christian values and principles were likewise expressed and communicated through works of literature. For the most part of the middle ages, literature provided a medium for moral education to the Christian Community (King, 2008). For example, morality plays like *"The Castle of Perseverance*" and *"Everyman"* were quite popular literary works during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which intended to cultivate Christian values in the audience (Bjork, 2010; Mills, 1995; Kelley, 1972). Considering that one of the significant functions of literature has historically been the presentation of moral ideals, the view that literature can be a source of moral education seems common sense. Nevertheless, some philosophers have argued that literature does not have anything to offer us which might be cognitively valuable.

In the last two decades, the debate concerning the role of literature in moral education has been revived in the philosophy of literature. Empirical studies in the field of psychology exploring the moral effect of literature on readers have also gathered pace (Oatley, 2011; Miall, 2006). Many philosophers, exploring the relationship of literature to morality, have advocated the view that literary works bear a significant role upon moral understanding (Beardsmore, 1971; Novitz, 1987; Booth, 1988; Nussbaum, 1990; Carroll, 1998a; Palmer, 1992). Martha Nussbaum (1990), for example, argues that certain realistic novels, such as those of Henry James, that get us imaginatively involved in the fictional worlds of particular individuals in particular situations should play a more central role in contemporary moral education (p. 27). Likewise, R. W. Beardsmore (1971) claims that literature enables us to become more sensitive in our perceptions and improves our understanding by presenting us new perspectives on different situations (p. 73). Another philosopher, Noël Carroll (1998a) suggests that through literary works we can deepen our understanding of the moral knowledge we already possess (p. 149).

Nevertheless, the view that literature can be cognitively valuable has its opponents (Stolnitz, 1992; Posner, 1997; Diffey, 1995). Philosophers who deny that literature can be a source of moral education often ground their claims on the suggestion that literary works impart only self-evident or trivial truths that readers already possess. If readers already know what these literary works have to say, it does not make sense to say, they claim, that we learn from literature (Stolnitz, 1992; Posner, 1997). We do not need to read *Pride and Prejudice* to learn that prejudice may get in the way of sound judgements. This is a well-known fact about human life and can scarcely be regarded as a moral revelation. Moreover, these philosophers add that, readers, in order to understand the work properly, must already be familiar with these general

facts about life. Therefore, it is concluded, it does not make sense to say that we learn from literature.

The other epistemic objection to the cognitive value of literature suggests that the imagined stories of imaginary persons can hardly be the grounds for any knowledge claims. Literature cannot impart knowledge of the real world since its frame of reference is the world of fiction and not the real world (Diffey, 1995). Literature typically offers a picture of a particular case which cannot be counted as evidence of any general knowledge in human affairs. How, then, can *David Copperfield* communicate anything other than the particularities of the fictional situations that the fictional individual, in this case David Copperfield, finds himself in? Through literature, the writer can convey her beliefs but to count them as knowledge we need evidence, argument or analysis. Fictions do not support their claims by evidence or any kind of argument and analysis. Thus, literature cannot yield any knowledge. Even if it were conceded that knowledge could be gained from artworks, so the argument goes, this knowledge would not be distinctive to art. Any type of knowledge that literary works are said to impart is gained properly from other practices like moral philosophy or social sciences. Stolniz says: “None of its truths are peculiar to art. All are proper to some extra-artistic sphere of the great world. So considered, there are no artistic truths” (1992, p. 198).

While the first objection states that much of the knowledge that literature is commended for imparting is common sense, self-evident knowledge; the second objection claims that art does not or cannot provide knowledge, moral or otherwise; that is, whatever literary works imply or impart cannot be categorized as knowledge. However, these two arguments, albeit from different routes, converge in their conclusions: Literary works of art are not cognitively valuable.

Against these objections that reject the cognitive value of literature by reducing it to propositional knowledge, some philosophers have argued for a distinction between two ways of conceiving knowledge (Walsh, 1969; Palmer, 1992). In one sense, knowledge consists in true beliefs about the world. This is the sense for which scientific propositions are considered to be the paradigm case. The other kind of knowledge, often called 'knowledge by acquaintance' is acquired by becoming acquainted with what it is like to experience certain things or by adopting a certain point of view. Other philosophers have been more cautious to call this type of cognitive gain 'knowledge', although they have shared the view that the cognitive value of literature lies in enabling the reader to experience what it is like to be a certain person or what it is like to be in a certain situation through imagination (Putnam, 1976; Novitz, 1987). Novitz, for example, uses instead 'empathic beliefs' (p. 120) while Putnam calls it 'hypothesis 'or 'conceptual discovery' to refer to this type of cognitive gain (p. 488).

The understanding of the cognitive value of literature implied in these objections is very narrow as these objections are based on the assumption that the propositional knowledge extracted from literary works is the only way we can learn from them. Cognitive progress, however, does not only come by gathering new facts. If our cognitive goal is to acquire facts or gather factual data, we should not turn to literature. Literature does not impart definitive truths, nor it purports to. In the remainder of this section, I will argue that the cognitive value of literature merits a broader understanding than the acquisition of propositional knowledge. More specifically, I will defend the claim that the cognitive value of literature lies in offering its readers the opportunity of improving their moral understanding.

Let me start by defining what I mean by moral understanding. I define moral understanding as a capacity that involves a range of abilities: 1) the ability to recognize the

morally relevant aspects of a situation and assess their moral significance, 2) the ability to take another person's point of view in imagination in order to grasp the way he sees a situation and 3) the ability to imagine possible courses of action, their limitations and consequences. I offer below some of the ways literature, and novels in particular, can enhance our moral understanding and thus be a source of moral education.

First, novels endow us with the capacity of being more perceptive (Murdoch, 1977, p. 86; Nussbaum, 1990, p. 143). Novels present models of the human social world. (Mar & Oatley, 2008). They draw our attention to different ways of living and aspects of life which we would otherwise have stayed oblivious. By doing so they expand our awareness of the variables that could be relevant in making moral judgements (Nussbaum, 1990, pp. 78-79). Being able to detect morally significant variables in a situation is essential for making sound moral judgements. Through imaginative participation in a literary work we can enhance our sensitivity to detect the morally relevant features in particular situations in order to assess their moral significance for the situation at hand.

In good novels, there is a purposeful selection of events, characters and actions so that certain features are made salient and their significance, properties and interactions are revealed. Wharton, for example, in her novel *The Age of Innocence,* focuses her attention on a love triangle amidst the upper-class society of New York, recounts events and characters in rich detail and leaves out other factors that are not directly relevant to the related events. The novel is set in the 1870s America, a period following the American Civil war, known in US history as the reconstruction era, a period in which significant social, economic and political changes such as the recognition of civil rights to African Americans, took place (Snodgrass, 2015). Wharton, however, makes no mention about the effects of the civil war, or the civil rights movement in the

novel. She restricts her attention on the theme she has selected. She carefully constructs a narrative weaving situations, characters, and events together with the selected factors such as adherence to moral conventions or loyalty to family and friends and portrays how these factors might have a bearing on individuals with certain character traits, motives, values, and goals. One might suggest that we would be cognitively better off if we read a social history book about the upper-class society of New York in the 1870s instead of reading Wharton's *Age of Innocence*. This, I think, would be a misplaced comparison as the cognitive gain we would acquire from reading a novel is different in kind from the cognitive gain we would acquire from reading a history book. By reading a social history book about the upper-class society of 1870s New York, we can gather facts about this social class at that specific period of time, about their tastes, their cultural interests, their political views, etc. but we would not be able to draw the insights we would have drawn from the novel, such as the relevance of loyalty to family or the significance of the limitations posed by moral conventions in making sense of certain situations in our lives.

Novels are similar to thought experiments in this sense (Elgin, 2007, 2014). Thought experiments are employed in various fields of inquiry and for very diverse ends. To explain how thought experiments can serve to advance our understanding, various accounts have been proposed. For example, it has been proposed that they advance our understanding by illustrating a theory or a theoretical claim (Peacock, 2018), by pointing out shortcomings of a theory (Brown, 2011, p. 33), by providing 'hypothetical explanations' (Schlaepfer & Weber, 2018), by making certain intuitions accessible (Lenhard, 2018) and by exemplifying properties and relations (Elgin, 2007, 2014). The diversity of the types and aims of thought experiments makes it difficult to formulate a definition for it. I am using this term here, following Elgin, to refer to

"imaginative exercises designed to disclose what would happen if certain, perhaps unrealizable, conditions were met" (Elgin, 2014, p. 226).

Catherine Z. Elgin suggests that thought experiments often enhance our understanding of a phenomenon by making us realize the significance of certain features pertaining to it which, until then, might have been overlooked (2014, p. 226). Thought experiments can do this by carefully designing a setting in which selected features are exemplified, made salient and their significance is displayed. Elgin remarks:

> [A] thought experiment brings it about that certain features are exemplified and manifests why they matter in the (artificial, carefully contrived) experimental setting. It thereby affords reason to suspect that they matter elsewhere. So it indicates that we would do well to consider such factors salient in related real-life situations. That is, it intimates that we ignore such factors at our epistemic peril. (2007, p. 48)

Works of fictions can function cognitively in the same way (Elgin 2007, 2014). Novels bring to the fore carefully selected events, viewpoints and characters elaborated in a detailed way to reveal how they hang together in order to examine particular aspects of life. Novels, like thought experiments, exemplify features selected by the author and by doing so, they provide the reader with epistemic access to these features. The reader can then realize how these features may bear upon one another and play out their consequences. He can, thus, be alert to the presence of these features in assessing real-life situations. Jane Austen, for example, in examining the relations between three or four families conducts such thought experiments in her novels (Elgin, 2007, p. 50). The relations between families are presented to us in a way that excludes some factors or external conditions that are not relevant to the situation. For instance, Jane Austen does not mention how the Napoleonic wars affect the characters. Excluding this

factor in the portrayal of the characters she, thus, limits the range of factors that affect them (p. 50). She portrays the situations, events and characters in relation to the selected factors such as wealth, social rank, courtship customs to enable the reader to examine what these selected features, their properties, relations and patterns disclose. The reader might, then, come to see the relevance of certain features in the fictional situation which perhaps he has not realized before and this gives him a reason to think that these features might also be relevant in real-life situations (Elgin, 2007, p. 47). That is, the understanding we gain and the insights we draw from reading a novel can make us morally more perceptive by alerting us to the possibility that these features might be present and relevant in real life situations. Thus, although works of fiction are not literally true, they might still be cognitively valuable as they afford epistemic access to certain features by highlighting and displaying their properties, and relations with other features.

Sometimes fictions in order to guide our reflection process on a particular moral virtue like courage, honesty or integrity present characters who endorse different and sometimes polarized understandings of the virtue under exploration and encourage us to compare these different perspectives. Noël Carroll, in his article that defends the view that fictions can be thought of as thought experiments explains this function of literature by introducing a structural element that is frequently used in narrative art that he calls the ‘virtue wheel’ (Carroll, 2002, p. 12). The virtue wheel comprises different characters who display varying degrees of a chosen virtue or a package of virtues. Some characters in the novel are exemplary instantiations of this virtue, some completely lack this virtue and some possesses it to a certain degree. This structure by enabling us to compare and contrast these different instantiations helps us clarify our conception of the virtue or virtues in question. The narrative, at the same time, by bringing other factors into the picture invites us to study the connections between the virtue under scrutiny and

these factors through this structure. The reader's reflection ultimately yields moral insights on the virtue in focus. Carroll illustrates this idea by referring to Dickens's *Great Expectations* (p. 12). In *Great Expectations*, there are a number of characters who exemplify the virtues of parenting in different degrees: Pip's sister, Joe, Abel Magwitch and Miss Havisham. This allows for comparison, Carrol suggests, and enables us to refine our understanding of the virtues of parenting. Exploration and clarification of our understanding of moral virtues in this way can also be counted as a cognitive gain.

Second, novels, on account of their emphasis on particulars, remind us that the abstract moral principles are not always straightforwardly applicable (Nussbaum, 1990, p. 38; Kieran, 1996). Abstract moral principles often prove to be inadequate where the moral situation is complex. Many occasions that call for moral judgments cannot be addressed simply by appealing to general, abstract principles, for in such cases it may not be possible to find a corresponding moral principle without having to ignore some of the serious concerns involved. This is not to say that general moral principles are insignificant; nevertheless, a full-fledged conception of morality takes into account all the features pertinent in the situation and admits the irreducible complexity of moral situations. A moral agent, to make sound moral judgements, needs to aspire for what Nussbaum calls a 'perceptive equilibrium' in which "concrete perceptions 'hang beautifully together', both with one another and with the agent's general principles; an equilibrium that is always ready to reconstitute itself in response to the new" (1990, p. 183).

Third, novels, describing the emotional experiences and inner lives of characters, enable readers to perceive the events they present from a particular point of view and enhance their capacity to empathize with others (Nussbaum, 1990, 2001; Keen, 2007; Mar & Oatley, 2008). Novels elicit emotional responses from readers through the imaginative mechanisms engaged

during the reading process. The reader, through imaginative participation in the literary work, can enhance her understanding of how situations can illustrate different moral qualities from different points of view. Emotional engagement with novels enlarges one's capacity for what Susan Feagin calls ‘affective flexibility’ (Feagin, 1996, p. 238). Affective flexibility helps a reader to envisage "a wider variety of possibilities . . . what it is like to do this or that, to be a certain sort of person, or to be in a certain sort of situation" (p. 248). Affective flexibility, which is a capacity that involves being able to imagine what somebody might be feeling or what being in a situation must be like, is a valuable moral skill as it enables the reader to understand people better and interact with them more sensitively. The ability of a moral agent to imagine herself in different situations plays an important role in moral deliberation. If imagination is conceived of as role taking or empathetic engagement with different people in different scenarios, then imaginative engagement might allow one to see what living through various complex situations would be like and in so doing might play an important role in practical reasoning. Sometimes the morally significant features of a situation are made manifest from the perspective of a specific viewpoint. Being aware of such possible perspectives is crucial for making better moral judgements because such awareness allows one to understand how others may be emotionally affected by a given action (Nussbaum, 1990, pp. 78-79).

Studies in empirical psychology provide some support for the view that reading fictions increases our ability to empathize (Mar, Oatley& Peterson, 2006, 2009; Johnson, 2012; Kidd & Castano, 2013). The research conducted by Mar and his collaborators (2006) suggests that regular readers of fiction tend to do better on Baron-Cohen’s test---a test that asks subjects to infer a person’s mental state from a photograph that shows his or her eyes (Baron-Cohen, Wheelwright, Hill, Raste, Plumb, 2001)--- than regular readers of nonfiction. Similarly, Johnson

has found that reading fictions is positively associated with pro-social behaviour and empathy (2012). Another empirical study conducted by Kidd and Castano (2013) have found that reading literary fictions influences our ability to understand other people's mental states better compared to reading nonfiction, popular fiction or nothing at all. Kidd and Castano's study also indicates that reading literary works "increases self-reported empathy", "expand[s] our knowledge of others' lives, helping us recognize our similarity to them" and "reduces the strangeness of others" (p. 377).

Fourth, novels demand their readers to engage in a continuous process of moral activity calling upon them to make moral judgements about the situations and characters in the world of fiction and in doing so, they provide readers with opportunities for practice. Nussbaum drawing a parallel between aesthetic and moral activity argues for the close link between the demands of morality on a moral agent and the demands of the novel on a good reader. She suggests that just as morality requires a rich perception from moral agents, fictional characters such as those in Henry James' *The Golden Bowl* require comparably rich perception, i.e., attention to the subtleties and details of the portrayed situations, from readers (1990, p. 162). The literary form of the novel by drawing attention to subtleties in the situations and subjective experience of the characters shapes the experience of reading as the text unfolds and, in this way, develops new habits of mind in their readers like being more attentive to details and being more open to empathizing with others.

Fifth, novels offer readers the opportunity for self-examination. By simulating a fictional character, we can experience a certain situation and see for ourselves what it would be like to be in that situation; we can then reflect how we ourselves would cope if we were to find ourselves in a similar situation. In this way, fictions can contribute to self-understanding. This is important

for moral reasoning because "Hypothetically test[ing] out alternative scenarios", as Mackenzie suggests, "provides us with a perspective from which we can question our own interpretations and assess our own reasons" (2002, p. 204).

Gregory Currie who develops a theory of the imagination based on the idea of mental simulation suggests that through the simulation mechanism which allows one to experience what it would be like to do certain things or be in certain situations we cannot only predict and understand other people but also experiment with various strategies while avoiding the harmful effects of adopting them in real life (Currie, 1997, pp. 253-54).

Finally, another way that some literary works might enhance our moral understanding is by presenting us scenarios that may lead us to question and challenge the conventional moral views. By conventional moral views, I mean the set of rules, codes and prohibitions that are regarded as binding by a society or a particular cultural group so that failing to obey them causes guilt, shame or remorse in those who recognize their authority. In different societies there might be different moral codes. Individuals living in a particular society bound by a particular moral code know what they are supposed to do or not to do under these rules. However, knowing what one is supposed to do or not to do does not entail having ever contemplated these moral rules and prohibitions. Individuals who really care about being moral will not be content to simply do the right thing according to the moral code of the society they live in, but they will be concerned with doing the morally good thing whether or not the moral code of the society they live in condemns it. Some novels by offering us possible scenarios that the current belief system in our society or culture falls short on dealing with can encourage us to reflect on the moral principles of our culture hitherto accepted unquestionably. In other words, novels prompt us to reflect on what we take ourselves to know. As a result of such reflection, one might recognize the

inadequacy of the established moral principles in question or understand the reasons for their existence. Either way, it enhances moral understanding. Even if our reflection leads us to the affirmation of our previously held beliefs about life, these beliefs are never self-evident. They still need to be examined if and why they hold true.

I have defended the view that literature can be a source of moral education and offered some of the ways literature can offer its readers the opportunity of deepening their existing moral understanding. One thing to note is that the list above of the ways literature can improve our moral understanding may not be exhaustive.

There is one last point that I would like to address here. Some philosophers who attack the view that literature may be a source of moral education, suggest that people who read a lot of literary works are not better persons compared to others who do not. Richard Posner, for example, supports this claim by saying that literature professors are not more virtuous than other people. He also points out that the fact that supporters of Nazi regime were quite immersed in art and literature is enough "to be skeptical about the edifying effect of high culture in general and of literature in particular" (1997, p. 5). This argument however misrepresents the view that literature can be a source of moral education. Nussbaum replies to Posner's objection by first acknowledging the importance of early moral education one receives in childhood in becoming a moral person later in life and second, stating that the scope of the claim that reading certain novels has morally positive influence on readers does not involve the claim that these readers will act invariably in moral ways (1998, p. 352). There are many factors at work in any given individual's behavior. We sometimes know what is morally the right thing to do but do not do it or again see that something is wrong but do it anyway (what is called since Aristotle, the weakness of the will). The relationships between moral judgments and action are very complex

and it is a serious oversight to reduce this intricate relationship to a simple, straightforward one, as Posner does. Novels, however morally edifying they might be, are no magic pills that will make one act morally at all times but this does not mean that they cannot have any morally positive influence on readers. The view that literary works can influence us in a morally positive way brings with it worries that they may also have a corrupting influence on readers. I will address this issue next.

2.2. Immorality in Fictional Works

The view that literary texts can be a source of moral education implies that they also have the potential to morally harm readers. Evidently, literary works can have effects on individuals both good and bad and they can be evaluated for having the potential for creating such effects.

One might argue, for example, that some works, by getting readers to sympathize or empathize with morally vicious characters, may morally harm them. However, the moral understanding we get through engagement with such literary works is not always that automatic and straightforward as is implied in this claim. A work, in exploring certain moral issues, may indeed give us access to the morally vicious characters' viewpoints and get us to empathize with them. But, even if we are led to empathize with morally reprehensible characters, this does not necessarily mean that such works will morally harm us. For example, Richard Wright's novel *Native Son* tells the story of Bigger Thomas, a black young man living in a poor area in Chicago in the 1930s who murders two women, one of whom is his girlfriend. In reading the novel we see how things are seen through the eyes of Bigger Thomas and we are often led to empathize with him but the empathy we have with Thomas serves us to recognize the problems of the society, particularly racial oppression and poverty and their contribution in producing his immoral deeds.

That is, in presenting the brutality, aggression and immorality of his hero and giving us access to his viewpoint, the novel offers a social critique (Bracher, 2013, p. 248).

Another example might be Nabokov's *Lolita* which stirred much controversy with its scandalous subject and hero Humbert Humbert, a pedophile who marries a woman just to gain sexual access to her twelve-year-old daughter. Humbert, being obsessed with the girl, plans to kill the mother but fails. However, his plan gets fulfilled by a car accident just after the mother learns about his real intentions and is about to expose his pedophilia. After her mother's death, Humbert becomes Lolita's legal guardian. They travel around the country for two years and then settle in a small town. Humbert, all the while, abuses her sexually and psychologically.

There might be a range of different responses to the work. One might argue that *Lolita* although engages us with the feelings of a morally reprehensible character, does not advocate or endorse the immorality of Humbert. Surely, understanding other people's viewpoints does not mean endorsing their viewpoints. We might be able to see how the world appears to a certain individual but this does not entail adopting his values and beliefs.

Nabokov himself defends his book against the claims of immorality by appealing to its aesthetic merits:

> There are gentle souls who would pronounce Lolita meaningless because it does not teach them anything. I am neither a reader nor a writer of didactic fiction, and, despite John Ray's assertion, *Lolita* has no moral in tow. For me a work of fiction exists only insofar as it affords me what I shall bluntly call aesthetic bliss, that is a sense of being somehow, somewhere, connected with other states of being where art (curiosity, tenderness, kindness, ecstasy) is the norm. (2006, pp. 314-15)

Contrary to Nabokov however, a number of literary critics have underlined the moral importance of his novel suggesting that reading this novel invites the reader to explore a range of moral issues. The literary critic, Colin McGinn, remarks, for example:

> The plain fact is that *Lolita* does teach us many things about morality—as stories of human turpitude generally do. That is, it engages our moral sensibility and invites our moral judgement, and we emerge from reading it with a better understanding of human sin and its consequences. (1999, pp. 38-39)

Another literary critic, Michael Wood says: "one of the most important things Nabokov's novel does is help us understand better just what an offense against a child is, and understand this morally, not merely technically" (Wood, 2003, p. 193). It has also been proposed that reading *Lolita* raises our curiosity about "how it would be possible for a highly sensitive, reflective, refined and imaginative individual—someone graced with taste, cultivation, and a finely tuned artistic sensitivity—to behave so callously and so cruelly toward someone he loves, or pretends to". (de la Durantaye, 2016, p. 185)

Nevertheless, it should also be acknowledged that encouraging the reader to imagine a child in a sexually provocative way might indeed pose a moral danger for some readers, particularly if they repeatedly return to certain passages in the book (Mullin, 2004, p. 253). On the other hand, some readers might be reluctant to even try to see the world from a viewpoint that they find disturbing and therefore resist reading the book (Moran, 1994, p. 25). McGinn identifies three types of readers and summarizes possible reactions to *Lolita*:

> The naive reader of *Lolita* sees only the barebones of the pedophilic plot and deplores what he reads; the sophisticated reader puts aside all moral concerns and simply enjoys the beauty of the work; but the astute reader (as he is occasionally

addressed in the book) sees that this is a working which morality and art are intermingled in original and challenging ways. (1999, p. 39)

McGinn's remark points to one of the prominent issues in contemporary aesthetics which is whether the moral and aesthetic assessments of artworks are easily separable. There are two separate questions embedded in this issue: First, should we consider the moral merits or defects exhibited by an artwork in evaluating its aesthetic value? Second, how should we react to an aesthetically beautiful work which invites us to find a morally evil view attractive? There has been a heated debate among philosophers on the first question (Anderson & Dean, 1998; Gaut, 1998; Dickie, 2005; Carroll, 1998; Kieran, 2001, 2006; Jacobson, 1997). My focus here, however, is on the second question as my concern in this section is the moral effects of literary works rather than their aesthetic evaluation.

Leni Riefenstahl's film *Triumph of the Will* is perhaps the most discussed work of art in thinking about examining our moral and aesthetic attitudes to immoral works (Kieran, 1996; Devereux, 1998; Dickie, 2005; Carroll, 2012; Gaut, 2013). *Triumph of the Will* is a documentary of the 1934 Nuremberg rally of the National Socialist Workers' party (Welch, 1983). This film offers a puzzling case as it promotes a moral evil, Nazi ideology, through its masterful implementation of an array of techniques and stylistic devices. *Triumph of the Will* is often judged by critics as an aesthetically excellent work (Manilla, 1965; Barman, 1975; Liebman, 2002; Kelman, 2003). Critics draw our attention to the sophisticated and innovative techniques used in the *Triumph of the Will* and praise Riefenstahl's skills in using cinematic techniques (Kelman, 2003; Barman, 1975).

While *Triumph of the Will* is commonly acknowledged for its aesthetic success, it is also commonly condemned for the depravity of its moral content that depicts National Socialism as

something attractive and solicits admiration from its audience (Devereux,1998; Barman, 1975). What makes this film so disturbing, as Mary Devereux puts it, is "its conjunction of beauty and evil" (1998, p. 236). That the film is both beautiful and evil at the same time offers a puzzling case in terms of our reactions to it. How should we react to this film? Is it wrong to enjoy and be moved by this film?

As a way to deal with our responses to this film, one might appeal to Edward Bullough's concept of 'psychical distance' (1977). Bullough developed this concept in his seminal essay titled *Psychical Distance as a Factor in Art and an Aesthetic Principle* (1977). The notion of 'psychical distance' incorporates emotional involvement in a work of art while having the awareness that the work is a cultural artifact. To explain the concept of 'psychical distance' Bullough makes an analogy (p. 759). He asks us to imagine a fog at sea. The fog would produce an unpleasant experience for most people as it may lead to dangerous situations. Despite the dangers however, Bullough says, the fog can be a source of aesthetic enjoyment that transforms our experience if we can achieve a psychical distance from it. This distance is achieved by dissociating the fog from "its danger and practical unpleasantness" and putting it "out of gear with our practical, actual self" (p. 759).

> The distance which is brought about by our awareness that the events are fictional would make an essential difference to the way we respond to them. The degree of the psychical distance varies both by "the nature of the object" and "the individual's capacity for maintaining a greater or lesser degree" (p. 763). Bullough remarks that the "whole censorship problem….may be said to hinge upon Distance; if every member of the public could be trusted to keep it, there would be no sense whatever in the existence of a censor of plays". (p. 766)

However, appealing to psychical distance, bracketing a work's moral content and focusing only on its aesthetic features does not seem to be an adequate solution to deal with a work that might indeed be potentially corrupting. Because immoral works might indeed have detrimental effects on the readers lacking or not using their meta-affective skills and the ability to think critically in engaging with fictional works.

One might suggest, alternatively, that in engaging with a work of art our moral and aesthetic judgements might diverge, which means that we can appreciate the work as art but still morally condemn it. However, it is not always easy and possible to separate the aesthetic and moral qualities of a work. Form and content are often intertwined in a work of art. In bracketing the moral content of a work to appreciate the work aesthetically, we might be bracketing those features that make it the work it is (Devereux, 1998, p. 243). For example, in the *Triumph of The Will*, it is the film's aesthetic features that enact its moral content; that is, the form and the moral content are inextricably linked. The *Triumph of the Will* employs various techniques strategically and deliberately in order to evoke powerful emotions in its audience in favor of the ideology it promotes. Editing techniques, sound design, use of light and contrast, innovative camera movements, framings are all used to promote the Nazi Party. Thomas Redwood's comments on the opening scene might help to illustrate this point:

> In the opening sequence, to take just one example, Riefenstahl presents a tour de force in deliberate design and construction of a scene for propaganda effect. It begins in the clouds as the introductory titles declare: '19 months after the beginning of the German rebirth, Adolf Hitler flew again to Nuremberg to review the columns of his faithful followers.' We notice in these early shots that Hitler is not shown. Rather, a series of aerial shots of Nuremberg, crosscut with shots of a plane, present a point of view from the clouds, one

generally associated with a divine perspective. The spectator is manipulated into associating the arrival of Hitler with nothing less than the graceful and benevolent Christian God. It is Hitler, this scene suggests, who has brought the 'resurrection' of Germany. (Redwood, 2019, p. 47)

Another critic, Barman makes the same point:

The film is a masterful blend of the four basic elements of cinema -- light, darkness, sound, and silence--but it is not just an achievement in cinematic form, for it has other essential elements--thematic, psychological, mythological, narrative, and visual interest--and it is in the working of these elements that Riefenstahl transcends the limitations of the documentary film and the propaganda film genres. Riefenstahl's art is to perceive the essence of a real situation and to transfer the form, content, and meaning of that essential moment to the screen. In short, she is a poet. Through her handling of myth, she extends the meaning of the immediate moment by enriching its cultural significance. (p. 70)

The *Triumph of the Will* is purposefully designed to manipulate its audience psychologically and emotionally into acceptance of Nazi ideology and Hitler. It might in fact be all the more dangerous because of its aesthetic features since, in depicting a moral evil as something noble, its aesthetic beauty might be just the thing that is responsible for its power to attract some audiences to Nazism.

In appreciating the beauty of works that solicit approval and admiration for their morally repugnant views, we might also be opening ourselves to the temptations of such views (Devereux, 1998, p. 249). Therefore, it would be right to acknowledge that some works, by making their morally repugnant views appear attractive and persuasive, might potentially corrupt their audiences.

3. Chapter 2: Emotions

In this chapter my focus will be on emotions. Before proceeding to deal with emotions and imagination in the next chapter, it will be helpful first to understand how the cognitive perceptual theory that I will draw on in developing this thesis views emotions. In the first section, I will examine various theories of emotions under two main headings: Non-cognitive and cognitive theories. My aim here is to give an overview of the main theories rather than explain them in detail. However, the cognitive perceptual theory will be assigned more space as this theory will be put to work in developing the main ideas. In the second section, I will draw some distinctions between emotions and other affective phenomena. The third section will be about the role of emotions in practical reasoning according to the perceptual theory. [1]

3.1. Theories of Emotions

There are competing theories that propose different ways of understanding emotions. On the one hand, there are theories which emphasize the felt aspect of emotions and on the other, there are those that highlight the cognitive aspect of emotions. In this section, I will explore the major accounts of emotion under two main headings. I will first discuss 'non-cognitive theories' and then proceed to 'cognitive theories'.

3.1.1. Non-cognitive theories

Non-cognitive theories hold that emotions consist in states which are characterized by the way they feel. There are different versions of this theory developed by various philosophers. One of the earliest versions was developed by William James. Around the same time James put forward his theory, a very similar view was presented independently by the Danish Philosopher Carl Lange. In this theory, which is now commonly called the 'James-Lange theory of emotion',

[1] In the context of this discussion 'emotions' refer to 'occurrent emotions', i.e., emotions which have a limited duration, as opposed to dispositional emotions which refer to relatively stable and long-lasting states.

an emotion is defined as the feeling of physiological changes, mainly of a visceral nature such as fluttering of the heart, trembling of limbs, and rapid breathing that are triggered by our perception of a certain external object. James, in his essay on emotions (1884) states that "the bodily changes follow directly the PERCEPTION [author's own emphasis] of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur IS [author's own emphasis] the emotion" (pp. 189-90). For James, emotions consist in the individual's feeling of his bodily responses that follow from the perception of an external object in his environment. The important thing to notice here is that according to James, "the perception of the exciting fact", i.e., the external object, is not part of the emotion. According to this theory, then, it is not that we tremble because we are frightened; on the contrary, we are frightened because we tremble. This theory maintains that different types of emotions can be distinguished by feelings of different bodily states. James remarks that, "no shade of emotion, however slight, should be without a bodily reverberation as unique, when taken in its totality, as is the mental mood itself" (p. 192). He defends his claim that an emotion is an individual's perception of physiological changes in his body by arguing that if we were to remove all the physiological changes an emotion, such as fear, involves from the emotion itself, the only thing left would be the intellectual perception of danger without actually feeling fear.

This argument seems plausible initially, but it has its weaknesses. It succeeds in establishing that physiological changes are a significant aspect of emotions. Nevertheless, it fails to persuade us that an emotion consists only in the feeling of the bodily changes. In other words, the claim that the perception of the physiological changes *is* the emotion itself does not seem convincing. To see what is missing from James's account, it will suffice to reverse his argument: If we try to imagine having the physiological changes characteristic of fear but without the

perception of danger, we will realize that the bodily changes, for example, trembling and rapid breathing do not amount to the emotion of fear. Without the cognition of danger, these physiological changes might as well be considered as symptoms of an illness. Moreover, bodily feelings are not always sufficient to identify the emotion type; particularly, in cases where different emotions have the same bodily feelings. Experimental studies made by Cannon (1984) and also Schahter and Singer (1962) provides evidence for the claim that individuals having different emotions may experience the same bodily feelings. Cannon found that the same bodily changes such as the acceleration of the heart rate, widening of pupils, sweating and increase of blood sugar take place in different emotional states like fear and anger (pp. 146-147). The conclusion proposed is that different types of emotions cannot be distinguished simply on the basis of bodily feelings. This suggests that something essential to emotions is missing from the account that equates emotions with feelings of bodily changes.

Another experiment done by Schahter and Singer (1962) confirmed the conclusion of Cannon's experiment.[2] In the experiment conducted by Schahter and Singer, participants were told that the purpose of the experiment was to test the effects of a new medicine on vision but they were actually injected with epinephrine, a medication that stimulates the sympathetic nervous system. Later, some of the participants were placed in a room with an actor who behaved angrily, while others were placed in a room with another actor who acted euphorically. It was found that the subjects interpreted the arousal they experienced as a result of the injected epinephrine either as anger or euphoria depending on the cues they took from the actors and the situations they found themselves in. This experiment, in addition to showing that people can assign different emotions to the same physiological state depending on their situations,

[2] See de Sousa's discussion (1987. p. 54-55)

confirmed that physiological states cannot reliably be used to distinguish between emotions. If two different emotions have the same bodily feelings as in the experiments, then James' theory will fail to explain how one emotion can be distinguished from the other. These experiments, however, do not suffice to refute James' theory. Empirical research might reveal that there is more to the physiology of emotions than we currently know. Nevertheless, it still remains unclear whether physiological changes in different emotion states are specific enough to distinguish one emotion from the other on the basis of these bodily feelings.

Further research has shown later, however, that there are emotional networks located in the subcortical regions of the brains of all mammalians and they can indeed be distinguished by stimulating specific regions of the brain electrically and chemically (Panksepp, 1998). Panksepp found that whenever specific subcortical regions of the brain are electrically stimulated, characteristic emotional experiences accompany them. Panksepp found seven networks of emotion in the brain: seeking, rage, fear, lust, care, panic/grief, and play. However, these emotional systems are only those crucial for survival; their number is limited and thus they do not seem adequate to identify and categorize the whole gamut of emotions that human beings are capable of experiencing.

Perhaps a more important criticism of this theory is that it fails to explain the world-directedness of an emotional experience (Goldie, 2009, p. 233). James's account cannot account for the crucial difference between an emotion state, say disgust, in which one feels particular bodily changes and the state of sickness in which one feels the same bodily feelings. There is, however, a significant difference between the emotion state and the state of sickness. The emotion of disgust is directed at a certain object. We do not experience the disgust as directed at

our own bodily state. In James' account however, "the perception of the exciting fact" is the triggering factor and not part of the emotion, as pointed out above.

Different versions of non-cognitive theories have also been developed by contemporary philosophers (Prinz, 2004; Robinson, 2005). Jesse Prinz, for example, has recently developed a new theory of emotions expanding upon James' views (2004).[3] In Prinz's theory, as in that of James', emotions are perceptions of bodily changes. Prinz expresses clearly, for example, that "emotional consciousness is consciousness of changes in bodily states" (2004, p. 206). Both for James and Prinz an emotion is the result of a non-cognitive process. This means that the emotion of fear that occurs, for example, following the perception of a snake does not involve the cognitive evaluation that the snake is dangerous. Unlike James however, Prinz argues that emotions do not only register bodily changes; but they also represent their formal objects by registering bodily changes. The formal object of fear, for example, is being dangerous (p. 63). Prinz then develops this idea of formal objects by employing Richard Lazarus's concept of 'core relational themes' (Lazarus, 1991). Prinz describes the core relational theme (formal objects) of other emotions by drawing on Lazarus' list. For example, the core relational theme of envy is "wanting what someone else has," or the core relational theme for shame is "having failed to live up to an ego-ideal" (p. 16). For Prinz, emotions can be different from each other by virtue of what they represent although they involve indistinguishable perceptions of bodily changes (p. 69). According to Prinz, the bodily changes that occur in response to the triggering factor, say the perception of a snake, can be explained as an adaptation. Our bodies respond in a particular

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[3] Both James' and Prinz's theories are non-cognitive theories. It is important to note that these theories which are sometimes referred to as ' perceptual theories' are different from the perceptual theory I draw on in this thesis such as Tappolet's (2016), de Sousa's (1987) and Goldie's (2000) since the latter group of theories are cognitive in nature in contrast to the former which are non-cognitive. When I refer to the perceptual theory, it should be taken to refer to the cognitive perceptual theory.

way following the perception of a snake but fear is not just the perception of "a racing heart and…other physiological changes", it also represents danger insofar as it has the function of indicating it (p. 69). Briefly put, in having an emotion we directly perceive the bodily changes and indirectly perceive the formal objects since bodily changes represent formal objects. One important thing to note is that in Prinz's account cognitions are prior conditions, not constituent parts of emotions (p. 98). That is to say the perception of a snake (snake being the object of emotion) is not the part of the emotion of fear. Prinz explains:

> If I am sad about the death of a child, I have one mental representation that corresponds to the child's death and another, my sadness, that corresponds to there having been a loss … Together, we can think of these as constituting a complex representation that means the child's death has been a loss to me. We might think of the compound as meaning something like: a child has died, and what a loss! (pp. 62-3)

In Prinz's account the perception of the object of emotion (the death of a child in Prinz's example above) is not part of the emotion, it is prior to the emotion. That is to say, the perception of the object of an emotion is a triggering factor or cause of the emotion. However, can we really separate ''the perception of the exciting fact'' to use James' words, from the emotion itself? If we do, we face the risk of failing to bring the world-directedness of emotions into the picture (Goldie, 2009, p. 233). Goldie, criticizing the separation of the perception of the object of the emotion (the death of the child) and the emotion (sadness) in Prinz's account, argues that the perception (of the death of a child) cannot be "distinct from the emotion itself, or a mere cause or 'trigger' of the emotion, but is inextricably bound up with the emotional experience and the

emotional response" because, he explains, "the way I take in the news of his death in perception has perceptual content that it would not have if I did not feel this grief " (Goldie, 2009, p. 236).

Another non-cognitive theory is the theory developed by Jenefer Robinson (2005). In Robinson's theory an emotion is not a state but a process. The process begins as an "affective" noncognitive appraisal which occurs without any conscious deliberation. Automatic affective appraisals cause physiological responses which are then followed by cognitive monitoring. The affective appraisal which causes the physiological responses in the emotion process functions to draw our attention by bodily means to the element that is of significance to us. Cognitive appraisal, then monitors the situation. Robinson writes:

> The emotional response is an automatic and immediate response that initiates motor and autonomic activity and prepares us for possible action. After the initial response cognition kicks in and corroborates or modifies our affective appraisal. And later still we may label our state with an emotion word from our folk psychology in an attempt to understand what has happened to us. The whole series of events is a process and each element in the process feeds back into and affects is development. (p. 310)

Robinson gives an example in discussing the reasons why one person might respond emotionally to something while another does not: She says: "two people may be entertaining the same thought at the same time—'she's pinching my pencil'—but only one makes the further noncognitive appraisal 'This is bad.'" (p. 96). So according to Robinson, the perception "she is pinching my pencil" is the same regardless of whether the individual experiences an emotion about the pencil-pinching. That is, in the case of the person who has an emotion, since his perception of the situation that triggers the emotion process is the same with that of the person

who does not have an emotion, all the emotionality is "loaded into the noncognitive affective appraisal and the bodily feelings" (Goldie, 2009, p. 236). Just like Prinz does, Robinson separates the cognition from the emotion itself and by doing so she, too, fails to account for the world-directedness of emotions. Goldie explains:

> Consider our experience of something dangerous. The issue is whether two people who both see the situation as dangerous see it in the same way, when one person is fearful and the other is not. For Robinson, and for Prinz too, perception (and cognition generally) is prior to, and not part of, emotional experience, so the two people take in the world in perception in just the same way. I would say that the two people take in the world perceptually in different ways, and that part of what it is to be fearful is to take in the world in a way such that the emotionality of the experience is revealed *in the way we take in the world in perception*, in the perceptual content, and not just in the emotional response. (Goldie, 2009, p. 236)

The most serious criticism directed against non-cognitive theories is, then, that in setting the perception of the object of an emotion apart from the emotion itself, non-cognitive theories fail to take into account the world-directedness of emotions.

Another group of theories developed to explain emotions are cognitive theories. These theories will be examined in the next section.

3.1.2. Cognitive theories

Cognitive theories regard cognitions as the essence of an emotion. There are many different accounts of emotions that can be classified as cognitive. I will examine cognitive theories here under two subsections: a) Judgement theory, and b) Perceptual theory.

a. Judgement Theory. In one of the earlier versions of this type of theory, emotions are identified with judgements or beliefs. So, for instance, the emotion of anger that I have is a judgement that someone has wronged me. Robert Solomon (1976) and Martha Nussbaum (2003) are among the philosophers who hold this view. Solomon, for example says:

> [M]y embarrassment is my judgement to the effect that I am in an exceedingly awkward situation. My shame is my judgement to the effect that I am responsible for an untoward situation or incident. My sadness, my sorrow, and my grief are judgements of various severity to the effect that I have suffered a loss. (p. 187)

It seems plausible to think that emotions must at least involve some kind of judgement or belief. Being angry seems to entail the judgement or the belief that someone has wronged me. This idea can be confirmed by the fact that a change in my judgement will typically cause my emotion to change or vanish: I cannot continue to be angry with someone, if I find out that she did not, in fact, do anything to wrong me.[4]

The important point here is that the beliefs associated with particular emotions do not neutrally apprehend the world but apprehend it evaluatively. Accordingly, each emotion type is identified with a belief that involves an evaluative property. For instance, the emotion of sadness is defined by the belief that there has been a significant loss for the individual feeling the sadness; or fear is identified with the belief that there is an impending danger to one's life or well-being. Emotions inform an individual of the significance of a situation or an object. They reveal a value-laden world to the individual. One obvious advantage of this theory, then, is that

[4] This is not the case with recalcitrant emotions which are the emotions that stay the same even if the judgements associated with them change. The case of recalcitrant emotions, as I will explain below is the major challenge to judgement theories.

emotions can be classified easily; that is, different emotions are distinguished from one another by virtue of a belief or judgement that involves a specific evaluative property.

A common objection against this line of cognitive theory is that one can make a judgement without having the corresponding emotion. For example, one can judge that one is "in an exceedingly awkward situation" without actually feeling embarrassed. Then, since we can make judgements without having the corresponding emotion, it is not right to identify judgements with emotions.

The most important shortcoming of this theory perhaps is that it does not fare well in accounting for the fact that emotions are felt states. An essential characteristic of any emotion is that it is felt. This theory oversimplifies emotions by reducing them to judgements and ignoring the felt aspect of emotions, such as the physiological changes that an emotion involves. Nussbaum, for instance, rejects the view that there are essential non-cognitive elements to emotion. So far as feelings are concerned, she thinks "the plasticity and variability of people . . . prevents us from plugging the feeling into the definition as an absolutely necessary element" (2003, p. 60). However, there is surely more to emotions than just beliefs or judgements.

Other philosophers have proposed more sophisticated versions by introducing elements other than judgements into their analyses. William Lyons, for example, argues that an emotion involves both judgement and physiological change (1980). Lyons defines emotion as "a physiologically abnormal state caused by the subject of that state's evaluation of his or her situation" (p. 58). On his view although emotions are not identified with judgements, they are accepted to be caused by judgements.

Another account of emotions that has been proposed views emotions as complexes of beliefs, desires, and feelings (Oakley, 1992). These views typically isolate emotional feelings

from intentional judgements or belief-desire pairs and regard feelings involved in an emotion as awareness of bodily changes in experiencing an emotion. Peter Goldie (2002), who labels the accounts that regard emotions as consisting in feelingless states--such as beliefs and desires--plus some psychological or physiological element--such as feelings--as ‘add-on theories’ (2002, p. 40), criticizes them on the grounds that such theories in separating the intentionality of the emotions from their phenomenology do not do justice to emotions (pp. 59-60). He suggests, rightly I think, that the emotions’ intentionality cannot be understood independently of their phenomenological character as their intentionality must necessarily be felt. To explain this idea, Goldie discusses a thought experiment about an ice scientist, Irene, who knows everything about ice and its dangers, and also about the psychology of emotions. With this knowledge, she can form beliefs like the beliefs that the ice might crack, and that ice is dangerous, and also desires such as the desire to stay away from ice-surfaces. However, Irene, having never felt fear in her life is “ice-cool”. Then one day Irene falls violently on the ice and feels fear for the first time. Now, with this new experience, Goldie suggests, Irene is capable of perceiving the ice in a new way (Goldie, 2009, p. 234). The important point here is that to conceive Irene’s new way of perceiving the ice as the belief that ice is dangerous plus feelings added to this belief is not faithful to the phenomenology of the emotions. Her new way of perceiving the ice is different from her old way of perceiving it. Although the belief stays the same (ice is dangerous), her emotional experience is not decomposable into belief and feelings just like one’s seeing the duck in the duck-rabbit picture for the first time is not decomposable “into the old way of seeing the picture as rabbit, plus something added” (Goldie, p. 234). Now, the perceptual content of Irene’s experience of the ice is different from it was before. That is to say, Irene’s new perception of the ice is an indivisible whole.

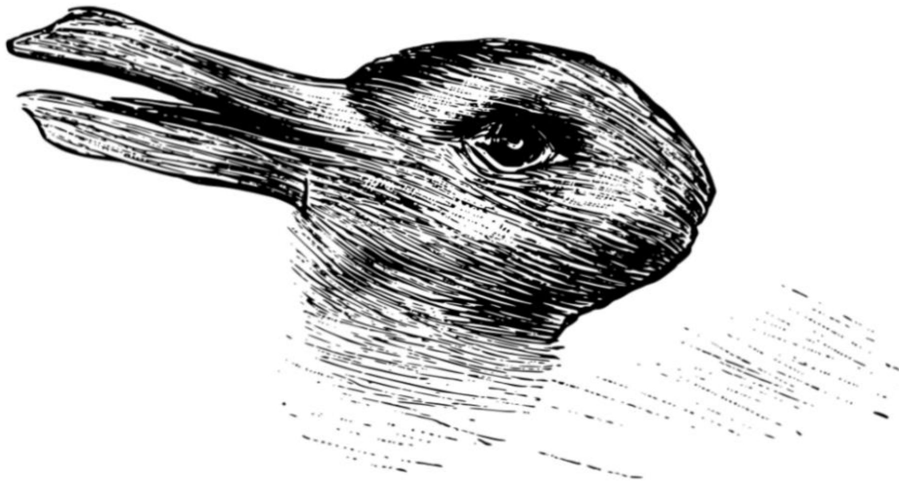

Fig. 1 Duck-Rabbit Illusion[5]

To the credit of the forms of judgement theory mentioned above, in most cases it is true that an emotion involves a relevant belief. For instance, fear usually involves a belief about imminent danger to one's life or well-being. However, there are occasions in which this assumption does not hold. For example, I might be afraid of a spider as I believe it can harm me. If I am then shown that it is perfectly harmless, my fear might still persist despite the fact that the belief that it can harm me no longer has its hold on me. The emotion does not change although the belief has changed. The emotion, staying the same, conflicts then with the new belief I have acquired. Once I drop the belief that the spider can harm me and acquire the new belief that it is perfectly harmless, it is supposed that my fear will be gone; but it does not. The problem that in some cases emotions may be recalcitrant has posed serious problems for theories that take belief or judgement as the essence of an emotion. According to such theories since an emotion involves a corresponding belief, once I get rid of my belief that it is dangerous, I should no more feel

[5] (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kaninchen_und_Ente.svg), "Kaninchen und Ente", marked as public domain, more details on Wikimedia Commons: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Template:PD-1923

frightened. Then why does my fear still persist despite the newly acquired belief that the spider is totally harmless? How can this theory explain cases where there is an obvious conflict between the emotion and the judgement?

One explanation that can be given for this kind of situation might be self-deception. It may be that I am deceiving myself in saying that I now believe that the spider is harmless. The judgement theory can explain such cases easily: The emotion corresponds to the genuine belief rather than the belief that I claim to be holding. However, recalcitrant emotions are not meant to describe such cases. Let us suppose that I still feel fear, although I genuinely believe that the spider is harmless and there is no self-deception involved. In this case, the emotion is recalcitrant. My emotion of fear conflicts with my new belief that the spider is harmless. Judgement theory, as it maintains that a belief or an evaluative judgement is a constituent part of an emotion, fails to explain how it is possible for an emotion to conflict with the belief held because then one would have to ascribe conflicting beliefs to the individual experiencing the emotion. In the above case for example, we would have to say that the person believes that the spider is fearsome, while also believing that it is not (Greenspan, 1988, p. 17).

To solve the problem of recalcitrant emotions weaker versions of the judgement theory have been developed. It has been suggested that an individual can have an emotion without being committed to a belief; he can rather entertain a thought or hold a proposition without assenting to it (Greenspan, 1988, pp. 17-20). So, one does not have to believe that the spider is dangerous to feel fear but just to entertain the thought of its dangerousness. However, even this weaker version of the judgement theory faces difficulties. Both the stronger and the weaker versions of judgement theory imply that an individual in order to have an emotion must have the cognitive capacity to hold beliefs, entertain thoughts and to understand concepts that take part in them.

Nevertheless, animals and infants that lack such cognitive capacity have emotions, too. Then, it is clear that judgement theories fail to cover the emotions of animals and infants who have not developed the cognitive capacity to use language (Deigh, 1994, p. 847).

However, recalcitrant emotions and the lack of capacity to use language do not constitute a problem for cognitive theories which hold that the cognition involved in an emotion need not be a belief or a judgement. Perceptual theory which will be examined below responds to these problems by suggesting that the cognition involved in an emotion might be non-propositional and also non-conceptual in content.

b. Perceptual Theory. The accounts examined above offer a partial explanation of emotions as they focus on a particular aspect of an emotion. Non-cognitive theories analyze an emotion in terms of its phenomenology; judgement theory, on the other hand, focuses on its intentionality. Although there is still much ground to be covered in explaining emotions, these accounts provide us with many useful insights. The perceptual theory of emotions draws on these insights addressing at the same time the shortcomings of these accounts as I will discuss below. Among the philosophers who have developed perceptual theories are Rorty (1978), de Sousa (1987), Roberts (2003), Döring (2008, 2014) and Tappolet (2003, 2016).

According to the perceptual theory, emotions are perceptions of evaluative properties. In other words, emotions represent their object as having particular evaluative properties. So, for example, fear consists in having the perception of something as fearsome. However, in contrast to the judgment theory where the content of an emotion is considered to be conceptual, the perceptual theory holds that the content of an emotion is non-conceptual. That is, according to the perceptual theory emotions have cognitive content but the cognitive content of an emotion need not be propositional or conceptual. One reason to think that the content of emotions need

not have propositional content and do not require concepts is that many emotions, like fear, can be experienced by beings that lack language such as animals and newborn infants. In the discussion regarding the judgement theory, it was also mentioned that this was an objection raised against the judgement theory (Deigh, 1994).

The view that emotions represent their object non-conceptually implies first that emotions need not have propositional contents. It also implies that experiencing an emotion does not require the cognitive capacity to use concepts (Tappolet, 2016, p. 16). Emotions as non-conceptual representations of evaluative properties resemble sensory perceptions in this sense.[6] The resemblance might be better explained by an example. Suppose you see a round, red apple on your desk. Having a visual experience of a round, red apple does not entail having the concepts ‘roundness’ and ‘redness’. Your sensory experience of a round, red apple and your judgment that the same apple is round and red both represent the apple and its properties, but in different ways. My sensory experience, i.e., the vision of the apple is nonconceptual, while my judgment is conceptual and thus entails that I possess the ‘redness’ and’ ‘roundness’ concepts. Emotions contrast with judgements in the same way that visual perceptions contrast with judgements. One does not need to possess the concept of ‘fearsome’ to experience the emotion of fear as apparent also from the case of infants and nonhuman animals.

The analogy between sensory perceptions and emotions will be examined in further detail in the next section.

i) Analogy with Sensory Perceptions. Philosophers who defend perceptual theories construe emotions on the model of sensory perceptions drawing attention to the similarities between them. It is important to note that the argument for the perceptual theory that likens

[6] For the distinction between conceptual and non-conceptual representational states see Evans, 1982; Peacocke, 1989; Heck, 2000.

emotions to sensory perceptions is an argument from analogy. There are similarities as well as dissimilarities between these two categories as frequently pointed out by the philosophers defending the perceptual theory (de Sousa, 1987, pp. 149-150; Tappolet, 2016, pp. 24-25).

The resemblance between emotions and sensory perceptions can be acknowledged once we see the important features they have in common. First, sensory perceptions and emotions are both characterized by their phenomenal properties (Tappolet, 2016, p. 19). In seeing a red circle or becoming angry I am the subject of a mental state with a distinctive character. There is something it is like to undergo the experience of seeing a red circle or becoming extremely angry. In this sense both the sensory perception and the emotion are irreducible to judgements. Having the visual experience of seeing a red circle or experiencing the emotion of anger both have distinctive feels that the corresponding judgements cannot capture.

Second, both emotions and sensory perceptions are automatic: they are not produced by the will of the person, they arise automatically as responses to the environment (Tappolet, 2016, pp. 19-20). If I see a snake, a fear response will be automatically triggered. I cannot see the red tomato in front me as purple if I wanted to. In the same way, I cannot decide to feel anger or disgust. This is not to say that we have no control over emotions. Emotions can be regulated to a certain extent. In discussing the similarities between emotions and sensory perceptions, we must not lose sight of the fact that the perceptual model is an argument from analogy. The appeal to sensory perception should not be taken as literal. As I will explain below, there are dissimilarities between sensory perceptions and emotions as well as similarities. Nevertheless, the analogy with sensory perceptions proves to be beneficial in explaining emotions as they have certain important characteristics in common.

A third property that emotions and sensory perceptions share is that they both have mind-to-world direction of fit which means that they aim to represent how things are in the world (Roberts, 2003 p. 147; Tappolet, 2016, p. 20).[7] John Searle distinguishes the intentionality of desires from that of perceptions (and beliefs) in terms of their 'direction of fit' (1983).[8] Desires have a world-to-mind direction of fit. This means that the world has to change in order to fit what is desired. For example, my desire for a degree in psychology is satisfied only if I acquire this degree. So, here, the world conforms to my mental state. Perceptions, on the other hand have a mind-to-world direction of fit; that is, the mind has to try to match the world. Both our sensory perceptions and emotions are usually caused by events in the world. For example, my perception of a green car before me is caused by the green car before me. In this case, my mental state conforms to the world. Emotions too, like sensory perceptions, have a mind-to-world direction of fit. They both are responses to how things are in the world. Thus, If I see a rattlesnake crawling towards me, a fear response will be triggered again only if I fear snakes.

Fourth, both emotions and sensory perceptions can be assessed in terms of their fittingness to the world (Tappolet, 2016, p. 20). In emotions, as in sense perceptions, properties are attributed to the world which the world may have or may not have. We judge that our sense perceptions are correct if the properties we attribute to the world conform to the properties the world actually has. We also judge emotions to be appropriate or inappropriate in terms of how they fit the world, i.e., their objects. Emotions, just like sensory experiences then, can succeed in fitting the world, or fail to fit it.

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[7] Tappolet makes the important point that mind-to-world fittingness or in her terms "world-guidedness" excludes the cases when we have an emotion on imagining something such as when we feel fear on imagining something frightening (2012).

[8] The notion of "direction of fit" goes back to Elizabeth Anscombe (1963) although she did not use the term "direction of fit".

Fifth, both emotions and sensory perceptions can conflict with judgements.[9] It was mentioned above that the judgement theory cannot explain emotions that contradict with one's beliefs, which are called recalcitrant emotions.[10] To remind again, if emotions were constituted by evaluative judgements or beliefs, then in the case of recalcitrant emotions, one would have to ascribe contradictory judgments to the individual experiencing the emotion. The analogy between perceptual illusions and recalcitrant emotions is a further case in point that suggests the similarity of emotions to sensory perceptions. Perceptual theories explain recalcitrant emotions by referring to their resemblance to visual illusions such as Müller-Lyer illusion (Döring, 2008, p. 87; Tappolet, 2016, p. 21). In this optical illusion two lines of the same length appear to be of different lengths. Recalcitrant emotions and visual illusions are similar because they both show that emotions and sense perceptions can conflict with our rational judgements. In the case of the Muller-Lyer illusion, despite our judgement that the lines are of the same length we cannot help seeing them as having different lengths. Similarly, in the case of recalcitrant emotions, one may judge that the spider is not fearsome but fears it anyway. His judgement that the spider is not dangerous does not prevent him from seeing the world as his emotion represents it to him. Similar to sensory perceptions, then, emotions can conflict with judgements.

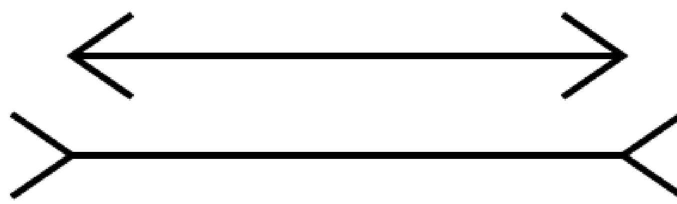

Fig.1 Muller-Lyer Illusion[11]

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[9] When we say emotions and sensory perceptions conflict with judgements, it means that the evaluative judgements grounded in emotions and sensory perceptions conflict with our considered judgements.
[10] See pp. 40-42.
[11] Fibonacci (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Müller-Lyer_illusion.svg), « Müller-Lyer illusion », https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/legalcode.

Perceptual theory explains that to fear the spider and thus to represent the spider as fearsome, one need not judge that it is fearsome. The content of the judgement is propositional and conceptual but the cognitive content of the fear need not be propositional or conceptual. Rather, fear involves a non-conceptual representation of the spider as fearsome. Once we consider that propositions involve concepts and that they are produced by the linguistic system, it seems reasonable that the recalcitrance of emotions results from a conflict of "two distinct evaluative systems", one of which is emotional and the other linguistic (D'arms and Jacobson, 2003, pp. 140-41). D'arms and Jacobson explain that, "[b]ecause these are discrete modes of evaluation, only one of which involves the deployment of conceptual capacities, it is possible for them to diverge systematically" (p. 141).[12]

The argument from analogy is not without its critics. Below, some of the arguments made against the analogy are examined.

ii) Objections to the Analogy. One objection to the analogy comes from Michael Brady (2011). In a nutshell, his argument is as follows: seeing a red car, gives me justification for judging that there is a red car before me. Further questions as to why I judge that there is a red car before me seem mistaken. I simply see a red car before me. However, he goes on, emotions do not work in the same way. Rather, they themselves require reasons for their justification. When I am asked why I feel anger, I might reply that I was treated unfairly. Nevertheless, my anger by itself does not seem to justify that the situation is unfair because unlike in the sensory

[12] The 'dual processing hypothesis' gives some support to this proposal. The dual processing hypothesis maintains that there are two different kinds of mental processing commonly referred to as Type 1 and Type 2. Type 1 processing is heuristic, automatic, rapid and does not involve analysis. Type 2 processing, on the other hand, is slow, rule-based and requires conscious attention. Keith Stanovich lists more than 20 varieties of this view (2004, pp. 34-36). For dual-process theories developed in various fields, see Reber, 1993; Sun, Slusarz, & Terry, 2005 (learning); Smith & Collins, 2009; Smith & DeCoster, 2000 (social cognition); Kahneman & Frederick, 2002 (judgement and decision making); Evans, 2003, 2007; Stanovich, 2010 the psychology of reasoning.

perceptual case, it still makes sense to reflect on whether my anger is appropriate. Hence, it cannot be the emotion itself that provides justifying grounds for the evaluative judgement.

To this objection one might reply that what ultimately justifies my emotion will, in part be the objective or non-evaluative features in situations on which we take the evaluative features to depend. In other words, the evaluative features involved in an emotion supervene on the non-evaluative features of the world (Tappolet, 2016, p. 40). For example, fearsome dogs usually have sharp teeth and short tempers and if a dog has these features, there is some reason for one to perceive it as fearsome (Tappolet, 2016, p. 40). However, it is also necessary to acknowledge that the justification of emotions differ from the justification of perceptions. It is not just the non-evaluative, objective features of a situation to which we appeal to justify an emotion. We must also appeal to the subjective states that are tied to one's individual biography on which one's emotions are grounded (Todd, 2014, p. 706). For example, I feel sad if my friend dies. The natural feature of the situation, i.e., her death might not trigger the emotion of sadness for you but it is represented as a loss warranting sadness for me because I care for her. Then it seems correct to say that as opposed to the case of sensory perceptions, emotions have cognitive bases such as beliefs, memories, sensory perceptions, etc. and that their justification depends on the justification of these cognitive states (Tappolet, 2016, p. 40).

Another objection is put forward by Bennett Helm (2001). Helm suggests that the account of emotions as perceptions fails since there is an important difference between recalcitrant emotions and sensory illusions. He thinks, in the case of sensory illusions, that the individual who is having the illusion is not at all irrational, whereas in the case of recalcitrant emotions, the individual who cannot get over his fear despite his rational judgement is irrational (Helm, 2001, pp. 42-3). Helm says, "It is not at all irrational to have a stick half-submerged in

water look bent even after one has judged that it is straight" (p. 42). On his account, a person who perceives the lines in the Muller-Lyer Illusion to be of different lengths is completely normal; however, a person who is experiencing a recalcitrant emotion, a phobia for spiders for example, despite her knowledge that they are harmless, should see a therapist. This difference, he thinks, results from the difference of the attitudes that the individual has towards the emotion and towards the optical illusion. He suggests that the attitude towards the recalcitrant emotion involves assent, whereas the attitude towards illusory perception does not involve assent. His conclusion is that emotions must be more like judgements rather than perceptions.

Michael Brady (2007) offers an objection, along the same lines, to the analogy between recalcitrant emotions and perceptions. He suggests that although "it seems plausible to suppose that someone suffering from recalcitrant emotions is subject to a certain rational requirement, namely to ensure that her emotions and her evaluative beliefs line-up" (p. 276), in the case of visual illusions it does not make sense to say that "someone experiencing the Muller-Lyer illusion should either stop seeing the lines as unequal, or change her perceptual belief" (p. 276).

These objections can also be replied first by underlining that perceptual theories need not deny that there are differences between emotions and sensory perceptions and then by pointing to the difference between the degree of plasticity that emotional and sensory systems have; that is, since our emotional systems are more plastic than our sensory systems, emotions are subject to rationality requirements, while sensory perceptions are not (Tappolet, 2016, p. 37-8).

These arguments put forward by Helm and Brady against the analogy between emotions and perceptions prove to be very helpful since they serve to clarify the nature of emotions. As Tappolet points out:

> The irrationality accusation is an indication that something might be wrong with the emotional system that is responsible for the emotional reaction. But it is also the claim that if there is something wrong, some action ought to be taken to improve the reliability of emotional system. The important point is that in contrast to the case of sensory perception, there is some hope that we can get rid of inappropriate emotions […]. If our emotional systems lacked plasticity, it would not make sense to require that we try and improve them. (2016, p. 38)

The plasticity issue hinges on the question as to what extent emotional systems are produced by evolution and to what extent they are susceptible to influence from one's cultural or social environment. In contemporary debates, the biological determinists who have advocated the view that emotions are the products of evolution (Ekman, 1971; Izard, 1977) have been opposed by the social constructivists (Averill, 1980; Lutz, 1986) who hold that all emotion types are inventions of culture. Other views that fall between these two extremes have also been proposed (Goldie, 2002, p. 99).[13] Although no agreement has yet been reached regarding the degree of the plasticity of emotions, it is generally accepted that the plasticity of sensory perceptions are less in degree compared to the plasticity of emotions (Tappolet, 2016, p. 38).

I will proceed now by making distinctions between emotions and other relevant phenomena in the affective realm.

3.2. What is an Emotion?

I will start the account of emotions by defining first what I have in mind when I refer to emotions, while at the same time making necessary distinctions between emotions and other similar phenomena in the affective realm, namely moods, sentiments and affective character

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[13] See Tappolet and Faucher (2002) for a typology of models concerning emotional plasticity.

traits. I will not discuss all these affective phenomena in depth; I will just draw a few distinctions to define what I mean when I use the term ‘emotion’. These distinctions will be drawn conceptually in general terms but it should be acknowledged that due to the complex nature of the affective realm, it is not easy to draw distinctions between these affective states with any precision. All affective phenomena are related to each other in various ways. They may, for example, shape each other, blend with each other or generate the other.[14] Nevertheless, these distinctions should be made at least in general terms to clarify what is meant by emotion.

3.2.1. Emotions and other affective phenomena[15]

Emotions, moods, affective character traits and sentiments are distinct categories in the affective realm. At the outset of the inquiry, two distinctions must be made in order to distinguish these affective phenomena from each other. The first distinction concerns the intentionality of an affective mental state. Intentionality indicates the directedness or aboutness of a mental state. Some mental states in the affective realm have specific intentionality; that is, they are directed at objects of thought real or imagined such as events, people, situations, etc. Some mental states, on the other hand, have general intentionality; that is, they are not directed to anything in particular, but everything in general.[16] A second distinction could be made between the occurrent and the dispositional nature of an affective mental state. An occurrent mental state refers to a state which takes place and comes to pass. It has a limited duration. A dispositional state, on the other hand, refers to relatively stable and long-lasting states.

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[14] Wollheim (1993, 1999) and Goldie (2000) offer excellent analyses on how different affective phenomena relate to each other.

[15] For making these distinctions, I draw mostly on Chapter 4 in Ben-Ze’ev (2000)

[16] Philosophers differ in their understanding of the intentionality of affective states. Some philosophers define states such as moods as lacking intentionality (Nussbaum, 2003, p.133), whereas other philosophers hold that they have intentionality but that their intentionality is general; that is, they are directed to nothing in particular and everything in general, such as, Goldie (2000, p. 143) and Ben-Ze’ev (2000, p. 87).

It is possible to distinguish four classes of affective phenomena on the basis of these two distinctions. The affective mental states which have specific intentionality may be occurrent or dispositional. The affective mental states which are occurrent and have specific intentionality might be classified as ‘emotions’. First, an emotion has a ‘formal object’ (de Sousa, 1987, p. 126).[17] Secondly, an emotion is also directed at a particular object that seems to fit the formal object (de Sousa, 2011, p. 64). The formal object of any given emotion is essential to the definition of that particular emotion. In the case of fear and disgust for example the formal objects of the emotions in question are being fearsome and being disgusting respectively. Thus, a formal object is a property that is ascribed by the emotion to a particular object. The formal object of my fear of Fido for example is its fearsomeness but the particular object of my fear is Fido. It is my perception of Fido as fearsome (perhaps due to its sharp teeth, relentless barking, large size, a piece of disturbing news I have read or a memory recalled concerning a dog of his species) that makes my emotion fear, rather than some other emotion.

The affective states that are dispositional and have specific intentionality are usually referred to as ‘sentiments’. Emotions and sentiments differ from each other in that the former are occurrent, the latter are dispositional. The anger I feel when my spouse says something that is offensive has specific intentionality and occurrent. My anger, on the other hand towards my ex-spouse might be dispositional. My disposition represents the tendency to become occurrent states in certain circumstances (Ben-Ze’ev 2000, p.80). The label for a particular emotion, for example, anger or contempt, can be used interchangeably for both an emotion and a sentiment. Other examples for sentiments, might be the love you feel for your spouse or the grief you suffer for the death of a close friend. These are relatively enduring and stable states. One other difference

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[17] The term ‘Formal object’ has entered the contemporary philosophy of emotions through Anthony Kenny (1963, p. 189).

between emotions and dispositions concerns the feeling dimension. Feeling expresses the consciousness of our own state. In emotions, compared to sentiments, feelings are intense. My fear of Fido when Fido gets close to me for example has a qualitative feel and this is accompanied by certain physiological changes. In dispositions, however, such as my fear of dogs in general, the feelings or bodily changes typical of these emotions are usually not present.

I have distinguished emotions and sentiments; but as mentioned above, the affective phenomena are not so neatly separate from each other. A sentiment can turn into an emotion when the eliciting factor comes into sight. My disposition to fear dogs for example can turn into the emotion of fear once I see Fido getting close to me. Conversely, emotions may sometimes, turn into sentiments, too. For example, my anger at my friend Joe might take the form of a more stable state in time and turn into a sentiment.[18]

Emotions are similar to moods in that they are both occurrent states. However, they differ in their degrees of intentionality. Unlike emotions that have specific intentionality, moods have general intentionality. I might feel gloomy in the morning when I am on my own at home but this gloominess is not directed to anything in particular and it lasts for a short time, for example until I get out of the house to meet with my friends in the evening.

If a mental state is dispositional and lacks specific intentionality, then it might be categorized as an 'affective character trait'. For example, being shy lacks a specific intentional object and is dispositional. Affective character traits last longer than other affective phenomena, in most cases a lifetime.

[18] Throughout this thesis I will use the more convenient phrase 'emotion' rather than 'sentiment' where it is clear from the context that it is the dispositional state which I have in mind but if is not clear from the context, I will try to specify in which sense I use the emotion term.

In this section I have distinguished emotions from other phenomena in the affective realm. In the following section I will discuss role in practical reasoning.

3.3. Emotions and Practical Reasoning

In recent decades, philosophers, such as Amélie O. Rorty (1978), Martha C. Nussbaum (1990, 2003), Patricia Greenspan (1988), Karen Jones (2004), Christine Tappolet (2016), and Ronald de Sousa (1987, 2011) have contributed to the recognition of the centrality of emotions in practical reasoning to a great extent. They have argued that far from impeding the reasoning process, emotions often influence it for the better and contribute to the reasoning process in a way that reason alone by itself cannot do. These philosophers, criticizing the views that have ignored the ways in which emotions play a crucial role in practical reasoning, proposed that to the extent that individuals lack emotional capacity, they will be less efficient in their deliberations. Below, I will list some of the ways emotions can contribute to the practical reasoning process.

3.3.1. Emotions as Patterns of Salience

It is, for example, suggested that emotions can enable rational decision-making by limiting the number of possible options to a manageable size (de Sousa, 1987, p. 192). Emotions, directing our attention toward certain objects and away from others, participate in the decision-making process by making some of the options salient. Thereby, they serve as some kind of compass that help to situate ourselves in accordance with our values. In other words, they facilitate the decision-making process by indicating and determining our priorities. There is now widespread consensus that emotions alert us to objects and events that are potentially significant for us.

The perceptual theory suggests that emotions are cognitive frameworks strongly linked to the individual biographies of the agents, which shape and structure their perceptions of the world (Rorty, 1978, de Sousa, 1987, Callhoun, 1984, Goldie, 2002). An emotion involves a way of seeing, a perspective or a 'quasi-intention' constituted by 'specific patterns of intentional salience' (Rorty, p.150). As such, the cognitive content of an emotion is tied closely to the past experiences of the individual experiencing the emotion.

De Sousa coined the term 'paradigm scenarios' (1987, p. 201), a concept that has important implications for understanding the nature of our emotions. We perceive value in light of a number of factors: biological, social and individual biography (de Sousa, 2011, p. 38). Individual history establishes paradigm scenarios in terms of which an individual perceives the world. Emotions are paradigmatic and they involve patterns of characteristic reactions developed in response to characteristic situations. Starting from our childhood we learn which situations elicit what type of emotions through paradigm scenarios. Paradigm scenarios are gestalts that we associate with certain emotions. De Sousa in explaining how we learn our emotions, remarks: "we are made familiar with the vocabulary of emotion by association with paradigm scenarios" (1987, p. 182.) An individual connects objects with emotions through paradigm scenarios which set particular emotions to particular types of objects (p. 182). Paradigm scenarios have two components: first, a paradigmatic situation that provides the characteristic objects of a specific emotion and second, a set of characteristic or "normal" responses to that situation (p. 182). Paradigm scenarios are first drawn from daily life in our childhood and are reinforced later by stories and fairy tales. The emotional repertoire thus gained is developed further, refined and revised through our interactions with the world around us as we come upon new emotional paradigms as well as through our encounters with literary works and other forms of art (pp. 183-

84). Being intimately related to our particular cares, interests, concerns, emotions then give us information about the world as seen from a particular perspective.

Peter Goldie has a similar view. He introduces a concept that he calls the ‘recognition-response tie’ (2002, p. 28). Since the characteristic property of an emotion is evaluative, recognizing this particular evaluative property merits a certain kind of response. The recognition-response tie can be inculcated in us by both our biological background and cultural upbringing. This explains both the cross-cultural commonalities and diversities in both the content of our recognitions and the responses these recognitions elicit. Goldie suggests that understanding a particular emotional response of an individual entails understanding the place of that emotion within the broader personal narrative of that individual which often comprises his character traits, his previous experiences including the various episodes of his emotional experience, bodily feelings, perceptions, etc. An individual’s emotions can be made intelligible by unfolding the stories embedded in the person’s biographical background (p. 16). Goldie holds that there will be a ‘paradigmatic narrative structure’ for each type of emotion which is epistemologically central to that type of emotion and according to which we apply that particular emotion (p. 33). He further specifies this view adding that, “the narrative structure for a particular emotional experience can include what is non-paradigmatic just as much as what is paradigmatic: one can laugh out of grief or kill a person out of love for her” (p. 33).

To explain more clearly, particular emotional episodes should not be viewed as isolated psychological states intelligible merely in terms of the individual's beliefs and desires as they relate to the situation at hand. Rather, to use Goldie’s example (pp. 42), understanding why I feel awful for my wife as she returns exhausted from a terrible journey entails understanding this emotional episode to be a part of a broader emotional experience, my love for my wife, which

involves other thoughts, feelings, and dispositions to think and feel, all structured by the broader personal narrative within which it is embedded. This is what makes the kind of awful feeling I have in seeing my exhausted wife different from that I feel in seeing graphic pictures of over-worked child laborers in third-world countries.

We interpret situations through the lens of our emotional schemas.[19] When a particular emotional schema is evoked by a certain situation, our emotional response may or may not be appropriate to the situation by which it is triggered. Thus, the anger towards your sibling which stems from your childhood may be re-evaluated and overcome later in life. In that sense at least, emotions can be assessed for rationality. Emotions have a key role in the dynamics of attention, helping us focus on a narrow range of objects and maintain that focus. Without the help of emotions that draw our attention to certain features in a situation, we would not be able to narrow down the options to a manageable size.

Ronald de Sousa in arguing that emotions play a positive role in making a rational choice (1987) considers what he calls the 'philosopher's frame problem' (1987, p. 192).[20] The philosopher's frame problem is the problem of sifting the relevant information from the irrelevant, thus limiting the number of options to consider in making a decision.

De Sousa suggests that emotions are "species of determinate patterns of salience among objects of attention, lines of inquiry and inferential strategies" (p. 196), and proposes that emotions narrow the focus of attention and thus enable individuals to solve the problem of what information to attend to in choosing the possible course of action to pursue, by determining the

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[19] The terms 'emotional schemas' or 'emotional gestalts' are used interchangeably with 'paradigm scenarios'.
[20] De Sousa points out that he uses the term 'philosopher's frame problem' to distinguish it from the 'frame problem' in the field of Artificial Intelligence (p. 192).

salience and limiting the number of live options from among which the individual will choose. De Sousa says:

> [W]e need to know when not to retrieve some irrelevant information from the vast store of which we are possessed. But how do we know it is irrelevant unless we have already retrieved it? I proffer a very general biological hypothesis: Emotions spare us the paralysis potentially induced by this predicament by controlling the salience of features of perception and reasoning; they temporarily mimic the information encapsulation of perception and so circumscribe our practical and cognitive options. (de Sousa, 1987, p. 172)

In other words, emotions determine which options to eliminate from among the possible alternatives open to the agent even before taking them into consideration. This view has also been supported by empirical research. Current research in neuroscience shows that practical reasoning entails normal emotional functioning. Antonio Damasio, for example, based on the findings of his research on patients with brain damage suggests that emotions are necessary for successful practical reasoning (1994, pp. 46-51). Damasio discusses the case of a patient (who he calls Elliot) who suffers from a tumor that damaged the tissue in the frontal lobe of his brain. He explains that after the tumor and the damaged tissue were removed, significant changes were reported by his family and friends to have occurred in his personality. He displayed a serious inability to make basic decisions, took on odd behaviors, and showed a lack of judgment about social relationships. Although his performance in intelligence tests and standard psychological and neuropsychological tests was average or above average, he could not handle most of the daily basic practical decisions. After comprehensive tests, Damasio concludes that the difficulties of the patient in practical reasoning resulted from his reduced capacity for emotional

responsiveness, considering that the frontal lobe of the brain (which was the damaged part of the patient's brain) has an essential role in the emotional processes. Although Elliot was fully aware of the options he was offered and had to ability to think rationally, he did not value one particular option over the other since he lacked the emotional capacity that would draw his attention to certain features of available courses and make one option salient among all. Consequently, he was not able to decide what course to take.

A proper capacity for emotion is, then, closely linked to the process of decision making and practical reasoning through their role of indicating salience and relevance. Our emotions help us choose one option from among the various options we have in the process of making practical decisions. However, it is important to note that the way emotions indicate salience is not only limited to putting certain features of a situation under spotlight. They establish salience in highly complex ways. An emotion represents the world to be in a certain way, but this representation is not simply based on the non-evaluative features of the situation. It is to a large extent dependent on the agent's particular psychological background, character traits, values, cares and concerns. Emotions influence the practical decision-making process by drawing our attention to a particular aspect among the many aspects that could be relevant in any particular situation. They do so by activating the paradigm scenarios developed through our life experience or exposure to art and literature. An example may clarify this statement: A person on hearing a child cry in the apartment next door may get annoyed. For this person, the volume and the duration of the child's crying are salient and he sees the child's crying as a disturbing background noise that must be stopped immediately. For the parents of the child, too, the duration and the volume of the child's crying will be salient. However, the parents who actually

care about the child will focus on the features of the situation that might help relieving the child's discomfort (Elgin, 1996, p. 154).

The view that regards emotions as distorting practical thought is then a sweeping generalization. It ignores the crucial role of emotions in enabling the practical decision-making process by directing our attention toward certain features and away from others and limiting the number of salient options. However, we should also not assume that emotions consistently aid the reasoning process. Emotions drawing our attention to certain features in a situation may also distort our reasoning by making us fail to see the other important aspects in the situation. This issue will be discussed below in section 3.3.2.

In addition to determining salience and relevance, emotions participate in the process of practical reasoning in other ways such as providing access to practical reasons and beliefs. I will discuss this next.

3.3.2. Access to Practical Reasons

Emotions, just like sensory perceptions, can provide access to information about our environment and therefore act as sources of practical knowledge.

Perceptions are triggered by the features of our environment, but at the same time, they act as indicators of certain features in our environment. After all, perceptual systems evolved as they provide access to information about the environment, thereby increasing the chances of survival. Similarly, emotions are not felt arbitrarily. If an individual were to experience the emotions of sadness, anger, disgust or joy randomly, that is, independent of the circumstances, then from an incident of a particular emotion we would not have had anything to say about the link between our emotions and our environment. However, emotions are triggered as a reaction to a certain situation. This shows that there is a link between our emotions and the features of

the environment and that our emotions can provide a source of information about the situations in which we find ourselves. When an emotion occurs, for example jealousy, I believe that there is a threat to my relationship with my lover. Later, when I am able to think more calmly, I may see that my jealousy was unwarranted. Such experiences might lead us to think that emotions are not trustworthy sources of information. However, this does not mean that it is wise to dismiss our emotions as quickly as possible. One of the reasons for this is that emotions are produced by the limbic system which is a product of evolution (de Sousa, 1987). This might be taken as evidence that emotions promote fitness by indicating the important features of the environment. A mother's feeling jealous of the father of her off-spring might promote the chances of the survival of her off-spring because if the father diverts the resources to another woman and her children, this would threaten the survival of her own children. Thus, according to the evolutionary argument, it is plausible to suppose that emotions can be informative about the environment in which they occur and give us a practical advantage.

There are two features of emotions that are central to the perceptual account of emotions. The first one is that they have cognitive content and the second is that emotions can conflict with judgements or beliefs. Both emotions and sensory perceptions can conflict with judgements or conceptually articulated states. As mentioned above, perceptual illusions such as the Muller-Lyer illusion where there is a conflict between our perceptions and judgements might be compared to the case of recalcitrant emotions. In sensory illusions, there is a conflict between our judgements and perceptions; in recalcitrant emotions there is a conflict between our judgements and our emotions, or in other words, our perceptions of evaluative properties. The understanding of emotions in the perceptual theory as perceptions of evaluative properties implies that emotions may serve to track our reasons to act in a certain way, that is, they provide access to our practical

reasons in the decision-making process. In other words, acting on our emotions in some cases might serve us better than acting on our rational judgements as emotions allow us to track the reasons that we might be excluding in our judgements. Rather than the judgement an individual makes in a certain situation, the emotion she feels might inform her about the environment. For example, she might feel fear when she walks alone at night in the street although she might judge it to be quite safe. In this case there is a conflict between her emotion and judgement. However, she might be mistaken in her judgement that it is safe to walk alone at night in the street. In this case, if she avoids walking alone at night in the street acting on her emotion, the emotion rather than her judgement might get things right. This does not amount to saying that all emotions must be taken at face value at all times, but that taking emotions into account may serve us better for our practical ends. As Karen Jones puts it:

> [O]ur emotions sometimes key us to the presence of real and important reason-giving considerations without necessarily presenting that information to us in a way susceptible of conscious articulation and sometimes, even despite our consciously held and internally justified judgement that the situation contains no such reasons. (2003, p. 181)

Nomi Arpaly gives the example of Emily who strongly believes that she should pursue a Ph.D. degree in chemistry. Once she starts her study however, she finds herself “restless, sad and ill-motivated” (Arpaly, 2000, p. 504). Yet she sees her emotions “groundless” and does not take them as evidence to the fact that the program of her study is not well-suited to her. But at some point acting on her emotions, she quits the program. She later recognizes that she acted irrationally for sticking to her judgement that the program was right for her and not leaving the program sooner. In this scenario, had Emily not ignored her emotions, the unpleasant emotions

she was experiencing would have served her in such a way that would provide access to her "reason-giving considerations" and guide her in the right direction.

Another much discussed example is Mark Twain's character Huckleberry Finn (Bennett, 1974; de Sousa, 1987; Jones, 2003, Tappolet, 2003, Döring, 2009). Huckleberry Finn first helps his friend Jim to escape from slavery, but later on following the society's moral code, he decides to turn Jim in. Just as he is about to turn him in however, Huck changes his mind. Although his judgement tells him not to protect Jim from slave hunters in accordance with the moral code imposed on him by the society he lives in, he feels the weight of his emotions and acting on them he decides to protect Jim. I will revisit this point later in Chapter 5.

Although there may be conflicts between emotions and judgements, these conflicts might prove to be productive in leading us to discover new reasons that might be significant in making decisions (Döring, 2009). Emotions, then, can lead us to question our judgements and existing reasons, and to formulate new ones. In the light of all these examples, I think it would be correct to say that individuals should take their emotions into account in the process of practical deliberation. This is not to say, however, that taking our emotions will always lead us in the right direction. What I mean rather is that sometimes we might find that in case we incorporate our emotions in the deliberative process, our deliberations might produce a more insightful response to a situation than our detached, intellectual deliberations will. The reason for this is that emotions can enable us to track the significant considerations in a situation to act in a certain way which we might fail to see if we dismiss our emotions.

However, it is also possible that when in acting on our emotions, we might be rationalizing them, which might sometimes lead us to illusions and projections. The possibility

of rationalization suggests that emotions can mislead us. I will tackle this issue below in section 3.4.

3.3.3. Access to Beliefs

As I have mentioned before, some earlier versions of the cognitive theories of emotions that equate emotions with judgements have failed to respond to the challenge presented by the problem of recalcitrant emotions. Nevertheless, it is true that most of the time our emotions are closely linked with our beliefs and that they result from our beliefs.

We sometimes hold beliefs without being aware of them. Our emotions can give us access to our beliefs and normative commitments that we endorse implicitly. The fact that I feel disappointment when someone acts in a certain way may reveal my belief that she should instead have acted in another way. This in turn keys me to the fact that I am committed to certain beliefs about the person in question or the relationship I have with her. For instance, I may feel disappointment if my friend Liza does not help me in a certain situation when I expect her help. In this case my disappointment reveals me first my belief that friends should help each other in times of distress and second that I consider myself and Liza as friends. Thus our emotions can give access to our existing beliefs.

3.4. Misleading Emotions

I have discussed above that our emotions enable us to perceive things as salient and to respond to them in ways that are appropriate. If we perceive some danger in the environment, being alarmed quickly we will take our guard without deliberation and eventually protect ourselves from what could prove to be harmful. Emotions, then, generally speaking, endow us with a capacity to respond to things quickly giving us an advantage to deal with the environment effectively. However, it should also be acknowledged that emotions can also mislead us.

Sometimes when we act on our emotions, we tend to rationalize and make up excuses to explain our actions. The fact that we sometimes tend to come up with rationalizations suggest that emotions have the potential to mislead us.

I have explained above that emotions are modes of perception that give us access to information about the situations we are in and that we perceive value in the light of complex factors that not only involves biological facts and social norms but also our individual biographies (de Sousa, 2011, p. 38).

This being the case, the questions that arise here are if and how we can take our emotions as reliable guides in our practical lives. First, it should be acknowledged that when we say that emotions provide us with valuable insights about the environment, it does not mean that we should take them at face value and immediately act upon their deliverances. Our emotions are not infallible. In fact, they can sometimes be misleading. It can be suggested that to prevent emotions from misguiding us, they can be checked and controlled by self-monitoring. Karen Jones (2003), for example has suggested that emotions can indeed be taken as reliable guides provided that the agent has "critical reflective ability, dispositions to bring that ability to bear when needed, and dispositions to have the result of such reflection control [her] behavior" (p.190). One can reflect on the emotions she is experiencing and the question whether these emotions can be preventing her from having a clear vision and thus misleading her.

However, this might not work as smoothly as expected since emotions can distort reason and disguise this fact as well at the same time (Goldie, 2008, p. 152). Goldie cites male aggression, xenophobia and sexual jealousy as three cases of emotion-based heuristic processes which often give rise to saliences that mislead us. Such saliences, he argues, might cause one to act unethically or wrongly by leading him to attach too much significance to certain particulars

in the situation at the expense of others (p. 153). For example, a xenophobe who thinks immigrants cause only trouble for the country, when shown reliable data that they have in fact done good to the economy, will disregard them and continue to defend his initial opinion appealing to anecdotal evidence instead of reviewing and revising his ideas (p.160). Goldie concludes that the emotion-based intuitive thinking, being so rapid and thus having already distorted the epistemic and preferential landscape of the individual, will catch the individual unawares and will cause him to dismiss the deliberative thinking process before it even arrives on the scene (pp. 160-62). He recommends some correctives to the difficulties that intuitive thinking can cause, such as trying to decrease the salience of the feature that skews the landscape by turning one's attention away from it and to increase the salience of the information that is not so salient by focusing on it. However, as Goldie suggests these recommendations will solve the problem only if the individual becomes aware that his emotions are distorting the landscape and preventing him to see the picture clearly. It is important to acknowledge here that if we do not have the right emotional dispositions, then emotions can indeed distort perception and reason leading us to see the world other than it really is.

Although much of what Goldie says seems true, the picture is not all that bleak if we remember that our emotions can be educated and sensibilities can be refined. It is possible to influence our emotional dispositions in a way that will guide us to make better practical judgements. What I mean by emotional education is a deeper understanding of our own emotions and that of others; this involves being able to identify the triggers, the beliefs and the underlying scenarios that give rise to these emotions, and being able to see things from a different perspective as well as respond to situations appropriately. The understanding gained through the

information which our emotions disclose yields valuable insights to respond to situations in ways that are helpful to ourselves and others. I will discuss this issue in detail in Chapter 5.

Literature and particularly novels provide us with opportunities for emotional education. We can gain access to a wide range of emotions and acquire some understanding of them through engaging with literature. The significance of novels will become apparent if we consider that emotional education does not only involve acquiring beliefs or making judgements about situations or characters, but of actually experiencing these emotions, having our attention focused on the characters and their situations, and understanding them in an experiential way. Novels, since they express emotions of the characters and describe their mental states and situations in a detailed way, have the resources to make us experience the emotions portrayed in them. This topic will be explored in the next chapter.

4. Chapter 3: Imagination and Emotions

In this chapter I will be concerned with our imaginative and emotional engagement with fictions. I will start by introducing some terms that I will use in my discussion drawing on Wollheim's analysis of imagination in his *Thread of Life* (1984, pp. 62-96). Next, I will continue by examining two different ways in which we engage with fictions. The first of these is the empathetic engagement and the second is the mechanism of acentral imagination or what I will refer to as reactive engagement. Then, I will discuss two important problems concerning our emotional involvement with fictions: the paradox of fiction and the puzzle of imaginative resistance.

4.1. Terminology

Wollheim, in his discussion of 'iconic imagination', makes a distinction between 'acentered' and 'centered imagining' (1984, pp. 72-6). Iconic imagination is the type of imagination where one imagines something in a given sense modality, such as visualizing. In imagining a scene acentrally, I do not imagine it from the point of view or perspective of anyone internal to the scene (p. 74). For example, I can acentrally imagine a scene in which Hillary Clinton is giving a public speech. I can imagine the audience, the conference hall where she is giving the speech, her facial expression during the speech and the reaction of the audience to her remarks. I imagine these from no person's point of view internal to the imagined scene. This does not mean however that acentral imagining lacks a point of view.[21] It just means that the point of view from which the situation is imagined does not belong to anyone within the scene.

Imagining centrally, on the other hand, refers to cases where I imagine the scene from the point of view of someone who is within the scene imagined. In centrally imagining a scene, I

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[21] Peter Goldie makes this important point. (Goldie, 2000, p.196).

imagine one person centrally, that is, from the inside, and all the other people in the scene 'peripherally'. It is important to note the difference between centrally imagining someone else and centrally imagining myself in someone else's situation. For example, if I centrally imagine Hillary Clinton making a speech, I take her point of view and represent the scene to myself from her point of view. I can also centrally imagine myself in Hillary Clinton's situation, as a candidate to presidency making a speech to a large audience. This case is different from centrally imagining Hillary Clinton because when I centrally imagine myself in her situation, the point of view I represent will be my own. In such a case, imagining the scene will not entail detaching myself from my own beliefs, character traits, goals and dispositions. When I centrally imagine Mrs. Clinton, on the other hand, the point of view I represent will be hers. I will be imagining her from the inside, adopting her point of view.

I have been defining the types of imagining by referring to the term 'point of view'. However, what does taking someone else's point of view mean? Adopting or taking someone else's point of view entails having some substantial information about the distinctive features of that person, 'a repertoire of substance'(Wollheim, 1984, p. 74) or in Peter Goldie's term a 'characterization' (Goldie, 2000, p. 178) and employing it in the service of one's imagining. In centrally imagining someone, once I take this particular perspective, I must represent the actions, thoughts, feelings and experiences of the person I am centrally imagining as though they were my own (Wollheim, 1984, p. 78). It is important to note that in imagining myself, it is possible to imagine myself centrally, acentrally or peripherally. When I am centrally imagining another, if I am in the scene as well, then I will be imagining myself peripherally. For example, if I am centrally imagining Hillary Clinton and I am a member of the audience listening to her speech,

then I will be imagining myself peripherally as the point of view I adopt in imagining the scene is not my own but Hillary Clinton's (p. 74).[22]

In the process of reading a novel, the novel prompts us to imagine the situation acentrally or centrally from the point of view of one of the characters. Taking our cue from the text itself we imagine the situations centrally from a particular character's point of view or acentrally.

Another important concept that should be mentioned in discussing imagination is what Wollheim calls 'psychic force' of the imagination. 'Psychic force' refers to the power of imagination to influence desires, feelings and beliefs of the imaginer (p. 81). Wollheim remarks:

> As I centrally imagine the protagonist's thinking, experiencing, feeling this or that, so I shall tend to find myself in the condition–cognitive, conative, affective--in which the mental states that I imagine, were I actually to have them, would leave me. (pp. 79-80)

These insights of Wollheim have also been confirmed by empirical research. Studies in cognitive neuroscience have provided evidence for the view that imagining generates states which resemble the states produced by perceptions of real stimuli.[23] For example, a region of the brain called the fusiform gyrus which is known to be distinctively activated when we see faces is found to be activated also when we imagine faces (Kanwisher et al., 1997; O' Craven & Kanwisher, 2000). It was also found that damages in this area diminish both the ability to recognize faces and the ability to imagine faces (Damasio, A.R, Tranel & Damasio,1990; Young et al., 1994). Another study has established that there is a neural overlap between visual perception and visual imagery (Kosslyn, 1997). In this study it was found that two-thirds of the activated areas in visual perception and imagery is common, and that some high-level processes

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[22] I will also be using the expressions taking the *internal perspective* or *external perspective* following Goldie (2007), to refer to central imagining and acentral imagining respectively.

[23]Goldman discusses the empirical research regarding this point in detail. (Goldman, 2006).

that are used in visual perception are also used in visual imagery. Additionally, there is empirical research which confirms that imagination has impact on emotions. Foa and his collaborators have found that exposure therapy in treating anxiety disorder is effective regardless whether the exposure is done through imagination or by using an actual anxiety-provoking object (Foa et al., 1980). The observation that images have strong impact on emotions has led clinical therapists to use imagery to treat many psychological disorders connected with emotions (Wolpe, 1958; Holmes et al., 2007).

In this section drawing on Wollheim's analysis I have distinguished different types of imaginative activity. I have introduced and defined the terms, central and acentral imagining, point of view, repertoire, and psychic force. In the following discussion I will examine the two standard types of our imaginative engagement with fictions. These are, first, the empathetic engagement which is based on the kind of imagination that Wollheim calls centred imagination and the second, the reactive engagement that is based on acentered imagination. I will start by giving a conceptualization of empathy that I endorse in this thesis. Then, I will consider the relationship between empathy and sympathy, clarifying also the distinctions between empathy and some other related phenomena. Next, I will discuss the empathetic process we engage with characters in reading novels.

4.2.Empathy

Empathy has been the focus of attention in contemporary philosophy and psychology in recent decades. The role of empathy and its relation to our capacity to respond to others in moral ways have been discussed by psychologists such as Hoffman (2000), by philosophers in the field of ethics (Slote, 2007) and philosophy of mind (Goldman, 1995). It should be noted at the outset

that there is no consensus in philosophy or psychology regarding the definition of empathy.[24] I will use 'empathy' to refer to the imaginative mechanism that Wollheim calls centrally imagining another or centrally imagining a situation from another's point of view. It is important to notice that this meaning does not involve centrally imagining myself in another's situation. In other words, I am using the term 'empathy' here to mean "shifting your perspective in order to imagine being the other person, and thereby sharing in his or her thoughts, feelings, decisions, and other aspects of their psychology" (Goldie, 2011, p. 302).

In other words, empathy, as I use it here, is an imaginative and emotional process in which one (observer/empathizer) takes the other's (target) perspective (other-oriented perspective) and imagines her experiences from the inside while maintaining his own separate sense of self. If I am empathizing with you, this does not mean that I am imagining myself undergoing your experiences. This would be another type of imaginative mechanism; that is, centrally imagining myself in another's situation where I would imagine things from my own point of view (self-oriented perspective). The conceptualization of the empathy I endorse here excludes processes that involve self-oriented perspective-taking. The reason for this exclusion is that in trying to understand and imagine other people's emotional states, if we take the self-oriented perspective we will, more often than not, fail. Self-oriented and other-oriented perspective-taking will produce the same result in simple situations where the differences between the observer and the target are irrelevant or unimportant; however, the results will differ considerably in cases where the differences between the observer and the target matter (Goldie, 2000, p. 201). For example, if the scenario to imagine consists in encountering a bear while taking a hike in the woods, the imaginative process will yield the same result whether I take the

[24] Daniel Batson lists eight conceptually distinct psychological states to which the term empathy has been applied up to date (Batson, 2009, pp. 3-4).

self-oriented perspective or the other-oriented perspective. However, taking the one or the other perspective will differ in their results if the case to be imagined is more complex than this. For example, in trying to imagine and understand how another person feels about making a career change, having a child or going back to school taking the self-oriented perspective will give considerably different results from taking the perspective of the person with whom we are attempting to empathize. In such cases the characterization of the person from whose point of view we are imagining the situation will be the key determining factor. Taking the self-oriented perspective in such a situation may not help me empathize with the other person as our values, goals, and desires might be very different. Our ways of seeing the world are influenced by our specific biographical background to a certain extent. If I take the self-oriented perspective in imagining a situation, I might end up with very different emotions about a certain situation than I would if I imagined the situation from the point of view of someone else.

Other-oriented and self-oriented perspective taking are essentially distinct from each other and the distinction between them is not only conceptual. Several experiments that have examined the brain activities associated with these two types of perspective-taking using fMRI have found that the neurological basis of these two types of perspective-taking is not the same (Jackson et al., 2006; Decety & Sommerville, 2003). In trying to understand another's experience and imagine his emotional states in a given situation, many of us, being unable to detach ourselves from our own perspective, imagine ourselves in the other's circumstances and rely on our own imagined experiences to reach conclusions about the other. When we attempt to imagine how the other is feeling or what she is thinking we tend to assume that there is a greater similarity between ourselves and the other than is usually the case. This assumption leads us to the conclusion that others will feel and think the same way as we do. Such conclusions are

commonly called by psychologists as 'false consensus effects'. Taking the self-oriented perspective often leads people to believe mistakenly that it provides them with access to the other's point of view when it does not. Experiments conducted by Keysar and his collaborators have found that although individuals by the age of 6 have the ability to distinguish between their own mental states and those of others and understand others' actions in terms of underlying mental states, they do not reliably use this ability to interpret the actions of others (Keysar, Linn, & Barr, 2003). Royzman, Cassidy, & Baron (2003), drawing on empirical evidence, have found similar results in their research. The conclusion of their research is that "epistemic egocentrism", defined as "the difficulty in setting aside the privileged information that one knows to be unavailable to another party" is a general feature of human cognition. These researchers explain the nature of epistemic egocentrism with this example:

> Imagine that a junior colleague is being considered for promotion to tenure, and you are worried about how she will react to a rejection of a journal article. You know that the department has already voted unanimously for her advancement, but you also know that she is unaware of this fact. Can you predict how disheartening she will find the rejection? Your entire knowledge base in this situation is the sum of the knowledge that you and the colleague share (i.e., the news of the rejection and certain background information) and your privileged knowledge (i.e., your awareness of the colleague's newly elevated status). If you are to succeed in anticipating your colleague's actual degree of distress, there are two things you must do: (a) You must avail yourself of all of the relevant knowledge that the two of you hold in common, and (b) you must set aside the knowledge that is yours and yours alone. Our concern here is with a specific failure of perspective taking that results from a difficulty in meeting the latter requirement; that is,

> setting aside the relevant privileged information (knowledge) that one knows to be unattainable to the other party, with a result that one's prediction of another's perspective becomes skewed toward one's own privileged viewpoint. We believe that this bias, which we call epistemic egocentrism (EE), is a general feature of human cognition […] (Royzman, Cassidy, & Baron, 2003, p. 38)

To be able to empathize, one must not conflate what one would experience with what the target experiences and must not let his own beliefs, values, and emotions, in short his self-perspective, influence the imaginative project. Self-other differentiation is critical for the empathetic process (Coplan, 2011). Without clear self-other differentiation, we let our own perspective interfere with our imaginative process and thus fail to replicate the other's experience. The empathic process entails that the observer attends to differences between himself and the other, while taking the other-oriented perspective. In empathizing with the other, one maintains the sense of his own separate identity. This enables him to appreciate the distinctiveness of the other's experience as well as his own.

For the empathetic process to take place, to take the other-oriented perspective and to distinguish the self from the other is necessary, first. Second, the empathizer must experience qualitatively the same emotions as those of the target. For example, when the target experiences fear, and the observer experiences pity, this will not be a successful case of empathy. However, the emotions of the empathizer might differ in intensity from those of the target.

Empathy must be differentiated from understanding a person's emotions. Empathizing presupposes some understanding of emotions in the first place and enhances the understanding we already possess (Goldie, 2000, p. 178). Understanding another's emotions is an intellectual grasp of what the other is experiencing and thus, as opposed to empathy, does not entail

experiencing any type of emotion (Goldie, 2000, p. 181). In thinking about the other's emotions personally we assume that the individual has her own distinctive perspective from which she perceives the world and her place in it and we try to explain her thought processes in the framework provided by this particular perspective. Understanding the other's emotions entails first being able to say what type of emotion he is experiencing and the object of his emotion but this is not enough. In chapter 2, I have argued that emotions are patterns of salience and they provide us with information about the world as viewed from a particular perspective. In consequence, unless the situation is not simple, such as fearing a bear that you encounter when hiking in the woods, understanding of the other's emotions depends also on the extent of your understanding of the biographical background of the person, his past experiences, upbringing, character traits, cultural context, social situation, etc. Intellectual understanding of the other person's emotions and being able to explain them does not, however, amount to empathy.

Empathy must also be distinguished from emotional contagion. (Goldie, 2000, pp. 189-95; Coplan, 2011). Emotional contagion refers to the phenomenon in which one reacts automatically to the other's expressions of emotion imitating her involuntarily, and then ends up experiencing the same emotion himself. Empathizing is not an automatic process. It requires conscious effort as it entails suppressing our own perspective and taking on someone else's perspective. In contrast to empathy, emotional contagion is not a conscious process; it is very quick, automatic and involuntary. It does not require any deliberate effort and usually occurs below the threshold of awareness. In emotional contagion emotions are not experienced imaginatively or in relation to another individual; we experience them as our own. The other individual's emotion triggers the observer's emotion and the observer shares the other's emotion, but the sharing of the emotion, as opposed to empathy, does not come about as a result of

adopting the other's point of view. Emotional contagion may precede empathy, but it is not necessary. Newly born infants crying in response to the calls of other babies in distress might be an example of emotional contagion. Since experiencing empathy requires the awareness that the source of the emotional state is the other person and not the self, to turn emotional contagion into empathy entails the development of a sense of self that emerges around the age of about 12 months (Hoffman, 2000).

To sum up then, empathy is the process in which the empathizer, while maintaining the differentiation between himself and the target, comes to experience the same mental states or very similar ones to those of the target through imaginatively experiencing the target's experiences from the target's perspective.

4.2.1. Empathy and Sympathy

Martha Nussbaum proposes a central role for empathy in our ethical life and recommends literature and particularly novels as a means to develop our capacity for empathy (1990, 1995). She maintains that the reading of novels, which cultivates readers' empathetic abilities, can ensure the extension of concern, help us recognize the demands of our fellow citizens on us, which we readily recognize in the case of our kith and kin, and might eventually pave the way for solidarity between otherwise detached citizens. (2001, pp. 432-33). Reading novels, Nussbaum claims, "exercises the muscles of the imagination, making people capable of inhabiting for a time the world of a different person, and seeing the meaning of events in that world from the outsider's viewpoint" (2001, p. 431). She proposes that the study of literature be included in the curriculum as this can make a significant contribution to political education by fostering the empathetic capacities of people and forging the bonds between citizens. On her account, the education for citizenship entails the extension of concern, through empathy, to the

other individuals with whom we share the broader social world where empathy means "the imaginative exercise of putting oneself in that person's place" (p. 342).

I agree with Nussbaum on these points. One thing to note however is that the link between empathy and sympathy might not be so straightforward as Nussbaum seems to assume. In other words, empathetic skills might not always bring about sympathy and altruistic motivations. To give an example from literature, Iago makes use of his empathetic skills to manipulate Othello, but he has absolutely no sympathy for him. Empathy and sympathy are separate although closely related phenomena. Empathy in some cases leads to sympathy, but does not necessarily have to.

Relying on Eisenberg, I define sympathy as "an emotional response that consists of feeling sorrow or concern for the distressed or needy other (rather than feeling the same emotion as the other person)" (Eisenberg, 2000, p. 678).

Empathy and sympathy are separate phenomena, although they both involve affective changes in the observer in response to the emotional state of another person. Sympathetic emotions are often triggered by the emotions of the other; however, they are qualitatively different from them. We sympathize with people who we think are suffering. As opposed to this, it is possible to empathize both with people who are suffering and enjoying themselves. Sympathy involves having concern for another's well-being but it does not involve imaginatively experiencing the emotional experience of the other individual. Empathy does not in and of itself involve concern for the other or the desire to alleviate his stress. In these aspects, sympathy and empathy are fundamentally different.

Coplan observes that scholars, often conflating empathy and sympathy, fail to recognize the differences between relating to the other empathetically and sympathetically. She brings to

light the most important difference between empathy and sympathy saying: "Just as I can sympathize with another without trying to imagine the world from her perspective, I can also empathize with another without experiencing concern for her well-being" (Coplan, 2004, p. 145). Empathy is thus neither necessary nor sufficient for sympathy. It is not necessary because one can still have concern for the other without being able to experience the mental states the other is experiencing. It is not sufficient because it is possible that one is able to imagine the other person's experiences from the inside but still not care (Goldie, 2000, p. 180).

On the other hand, empathy can serve as a source of information by enabling one to understand how others may be emotionally affected in a given situation and as such can directly inform moral judgements and actions. Empathizing with another, that is being able to see the world in the way the other sees it while recognizing that he is different from us in some aspects like race, gender, social background, character traits, etc., might, despite all these differences, make us recognize the similarities we share with them, such as our shared vulnerability to emotional and physical pain. Empathy allowing us to feel with the other whom we do not know, or even like, then, might make us feel concern for the other.

However, the empathetic ability to understand others' emotional states can be exploited and used in the service of immoral behavior, such as torture or emotional manipulation. One can employ the information acquired through empathy to take advantage of the emotional states generated in the other and develop behavioral strategies that will allow him to benefit himself. We often hear about people, sometimes referred to as "con-artists", who use their empathetic skills to induce trust in their victims and make them susceptible to their scams. Whether empathy results in prosocial or immoral consequences depends on other variables, such as the acquired behavioral tendencies of the agent, his moral values, the presence of other emotions such as envy

or guilt, as well as the nature of the relationship between observer and target. The main role of empathy in morality is epistemic. Empathy influences moral judgments by providing information about the emotional states of people but does not guarantee that these judgements are morally appropriate. There is a much more complex link between empathy and morality than the one suggested by the widely held belief that empathy produces moral behavior.

In some situations, empathy by causing a person to show partiality toward the members of their own social group can ultimately lead to morally suspect judgements. There is empirical research supporting that empathy is stronger between members of the same social group. A recent social neuroscience experiment conducted by Avenanti, Sirigu, & Aglioti demonstrated that neural responses to others' pain are stronger when the other person is a member of one's own ethnic group (Avenanti et al., 2010). In another study, higher activity was found in the region of the brain associated with empathy when participants saw fans of their favorite football team in pain compared to when they saw the members of the rival team in pain (Hein et al., 2010). Thus, a moral judgment based on the information that empathy provides cannot automatically be deemed as a morally appropriate judgment.

4.3. Imaginative Engagement with Fictions

Issues concerning the role of imagination in our engagements with fictions and our emotional responses in this process have been the subject of a great deal of debate among philosophers in recent years. One of the issues much discussed regarding our imaginative engagement with fictions concerns whether in this process we typically take the point of view of a character in the story or the role of an onlooker. Different accounts have been given by various philosophers concerning this issue, some of which I will discuss below.

4.3.1. Empathetic Engagement with Fictions

Considerable attention has been given to empathy in the philosophy of literature. Various accounts concerning readers' imaginative involvement with literary works have been developed, which highlight the role of empathy in our engagements with fictional characters (Feagin, 1996; Currie, 1995; Nussbaum, 1990, 1995, 2001).

Nussbaum in her book *Love's Knowledge*, as discussed above, maintains that being attentive to the subtleties in the text, empathizing with characters and seeing the world from their viewpoint will improve us morally. In her later works, *Poetic Justice* (1995) and *Upheavals of Thought* (2001) she further explores the relationship between morality, emotions and literature. In *Poetic Justice*, she focuses on the "ability to imagine what it is like to live the life of another person" (1995, p. 7) and maintains that the literary imagination is "an essential ingredient of an ethical stance that asks us to concern ourselves with the good of other people whose lives are distant from our own" (1995, p. xvi;). Again, in *Upheavals of Thought*, Nussbaum argues that the reader through imaginative engagement with novels becomes a participant in the social struggles of the protagonists. This provides the reader with a form of moral perception that learning the "facts about classes, races, nationalities, sexual orientations" cannot provide (2001, p. 432). Studies in empirical psychology concur with Nussbaum's view that reading fictions increases our ability to empathize (Mar et al, 2006, 2009; Johnson, 2012; Kidd & Castano, 2013). A study demonstrates that regular readers of fiction do better on Baron-Cohen's test--a test that asks subjects to infer a person's mental state from a photograph that shows his or her eyes (Baron-Cohen et al, 2001)--than regular readers of nonfiction. (Mar et al., 2006). Another study conducted by Kidd and Castano (2013) has suggested that reading literary fictions influences our ability to understand other people's mental states better compared to reading

nonfiction, popular fiction or nothing at all. Kidd and Castano's study also indicates that reading literary works "increases self-reported empathy", "expand[s] our knowledge of others' lives, helping us recognize our similarity to them" and "reduces the strangeness of others" (p. 377).

Apart from Nussbaum's account, much of the recent discussions of empathetic engagement with fictional characters has centered on the simulation theory. One such prominent account is given by Gregory Currie. Currie proposes a theory of imagination applying the simulation theory developed in the field of philosophy of mind to our imaginative engagement with fictions (1995, 1997). Currie suggests that fictions can provide us with simulated, 'off-line' emotional responses that could not be achieved otherwise. Before I move on to explaining Currie's account in more detail, I would like to discuss briefly the simulation theory developed by various philosophers of mind, which lies at the basis of his account.

Simulation theory is one of the two competing groups of theories that have emerged in the philosophy of mind to account for the human ability to understand and explain actions or psychological states of other people. The first group of theories, called the 'theory-theory', holds that we understand and explain other people's minds by employing a theory, an explanatory framework that identifies causal connections both amongst mental states and between mental states and external events which we tacitly or explicitly endorse about the functioning of the human mind. According to the other group of theories, the simulation theory, we understand other people's behaviors and mental states by replicating their thoughts, beliefs and emotions through the use of our imagination, i.e., by simulation. In the simulation process, we use our own mind as a model of the person's mind we simulate.

Various accounts that differ in their details have been given by different philosophers to explain the simulation process (Goldman, 1989; Gordon, 1986; Heal, 1986, 1995, 1998). In one

view simulation is linked with the capacity for reasoning. If we have the knowledge of another person's beliefs or thoughts as our starting point, we can infer what other beliefs or thoughts these mental states will lead to by using our rational capacity. Here, the background assumption that is needed for the simulation of other people's thought processes is that the other person's reasoning processes function in the same way as ours, or as one theorist advocating this approach puts, "they are like me in being thinkers, […] they possess the same fundamental cognitive capacities and propensities that I do." (Heal, 1995, p. 47).[25] This argument is based on a conception of our shared rationality with others. In coming to decide what beliefs or mental states the other person will eventually reach, we start out with his beliefs, although we may not be sharing these beliefs or agree with them. Then we employ our own rationality, tacitly assuming that the other is very much like us in his reasoning. Thus, if I know my professor thinks his student John is an honest person, in simulating my professor's though processes I will think that John is not going to cheat in the exam. The underlying assumption here is that the other person's reasoning processes works in the same way as mine does.

In another view, simulation is based on perspective-shifting. In simulating another, I imaginatively occupy her situation and try to enter her perspective. I use myself as a model of the other and run my own psychological processes 'off-line'. This way I come to see the world as the other sees it, that is, from the inside or from her first-person perspective (Gordon, 1995a). Gordon describes this process as 'recentering our egocentric maps' onto the other (Gordon, p. 63). On this view, in cases where we are not so different from the other in terms of values, beliefs, desires, preferences and emotional dispositions, etc., projecting our own perspective onto the other can be adequate to explain their actions and beliefs. However, in cases where there are

[25] Heal calls her particular version of simulation theory a theory of 'co-cognition' (1998).

considerable differences between us and the other person regarding values, beliefs, desires, etc. we need to make 'imaginative adjustments' to minimize these differences.

Currie applies the simulation theory to our imaginative engagement with fictions (1995). He describes simulation as the kind of imagination in which “we are able […] to feel as the character feels” (p. 256). On this view, the mental operation of simulation allows the belief-desire system to run “offline”. This means that the belief-desire system of the simulator is disconnected from his own beliefs and desires. Nevertheless, it continues to operate in an otherwise normal way, and now that the simulator has taken up the other’s perspective, it gives rise to mental states in which he would be if he were in the other’s situation.

Simulation theory holds that one has to align his psychology with the psychology of the character that he is trying to simulate. If I want to know how someone else would feel in a certain situation, I must not only put myself in his situation, but also take on his beliefs about the situation and then imagine how I would feel. If I simulate Albert, as Currie explains:

> [W]hile Albert believes p and desires q, I, in empathizing with him, come to believe^{1} p and desire^{1} q, where ‘believing^{1}’ and ‘desiring^{1}’ denote states that bear systematic resemblances to believing and desiring […]. [T]hey are like real beliefs and desires in respect of content…and they are like real beliefs and desires in terms of internal causal role, but unlike them in terms of external causal role […]. I-states are blocked off from behavior. They are, as people sometimes say, ‘off-line. (Currie, 1997, pp. 67-8)

For example, when I am watching a movie, I see the character running away from a bear chasing him. I ascribe fear to him. According to the simulation theory, I do this by substituting the beliefs of the character (that is, I am in a forest and chased by a bear) for my beliefs (for example the belief that I am home and safe) and allow my belief-desire system to process the

substituted input. In this way, I discover that I would feel fear, therefore I ascribe fear to the character in the movie.

According to Currie, simulation is related to morality as it provides access to the mental states of the person we are simulating and gets us to experience what it would feel like to do the things he does. Thus, imaginative engagement with fictions, by giving us the opportunity to experience emotions and other mental states involved in many different scenarios, assists us in the process of moral deliberation (1995, p. 257). In Currie's words,

> We imagine ourselves in a certain situation which the fiction describes, imagining ourselves to have the same relevant beliefs, desires and values as the character whose situation it is. If our imagining goes well, it will tell us something about how we would respond to the situation, and what it would be like to experience it: a response and a phenomenology we can then transfer to the character. That way we learn something about the character. More importantly from the point of view of moral knowledge, we learn something about ourselves and about the things we regard, or might regard, as putative values. (p. 257)

Moreover, Currie suggests that if we simulate an immoral character, we may end up becoming immoral and we might come to "value that which is not valuable" (p. 258). As he says, "fictions that encourage secondary imaginings, while providing signposts for those imaginings which systematically distort their outcomes, may do moral damage by persuading us to value that which is not valuable" (p. 258).[26]

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[26] Currie distinguishes two types of imagining which he calls primary imagining and secondary imagining. Primary imagining is imagining a fictional proposition. Secondary imagining on the other hand is imagining what is fictional in an experiential way; in other words, it refers to the empathetic re-enactment of the character's situation (1995b, p. 152-53). However, as I argue below, Currie's empathetic reenactment of the character's situation or what he calls secondary imagining conflates what I call centrally imagining yourself in someone else's situation with centrally imagining being someone else.

An important point to note concerning Currie's account of simulation in our engagements with fictions is that the distinction between what is referred to above as centrally imagining oneself in another's situation and centrally imagining a situation from someone else's point of view is not clearly made. In centrally imagining a situation from another's point of view or what I have referred above as empathizing, we try to share the other's perspective and from this perspective imagine the situation. This provides us with experiential understanding and offers us the opportunity to understand another person from the inside. In centrally imagining myself in another situation, on the other hand, I imagine how *I* would experience a certain situation and how *I* would feel and think in this situation. In imagining this, I draw on my own repertoire and do not adopt a point of view in the imagining as in the case of empathizing. It is important to make this distinction clearly since these are two different types of imaginative mechanisms. The imaginative mechanism described in Currie's theory, conflating these two different mechanisms, corresponds to what Peter Goldie calls 'in-his-shoes imagining' which is a type of imagining that involves a mixture of characterizations of both the imaginer and the centrally imagined person (2000, p. 200). This being the case, it fails to explain how, as stated by Currie, through this process we both "learn something about the character" and "learn something about ourselves" at the same time. The significance of characterization and its deep and holistic nature seems to be undermined in this account (Goldie, 2000, p. 179). To be able to imagine how a person feels from the inside, it will not be sufficient to adopt only his current beliefs; we need to adopt also the overall repertoire that belongs specifically to him.

Through empathetic engagement, we connect with characters operating from various emotional schemas and experience how the world is seen from that perspective. When a reader empathizes with a character, she replicates that character's experience, but at the same time

maintains her own separate sense of self. It should not be assumed that empathizing with a character requires readers to think themselves as identical with that character. Empathy is an imaginative project and imagining from the inside what it is like for the character to experience a certain situation does not require any such blurring of boundaries between the self and the other. When I empathize with a character in reading a novel, it is possible to imagine what it is like to be her in her situation and have my own separate mental states.

There are some necessary conditions for the empathetic process to take place. First, there must be a narrative unfolding that ascribes actions and lines to the person I am centrally imagining. As I am centrally imagining her saying this or doing that, I must imagine experiencing her mental states from the inside. Second, being able to imagine another centrally entails having sufficient knowledge, a 'repertoire of substance' (Wollheim, 1984) about the other person or what Goldie calls 'substantial characterization' (2000, p. 195). Characterization involves both psychological facts about the person such as emotional dispositions and character traits and non-psychological facts such as his occupation, education, historical and cultural background, social relations and features of his embodiment such as being heavy-built. Characterization serves as the background for the situation imagined in the foreground (Goldie, 2000, p. 198) The extent of our knowledge about the person, his character traits, mental dispositions, past experiences, future expectations and the level of our sensitivity to the differences stemming from factors such as culture, religion or gender between our point of view and that of the other person will influence the degree of the success of the empathetic process. So, through empathizing with characters in works of fictions, we engage with their point of view and can come to a better understanding of how the world appears from their perspective.

There is a variety of narrative techniques which an author uses in order to evoke empathy in readers such as free indirect discourse, quoted monologue, and psycho-narration (Keen, 2007, pp. 96-7).[27] The following extract from Jane Austen's *Emma* exemplifies the free indirect discourse, also called the narrated monologue, in which "the narration includes an indirect quotation of the character's own thoughts or verbalization of feelings" (Cohan & Shires, 2003, p. 99):

> Never had she felt so agitated, mortified, grieved, at any circumstance in her life. She was most forcibly struck. The truth of his representation there was no denying. She felt it at her heart. How could she have been so brutal, so cruel to Miss Bates! --How could she have exposed herself to such ill opinion in any one she valued! And how suffer him to leave her without saying one word of gratitude, of concurrence, of common kindness! Time did not compose her. As she reflected more, she seemed but to feel it more. (Austen, 2006, chap.7)

Quoted monologue is the technique which presents the character's mental discourse by shifting from the third person of narration to the first person of thoughts. The extract below from Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* in which Raskolnikov thinks to himself is an example of this technique:

> "I want to attempt a thing like that and am frightened by these trifles," he thought, with an odd smile. "Hm... yes, all is in a man's hands and he lets it all slip from cowardice, that's an axiom. It would be interesting to know what it is men are most afraid of. Taking a new step, uttering a new word is what they fear most [...]. But I am talking too much. It's because I chatter that I do nothing. Or perhaps it is that I

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[27] See Cohn (1978, pp. 121-26) for detailed information on these techniques.

> chatter because I do nothing. I've learned to chatter this last month, lying for days together in my den thinking... of Jack the Giant-killer. Why am I going there now? Am I capable of that? Is that serious? It is not serious at all. It's simply a fantasy to amuse myself; a plaything! Yes, maybe it is a plaything. (Dostoyevsky, 2006, chap.1)

Psycho-narration, another technique the use of which is suggested to create empathy, gives the reader access to the inner lives of characters by describing the development of the mental states of a character over a long period of time or by expanding a mental instant (Cohn, 1978, p. 34):

> Emma continued to entertain no doubt of her being in love. Her ideas only varied as to the how much. At first, she thought it was a good deal; and afterwards, but little. She had great pleasure in hearing Frank Churchill talked of; and, for his sake, greater pleasure than ever in seeing Mr. and Mrs. Weston; she was very often thinking of him, and quite impatient for a letter, that she might know how he was, how were his spirits, how was his aunt, and what was the chance of his coming to Randall's again this spring. But, on the other hand, she could not admit herself to be unhappy, nor, after the first morning, to be less disposed for employment than usual; she was still busy and cheerful; and, pleasing as he was, she could yet imagine him to have faults; and farther, though thinking of him so much, and, as she sat drawing or working, forming a thousand amusing schemes for the progress and close of their attachment, fancying interesting dialogues, and inventing elegant letters; the conclusion of every imaginary declaration on his side was that she *refused him* [Austen's emphasis]. Their affection was always to subside into friendship. Everything tender and charming was to mark their

> parting; but still they were to part. When she became sensible of this, it struck her that she could not be very much in love; for in spite of her previous and fixed determination never to quit her father, never to marry, a strong attachment certainly must produce more of a struggle than she could foresee in her own feelings. (Austen, 2006, chap.13)

Nevertheless, reading an emotionally evocative novel does not always result in empathy with characters. Empathy might not come easily to everyone. Empathizing with the other might not be easy particularly when the person with whom we are trying to empathize is very different from ourselves. It might be relatively easier to adopt the repertoire and reconstruct the experiences of those who are similar to us in important ways; in terms of character traits, emotional dispositions, beliefs and values. In cases where the person we are trying to empathize with is very different from us, the empathetic process may encounter some difficulties as it is not easy to detach ourselves from our own repertoire, and adopt the others' so that it can constitute the background for the imaginative project in the foreground. The success of the empathetic process might, then, be influenced by the extent of the similarities between the person who is attempting to empathize and the person whom he is attempting to empathize (Goldie, 2000, p. 203). However, this does not mean that we cannot empathize with people who are different from us. It just means that we might need to exert more cognitive effort to see things from their point of view. Rather than taking an all-or nothing approach to empathy we can think of it as a process that admits of degrees. The success of the empathetic process requires relevant knowledge of that person. So, when an author wants his reader to empathize, he has to provide him with a lot of information about his character, i.e., he has to give a deep characterization of his character. This

is an important reason why I think novels are more apt to enhance our emotional understanding of others than other forms of narrative such as short stories and plays.

The success of the empathetic process will also be influenced by other factors. For example, some readers are less disposed by nature than others to engage emotionally with fictions and also less interested or skilled in centrally imagining (Goldie, 2000, p. 197). In addition to these factors, the quality of the attention a reader gives to the reading process and his fluency in the genre will necessarily influence the empathetic process (Keen, 2007, p. 72).

Empathy is an important mechanism readers engage in the course of reading fictional narratives. However, it is not the only one. I will discuss another way of imaginatively engaging with fictions that is based on acentral imagining. I will call this type of imaginative engagement 'reactive engagement'.[28]

4.3.2. Reactive engagement

As I have mentioned above, acentral imagining is imagining a situation from a point of view that is not internal to the scene imagined. It is imagining a situation as if one is watching it from a distance and not as someone present in the scene. In central imagining, I take the perspective of someone in the scene and imagine the situation from this internal perspective. Thus, in watching a movie or reading a book, if I centrally imagine someone who is about to be executed for a crime he did not commit, the emotions I experience will mirror those of the fictional character during his experience, in this case for example fear and indignation. I have called this type of imaginative mechanism empathy above. In acentrally imagining a fictional character, I do not try to recreate the mental states of the character in my imagination as they are from the inside as I do in central imagining. So, in the example given above instead of feeling

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[28] This term is inspired by Wollheim's terminology. Wollheim uses the term 'reactive audience' for the type of audience engaging with a work through acentral imagination.

fear or indignation like him, I might feel compassion for him. This, then, would not be empathy, as the emotions of the reader and the character are not qualitatively the same. Various accounts have been given by different philosophers about how we imaginatively engage with fictions through acentral imagination (Carroll, 2001; Goldie, 2003a, 2003b). One such account has been given by Noël Carroll. Carroll defends that readers typically involve with fictions through acentral imagining and not through central imagining. As Carroll affirms:

> We do not typically emote with respect to fictions by simulating a character's mental state; rather, we might argue, we respond emotionally to the fiction from the outside. Our point of view is that of an observer of the situation and not, as simulation theory suggests that of the participant in the situation. When a character is about to be ambushed, we feel fear for her; we do not imagine ourselves to be her and then experience "her" fear. (2001, pp. 311-12)

To support his claim that we usually do not take on characters' points of view or simulate their mental states, Carroll argues that the objects of readers' emotions are different from those of the characters' emotions and thus these emotions cannot be said to be the same. He explains that while the character feels fear because she is about to be ambushed, we *respond* to the character's situation and feel fear for her. *Responding* to the character's situation emotionally is totally different from simulating her fear. In such cases we might respond with emotions, but these emotions are not identical to those of the characters. When the character feels grief, we feel pity for her. The object of our emotion is her situation in which she feels grief but the object of her grief might be, for example, the loss of her child. In this case the object of her emotion is different from the object of our emotions. Thus, we do not typically simulate her mental state,

her grief; rather, we respond emotionally to her situation with a different emotion which is pity (2001, p. 313).

Another reason, why the emotions of readers and characters are different is that, Carroll explains, we as readers often have more or different information about the situations than the characters do. He refers to the opening scene of the movie "*Jaws*" to illustrate this point. He says, our emotions are not the same as those of the young woman on the screen who is about to be the shark's first victim. As she swims in the ocean, she feels delight, she is carefree and happy. But we experience different emotions, fear and anxiety, knowing what she does not know; that is, a shark is lurking just beneath her (1998b, pp. 90-91).

The view that only one type of imaginative mechanism, whether it is central or acentral imagination, can be considered as a typical response to our imaginative involvement with fictions remains inadequate to explain the process of our imaginative engagement with fictions. In the process of reading, often the reader switches from one imaginative mechanism to the other depending on the mode of presentation and by doing so engages with different perspectives. In fact, understanding a novel often requires the reader to switch from one perspective to the other during the reading process guided by the text. Different perspectives will have different emotional imports and understanding the interplay between these perspectives will be crucial for understanding the text (Goldie, 2003b). Sometimes the emotional responses elicited by these different perspectives will be concordant and sometimes not (Goldie, 2003b, pp. 209-10). For example, taking the perspective of one of the characters we might share his emotion of revulsion and from the narrator's perspective we might be invited to respond with horror. In this case the emotional responses elicited by different perspectives will be concordant. In another narrative, we might first be invited to empathize with a character and share his anger but then from another

character’s perspective or the narrator’s perspective we might be called upon to respond with amusement to the anger of the character. In such cases the emotional responses invited by the different perspectives will be discordant. To understand the characters, their point of view and emotional schemas therefore we need to be able to shift our perspectives. A text can thus present situations in ways which sometimes entails taking an internal perspective and sometimes an external perspective. Thus, the ability to engage with different perspectives is often crucial to understanding the text.

In this section I have examined two different types of emotional mechanisms we engage with in our encounters with fiction and I emphasized the importance of being able to engage with a diverse range of perspectives for properly understanding a text. In the next section I will deal with some problems that our emotional engagements with fictions raise.

4.4. Problems

I will address two problems that our emotional responses to fictions raise in this section. Although the problems that our emotional engagement with fictions raise cannot be confined to two only, I want to address these two specifically as I believe they are the most important ones that must be addressed at least to clarify the role of emotions in our imaginative engagement with fictions. The first problem is often referred to as the ‘paradox of fiction’. The second is the problem that is dubbed as ‘the puzzle of imaginative resistance’. I will begin with the paradox of fiction.

4.4.1. Paradox of Fiction

The problem which is often referred to as the ‘paradox of fiction’ concerns how it is possible for a person to feel emotions towards a character whom she knows to be fictional, given that being emotionally moved by something entails the belief that the object of the emotion exists.

The paradox of fiction suggests that our emotional responses to fictions involve contradictory beliefs. An emotional response entails a belief that the situation or the person is actual. However, if we say we respond with an emotional response to a character or a situation that we believe to be fictional, then we will have to admit that we are holding two contradictory beliefs at the same time: The situation or the character is actual and not actual. To pity Anna Karenina, I must believe that the person I have pity for is suffering. Yet, I know that the object of my pity, Anna Karenina, does not exist. This puts me in the very odd situation that I know that Anna Karenina does not exist and therefore is not suffering, but I still seem to feel pity for her. How is this problem to be solved?

The debate about the paradox of fiction have begun with Colin Radford's article, "How Can We be Moved by the Fate of Anna Karenina?" (1975). In the article Radford suggests that "our being moved in certain ways by works of art, though very 'natural' to us and in that way only too intelligible, involves us in inconsistency and so incoherence" (p. 78). Radford remarks:

> Suppose then that you read an account of the terrible sufferings of a group of people. If you are at all humane, you are unlikely to be unmoved by what you read. The account is likely to awaken or reawaken feelings of anger, horror, dismay or outrage and, if you are tender-hearted, you may well be moved to tears. You may even grieve.
>
> But now suppose you discover that the account is false. If the account had caused you to grieve, you could not continue to grieve. If as the account sank in, you were told and believed that it was false this would make tears impossible, unless they were tears of rage. If you learned later that the account was false, you would feel that in being moved to tears you had been fooled, duped. It would seem then that I can only be moved by someone's plight if I believe that something terrible has happened to him. If I do not

> believe that he has not and is not suffering or whatever, I cannot grieve or be moved to tears. (1975, p. 68)

Radford's suggestion that it is paradoxical to have emotional responses to fictional characters has generated considerable attention. In his essay that surveys the literature on the paradox of fiction, Levinson (1997) formulates the paradox as follows:

> (a) We often have emotions for fictional characters and situations known to be purely fictional. (b) Emotions for objects logically presuppose beliefs in the existence and features of those objects. (c) We do not harbor beliefs in the existence and features of objects known to be fictional. (1997, pp. 22-3)

Various proposals have been developed by philosophers to solve this paradox. One of these proposals is developed by Kendall Walton who puts forward a theory of representation in the arts in his *Mimesis as Make-Believe* (1990). Walton, drawing an analogy between children's games of make-believe and adults' responses to fictions, proposes that similar to props children use in games of make-believe, fictions function as props for the audience (p. 69). An object is a prop in a game of make-believe if it prescribes such-and-such imaginings for the players of that game. The role of the props in such games of make-believe is to generate fictional truths. A fictional truth, as defined by Walton, "consists in there being a prescription or mandate in some context to imagine something" (p. 39). For example, in a game of make-believe in which stumps are imagined to be bears, the presence of a stump generates the fictional truth that a bear is present. In other words, fictions generate fictional truths by prescribing certain imaginings for the audience. Such fictional truths also include propositions such as one is feeling pity for a tragic character. Walton suggests that we are not in fact emotionally moved in our engagement with fictions; instead, when we, for example, watch King Kong, it is only fictional that we fear this

giant gorilla. This is not to deny that the audience may be undergoing an emotion of horror very intensely when watching a horror movie but still this emotion of horror is not the same as the emotion of horror that we have in response to real events (p. 247). Our emotional responses to fictional events which Walton refers to as 'quasi-emotions' have the same phenomenology with genuine emotions, i.e., our emotional responses to real life events. However, according to Walton's account, there is a difference between these two types of emotions: quasi-emotions are not subject to the same constraints as genuine emotions since the former involves make-believe while the latter involves beliefs (p. 245). The relation between beliefs and actions is different from the relation between imaginings and actions: the belief I have motivates me to act in a certain way whereas the make-belief or the imagining does not motivate me to act. Walton writes, "Fear emasculated by subtracting its distinctive motivational force is not fear at all." (p. 202) Thus, quasi-fear is distinguished from genuine fear by the absence of a motivational component. We often describe ourselves for example as pitying Anna Karenina or as horrified by the monster in the movie but these emotions do not involve beliefs or the motivational forces their correspondent real-life emotions involve and this is because we know that we are involved in a form of pretense and consequently, do not believe that the portrayed events are real (p. 195, p. 204). As Walton remarks:

> Charles is watching a horror movie about a terrible green slime. He cringes in his seat as the slime oozes slowly but relentlessly over the earth, destroying everything in its path. Soon a greasy head emerges from the undulating mass, and two beady eyes fix on the camera. The slime, picking up speed, oozes on a new course straight toward the viewers. Charles emits a shriek and clutches desperately at his chair. Afterwards, still shaken, he confesses that he was "terrified" of the slime. Was he terrified of it? I think not. Granted

> Charles's condition is similar in certain obvious respects to that of a person frightened of a pending real-world disaster. His muscles are tensed, he clutches his chair, his pulse quickens, his adrenaline flows. Let us call this physiological-psychological state quasi-fear. But it alone does not constitute genuine fear. (Walton, 1990, p. 196)

In Walton's analysis, when we are watching the horror movie*, The Green Slime*, a state of 'quasi-fear' is generated in us but our fear of the slime involves neither a belief that we are in danger nor any desire to run away. Fictional truths being imagined are not only those propositions concerning fictional characters and events but also the ones that concern what we are feeling as we are watching it. Thus according to Walton it is not true but fictional that we fear the slime (pp. 241-55). In this case we can say that we are fictionally fearing the Green Slime and this is part of our game of make-believe. So the solution proposed to the paradox of fiction by Walton is that in watching a horror movie one experiences quasi-fear which means that he is pretending to be afraid, as part of a game of make-believe in which the movie is a prop. The suggestion that we are fictionally afraid of the Green Slime in our game of make-believe is consistent with our knowledge that the Green Slime does not exist. Although this account does away with the problem of the contradictory beliefs involved in the paradox of fiction, it raises another question: Are our emotions in response to fictions not genuine?

Walton's claim that our emotional responses to fiction are quasi-emotions and so are not genuine has been criticized by a number of philosophers. One of his critics, David Novitz, remarks:

> [M]any theatre-goers and readers believe that they are actually upset, excited, amused, afraid, and even sexually aroused by the exploits of fictional characters. It seems

> altogether inappropriate in such cases to maintain that our theatre-goers merely make-believe that they are in these emotional states. (1987, p. 241)

Noël Carroll, too, criticizes Walton on this basis, suggesting that the intensity of the sadness we feel for a character's tragic fate implies that we are genuinely moved (Carroll, 1990, pp. 73-4). However, considering that Walton in his account states explicitly that quasi-emotions and genuine emotions have the same phenomenology, these criticisms based on phenomenology are not well-founded. According to Walton what makes our emotion a quasi-emotion rather than a genuine emotion is not the intensity or the phenomenology of the emotion but their cognitive components; that is, the former involves imagining whereas the latter involves belief.

That said, there are still good reasons to be critical of the view that the emotions we experience in our engagements with fictions are not genuine. To put the paradox of fiction and the problem of quasi-emotions in perspective, it might be fruitful to consider our emotional responses to non-actual events (Goldie, 2003a; Moran, 1994). If we consider our emotional responses to other types of non-actual events, this solution to the paradox of fiction that posits quasi-emotions remains inadequate. Similar to fictional cases, there are many real life, non-actual cases such as "things might have happened to us but didn't, things we might have done, how things could have turned out differently," which do not involve a belief in the existence of the emotion eliciting situation (Moran, 1994, p. 78). Nevertheless, we conceive of our emotions in such cases as genuine. That we have genuine emotions in response to such non-actual events might give us good reasons to think that we have genuine emotions in engaging with fictions. We commonly have emotions in response to what we believe and know does not exist. The embarrassment one feels on remembering something silly he has done in the past, or the horror one has on imagining his future self in old age having all the weaknesses or diseases the old age

brings might be examples of such cases (Goldie, 2003a, p. 57). In such cases there is only rememberings or imaginings. Examples can be multiplied. This shows that genuine emotions can also arise in response to imaginings. These emotions which we daily experience in our lives do not seem to raise any concern about their irrationality although they do not presuppose the existence of their intentional objects in the actual world. Thus, it seems that it is not necessary that the target of a genuine emotion should actually exist.

Alternatively, if we think both our emotional responses to fictions and such non-actual events are irrational, then the paradox in question will not be of fiction since what makes the paradox distinctively specific to fictions will be lost as it will equally apply to the non-actual cases (Moran, 1994, p. 78). However, I do not think that our emotions in both of these cases are irrational. In the following section, I will give reasons for the view that our emotions to both fictional events and non-actual events are genuine.

a. Recognition-response Tie. The reason we tend to think that there is a paradox involved when we feel pity in response to a fictional character lies in the formulation of the paradox of fiction. The paradox is framed in such a way that it leads us to the idea that the sense of fictionality must be overcome if we are to have genuine emotional responses to fictions (Moran, 1994, p. 82). In the formulation of the paradox it is assumed that we respond with genuine emotions only to those things that we believe to be actual. In other words, the paradox takes for granted that emotions are genuine only as long as their objects are actual. If one defines 'genuine emotion' as requiring a belief in the actuality of its target, then the paradox might seem to be unsolvable. But we do not have to define genuine emotion in this way. If we do not accept the definition that the paradox assumes, the paradox will dissolve. Consider the following passage:

> 8-year-old Francis, while struggling with his older brother Luke for the possession of a newly sharpened knife fell and the point of the knife penetrated deeply into his eye. He was immediately taken to hospital by his parents.

On reading this sentence, I respond with a certain emotional reaction, for example I recoil with horror, without even considering its actuality or fictionality. This sentence might be taken from a local newspaper or someone might have made it up. The 8-year-old Francis may exist and may have damaged his eye in struggling with his brother Luke, or he may not exist, may have never existed and such a situation may have never occurred. Independent of the actuality of the event, I react with horror on reading this sentence and imagining the knife penetrating his eye.

A situation, regardless of whether it is actual or imagined will elicit unreflectively the same or a very similar emotion from us in most situations. This is because emotions are typically perceptions of their objects as possessing some evaluative property. Recognition of this property in a certain situation or object elicits a certain kind of response from the perceiver. We are typically brought up to recognize some evaluative property in an object and to respond to it in a certain way. Emotions involve this tie between recognition and response. (Goldie, 2000, pp. 28-35) For example while I am watching the lions wandering in their enclosure at the zoo from behind the iron bars, I may recoil in fear when one of the lions come closer to the iron bar and roars at me. In recoiling with fear, I do not engage in any conscious deliberation. I recognize a situation as dangerous and this recognition elicits a certain emotional response from me, in this case fear. I respond with fear to the situation although I know that I am safe and the lion cannot get out of its enclosure.

Emotions are similar to sensory perceptions in many respects, as I have argued in Chapter 2. According to the cognitive-perceptual theory for which I have argued, emotions do not

typically result from conscious deliberation. They are automatic and result from our perceptions of how things are. At the base of our emotions there are paradigm scenarios through which we have learned our emotions. A paradigm scenario provides first, a paradigmatic situation with specific features and second a paradigmatic response to this specific situation. Our emotions are constructed and etched into our cognitive structure through the paradigm scenarios we have encountered especially in childhood. We interpret the situations through the filter of these paradigm scenarios. Thus, paradigm scenarios shape our automatic responses. Once our emotional schemas are triggered, the automatic pilot is switched on and we enter into a certain mode. That they are automatic and involuntary however should not be taken to mean that they cannot be educated. In fact, it is by virtue of these paradigm scenarios that our emotions are educable. When we are faced with a new perspective through our encounters with other people and fictional works, we may be forced to rearrange our perceptions and cognitions. I will elaborate on this in Chapter 6.

Tamar Gendler (2010, pp. 227-32) discusses Antonio Damasio's neuroscientific work to account for the paradox of fiction. Damasio's study shows that patients with damage to the ventromedial prefrontal cortex lack autonomic responses to emotionally disturbing images, and that such patients also have an inclination to engage in high-risk behaviors despite being fully aware of the risks these behaviours involve (1994, 1999). An implication of this study is that individuals who lack somatized emotional responses to hypothetical or imagined courses of action are unable to transfer the knowledge of the consequences of these actions into action-guiding behavior. This, in turn, suggests that the capacity to respond emotionally to imagined situations is significant for practical reasoning. Tamar, in the light of this study suggests that "in

a well-functioning mind even when content is explicitly and consciously represented as imaginary or hypothetical, a vivid emotional response is to be expected" (p. 227).

Literary texts are 'critically pre-focused' to enable the reader to engage with them emotionally (Carrol, 2001, p. 228). In other words, texts are designed to draw our attention to some specific aspects of situations and trigger our emotional paradigms by making salient certain features of the situation and the characters. Once we recognize a situation in a certain way, the relevant emotional response will be elicited from us. For example, the reader perceives a character to be in pain and this perception elicits pity for that character. It is the way in which the text is emotionally pre-focused that determines the reader's emotional response. The text will activate readers' shared emotional paradigms to get the readers emotionally involved with characters and cause some concern on the part of the readers about the fate of these fictional characters. Due to the commonalities between our emotional paradigmatic structures most narratives are able to elicit the kind of emotion they want to elicit. Thus literary texts not only represent situations and characters but also guide us in how to engage with them emotionally.

In reading novels, it is possible that a morally sensitive, decent person might find herself empathizing with an immoral character to some extent. Much depends on the mode of presentation. Empathizing as I have discussed above is not an intellectual grasp of the emotions of the character. It is an emotional response. To elicit this empathetic emotional response from the reader authors might direct the imagination of the reader to his positive aspects. The ways things are presented to us shape our emotional responses. A text might depict a certain situation by making certain things salient. The same situation might be depicted in another way, this time by making other aspects of the situation salient. The use of certain literary devices prompts us to respond in certain ways. Nevertheless, an emotionally pre-focused text does not by itself arouse

the reader's emotional engagement. The reader's attitude is equally important. The reader must be willing and able to engage with the text emotionally. In some cases, though, the actual emotion elicited from the reader may not correspond to the emotion the author intends to elicit. This issue will be considered in the section concerning imaginative resistance. Now, I will proceed by looking into the nature of literary language and devices and explain why the craft of the novelist is an important element for our emotional engagement with fictions.

b. Literary Language and Narrative Techniques. Another important point to be recognized regarding our emotional engagement with fictions is that it is, in fact, the use of a powerful language and a compelling style that makes the text emotionally palpable. If we were to remove the stylistic elements from the text, it would lose a great part of its emotional appeal. A description of the characters and a summary of the plot, no matter how detailed they might be, will not move us emotionally in the same way that they would if we read the text itself. Reading the synopsis of a novel will not create the same effect on us as reading the novel itself since in the latter the use of artistic techniques increase the intensity of our emotional responses.In the second chapter, I argued that having an emotion about something indicates that the individual having the emotion perceives that thing as significant. The novel, then, to draw the attention of the reader and get him to care about the characters, has to be told in a certain way. (Robinson, 2005, p. 114). Stylistic devices express vividly and forcefully what is meant to be conveyed and thus enhance the communicative capacity of literature. Many narratives elicit emotional responses from their audience by employing narrative techniques such as foregrounding or unreliable narrator.[29] For example, by employing the technique of unreliable narration plot-relevant information may be presented or withheld in ways that create surprise, uncertainty, and

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[29] Wayne C. Booth is credited with first using the term "unreliable narrator" in his *Rhetorics of Fiction*. (1961, p.158).

suspense as to what will happen, or how things will happen so that the reader gets interested in the text and the characters. The technique of foregrounding indicates a departure from a rule or convention which may be social, cultural, linguistic, literary or some other kind. (Van Peer, 1986, p. 21). There are different types of foregrounding. Using parallelism in texts, for example, is a type of foregrounding. Parallelism refers to the technique whereby a phrase, a clause, a word, etc. with excessive repetition is promoted into the foreground of the reader's perception. By employing this technique, the author uses the same or similar pattern over and over again although the normal flow of language would permit variation. The following lines from Charles Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities* illustrate this technique:

> It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to heaven, we were all going direct the other way--in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only. (Dickens, 1994, chap.1)

Another foregrounding technique is deviation. Neologism, archaism, metaphor, ungrammatical sentences, oxymorons are examples of linguistic deviation. The title of Dylan Thomas' poem "A grief ago" (1936) illustrates linguistic deviation: The adverb ago is often, if not always, used with expressions of time such as a month ago, a year ago, etc. and not with emotions as in the poem title.[30]

[30] Hoey, 2005, p. 176.

Literary works through the use of these devices disrupt the reader's routine perceptions creating awareness of views and preconceptions adopted automatically without being questioned so that the reader is forced to see things from a different perspective. In this way commonplace views can be replaced by new and fresh insights. The technique, by way of disrupting the readers' expectations, is meant to shake their sensibilities through its representation of reality and challenge the dominant ideas of society (Van Peer, 1986; Hakemulder, 2006, p. 546). Empirical research studying the effect of literary language on readers' emotions have also confirmed that foregrounding techniques used in the text, in addition to drawing the reader's attention and slowing down the processing of the text, increase the emotional responses of the reader, enhance aesthetic appreciation and bring about changes in the reader's perceptions of the extra-textual world. (Van Peer, 1986; Miall & Kuiken, 1994, 1995; Hakemulder, 2004). Hoorn (2001) conducted experiments with electroencephalograms, revealing that foregrounding techniques, particularly semantic incongruence in metaphors, give a shock or surprise to the reader. Another study based on the comparisons made between the level of activation in emotion-related brain regions in response to metaphors and their literal counterparts has reached the conclusion that metaphors are emotionally more evocative than their literal counterparts (Citron & Goldberg, 2014).[31]

4.4.2. The Puzzle of Imaginative Resistance

The puzzle of imaginative resistance which is often traced back to the remarks of David Hume in his *Of the Standard of Taste* has been the subject of a great deal of interest in recent years. In this essay, Hume remarks:

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[31] In this study, 37 conventional metaphorical expressions were compared to their literal expressions such as "She looked at him sweetly" as opposed to "She looked at him kindly".

> Whatever speculative errors may be found in the polite writings of any age or country, they detract but little from the value of those compositions. There needs but a certain turn of thought or imagination to make us enter into all the opinions, which then prevailed, and relish the sentiments or conclusions derived from them. But a very violent effort is requisite to change our judgment of manners, and excite sentiments of approbation or blame, love or hatred, different from those to which the mind from long custom has been familiarized. And where a man is confident of the rectitude of that moral standard, by which he judges, he is justly jealous of it, and will not pervert the sentiments of his heart for a moment, in complaisance to any writer whatsoever. (Hume, 1993, p. 152)

Hume makes the above observation regarding our engagements with non-fictions. Tamar Gendler, taking her cue from Hume, formulates this problem, in relation to the difficulty we face in imagining fictional worlds that we think are morally deviant calling it 'the puzzle of imaginative resistance' (2000).[32] She formulated this puzzle as "the puzzle of explaining our comparative difficulty in imagining fictional worlds that we take to be morally deviant" as opposed to imagining a fictional scenario which does not concern our moral assessments (Gendler, 2000, p. 56).

First, pointing to the asymmetry between belief and make-belief, Gendler suggests that we find ourselves "equally stumped" in believing propositions that we do not think are true whether these propositions are moral or non-moral, such as earth is flat or murder is right (2000, p. 58). However, she continues, in the case of make-believe this is not so. According to her, one can easily imagine a scenario in which earth is flat, but will have difficulty in imagining a scenario in which murder is right (2000, p. 58). Gendler, in order to solve the puzzle, proposes

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[32] Gendler points out that she borrows this term from Moran (1994).

that the cause of the imaginative resistance is the unwillingness to engage in the sort of imagination that is prompted; that is, we resist imagining because we find it inappropriate to engage in that imaginative activity, in cases where we are prompted to imaginatively take on attitudes which we find morally deviant (2000, 2006).

To start with, I do not agree with Gendler that it is easier to imagine a scenario in which earth is flat than to imagine a scenario in which murder is right. I share the view that it is in our power to imagine any given content such as a fictional world in which the moral values endorsed are in serious conflict with our own; what is not in our power however is to respond to a certain imagined situation with a certain emotional response that I am invited to share in (Goldie, 2003a). It might then be right to refer to this phenomenon as 'emotional resistance,' as Goldie does (2003a, p. 56). We have the capacity to imagine, for example, a morally deviant fictional world where it is morally permissible to burn the widows left behind on the pyre. The resistance emerges not when we are asked to imagine this, but when we are invited to share in the emotional response the text is trying to elicit that we do not assent to. In other words, when the 'narratively appropriate' response does not accord with what we consider to be the 'ethically appropriate' response to such situations in real life, we might resist to engage emotionally with the work (Goldie, 2003a, p. 66). Therefore, the resistance in imaginative resistance does not concern the imagination per se but our emotional response to it. When the fictional work solicits a morally inappropriate response, the reader might be unwilling to engage with it any further; that is, she may refuse to engage in the imaginative activity in order not "to export ways of looking at the actual world which she does not wish to add to her conceptual repertoire" (Gendler, 2000, p. 77).

However, it is important to note that sometimes we do not show emotional resistance and we let ourselves play along and respond emotionally in the way we are invited to do although such responses might be conflicting with our moral values. One reason for this, as I have mentioned above, might be the author's skills in framing the situation. Thus, we might enjoy works which are misogynistic, such as most plays of Shakespeare, or feel sympathy for certain characters whom we consider immoral. A fictional work, by depicting the kind actions of an otherwise immoral character might elicit sympathy from us for the character. Thus, a scoundrel in a fictional work might win our sympathy when we are shown that he feeds stray cats and dogs. Another reason might be that we may not have any worries that our emotional responses might transcend the boundaries of our engagement with the fiction in front of us and spill over into our practical life. In such cases we might enter into the fictional world and respond as solicited attending to the artistic features.

In this chapter I have discussed some issues concerning our emotional and imaginative engagement with fictions. In the next chapter I will explore self-knowledge and the relation between self-knowledge, emotions, and morality.

5. Chapter 4: Self-Knowledge

I will start this chapter by explaining what I mean by ‘self-knowledge’ in the framework of this thesis. After clarifying what ‘self-knowledge’ refers to, I will move on to the topic of ‘self-ignorance’ and the obstacles to self-knowledge.

5.1. What is Self-knowledge?

Much of the recent literature in philosophy concerning self-knowledge has focused mainly on the kind of self-knowledge that refers to the knowledge of one’s current states of mind, such as one’s knowledge of his belief that he is wearing a green shirt or the knowledge of one’s belief that it is snowing outside (Burge, 1996; Peacocke, 1999; Moran, 2001). It is definitely true that I know something about my mind if I have the knowledge of my belief that it is snowing outside or my belief that I am wearing a green shirt. However, this kind of knowledge is not the kind of self-knowledge to which I am referring when I use the term ‘self-knowledge’. It is therefore necessary to clarify the distinction between these two kinds of self-knowledge.

The key factor that distinguishes the sense of self-knowledge I adopt is the significance it has for our moral lives. In making this distinction, I rely on Eric Schwitzgebel (2012). Two kinds of self-knowledge can be distinguished based on the significance they have on our moral lives (Schwitzgebel, 2012, p. 191). The first kind of self-knowledge concerns our ‘‘fairly trivial attitudes’’ such as one’s preference for vanilla ice cream over chocolate or one’s belief that it does not rain much in California in April. This kind of self-knowledge tends not to be morally loaded; that is, it does not, generally speaking, have an impact on one’s moral judgements (p. 191).[33] The second kind of self-knowledge concerns the knowledge of one’s “central values” and

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[33] Another philosopher who makes a similar distinction between two kinds of self-knowledge is Cassam (2014). Cassam talks about substantial self-knowledge as opposed to trivial self-knowledge. He lists ten characteristics that distinguish the kind of self-knowledge that ‘matters in a practical or even a moral sense’ which he calls ‘substantial self-knowledge’ from trivial self-knowledge (pp. 30-32). He also suggests the difference between these two different

one's "general background assumptions about the world and about other people" (p. 191). Knowing that you have the belief that people in general are selfish or that you are prone to jealousy or that you feel resentment towards your parents might be examples of the second kind of self-knowledge. Thus, the knowledge of our values, beliefs and assumptions about what is important and valuable in life, such as our knowledge of what we care about, our beliefs about what a good life consists in or what ideals we should live by are all a part of our self-knowledge.

We perceive the world through our interpretive frameworks that are shaped by biological, social, cultural factors and our past experiences. Thus, we need to look back to understand how we have come to see the world in the way we see it. We are not, however, doomed to passivity as subjects shaped by these genetic, social, cultural factors and our individual biographies. Once we reflect on our beliefs, assumptions, action tendencies and values, we might discard them, revise them or refine them and act accordingly. As John Kekes puts,

> Self-knowledge is both backward-looking and forward-looking. It derives its content from the past and its significance from the future […]. In endeavoring to develop [self-knowledge], we have to look backward. But we do not look backward because we have disinterested curiosity about our past. We look because we want to increase control over our actions […]. (1995, p. 121).

The search for self-knowledge is sometimes provoked by exposure to new perspectives or others' ways of seeing, particularly if they are different from one's currently held perspective. Trying to see a familiar situation from a new perspective, by making some features salient in the situation which were not salient to us before, might increase our awareness of the way we have

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kinds of self-knowledge is a matter of degree, that is, the more of these ten characteristics a piece of self-knowledge has, the more substantial it is. (p. 30).

perceived them until then. Once this happens, it might cause us to doubt the completeness of our ways of seeing, prompting a process of critical reflection.

Self-knowledge requires the capacity for critical reflection and the capacity to shape it according to our reflections. Some might object to the idea that self-knowledge requires critical reflection. They might say, for instance, that one knows right away that they value justice. However, through critical reflection, one often comes to see that they do not know even what justice is, let alone why they endorse it. To clarify this point, then, we might say that self-knowledge is more than merely knowing our beliefs. Self-knowledge also involves a grasp of the causes and reasons of the beliefs one has. Once we become aware of our automatic assumptions and beliefs, we can assess them and if we come to the conclusion that a belief is incorrect, we can drop it, refine it or revise it in the light of our reflections. Hence, reflection might make self-transformation possible.

It is, of course, not always easy for us to know our beliefs about morality as we often suppress or repress unwanted thoughts to escape from unpleasant emotions, such as guilt or shame. Failures of self-knowledge, which I will refer to as self-ignorance, might also be caused by other factors such as faulty reasoning, in addition to suppression or repression mentioned above. Self-ignorance is normal and commonplace to some extent, but this does not mean that we are doomed to it. It is possible to overcome self-ignorance, at least to some extent. I will devote the next section to self-ignorance as it is important to see how our quest for self-knowledge might go awry if we are not aware of the dangers on our path.

5.2. Self-ignorance

Our knowledge of ourselves is far from perfect as we are prone to making errors, which. might be motivated by our desires or that come about as the result of cognitive biases in the

thinking process. It is normal and unavoidable to some extent to fail to know our attitudes, beliefs, values and character traits due to these cognitive or motivational biases. However, it is possible to overcome failures of self-knowledge, if we make an effort and become aware of these biases. I distinguish two kinds of self-ignorance: 1) Unmotivated self-ignorance which is the kind of self-ignorance caused by cognitive biases and 2) Self-deception which is the kind of self-ignorance caused by motivational biases. There are also instances of self-ignorance which might be caused by the interplay of both motivational and cognitive biases. Although cognitive biases can lead to biased beliefs independently of motivation, they may also be triggered by a desire. For example, motivation can make certain data more vivid or it can cause confirmation bias by making one of the available hypotheses more salient (Mele, 2001, pp. 29-30). I will start by examining the kind of self-ignorance that result from cognitive biases.

5.2.1. Unmotivated self-ignorance

Our thought processes and reasoning skills are not perfect. We use various cognitive strategies to make judgments and form beliefs as we go about our daily lives. Making use of such strategies quickly and without being consciously aware of their limitations, we often fail to utilize available information properly and make erroneous inferences. As a result, we acquire beliefs and form judgements that are often biased. Being wary of the causes of such errors which can operate independently of motivation might be helpful for our practical lives.

Cognitive psychologists have documented cognitive biases that can often cause us to make incorrect inferences and judgments (Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). For example, the ‘availability heuristic’ is a strategy we employ when we make inferences based on our past personal experience and assume that some events happen more frequently or are more probable because we can easily recall similar instances (Nisbett &Ross, 1980, pp. 18-20).

Certain events that support our beliefs about ourselves might be readily available or easily accessible in our memory, but this does not mean that they are true. What often makes an instance easy to recollect is the vividness of information. A memory might be vivid for us if it is “proximate in a sensory, temporal, or spatial way” (Nisbett &Ross, 1980, p. 45). For example, I might easily bring to my mind the time I acted calmly to a situation that was irritating for me as it happened just yesterday but that does not establish the fact that I am not an easily irritated person.

Confirmation bias is another cognitive strategy that might cause us to make erroneous judgements. It can be defined as the inclination to search for or notice information that confirms our pre-existing beliefs (Nisbett &Ross, 1980, pp. 181-82; Nickerson, 1988). Confirmation bias also affects how we interpret otherwise neutral information in a way that supports our existing beliefs. We should be aware of such cognitive errors if we do not want to be misled in our thought processes. Confirmation bias is also one of the ways in which stereotypes take their hold. For example, when we meet someone who confirms our understanding of a particular stereotype, say philosophers or Russians, we are more likely to remember this stereotype-consistent information but we tend to ignore the information that doesn’t confirm our existing beliefs about philosophers or Russians.

Apart from such tendencies causing biases in the cognitive processing, it is also possible that self-ignorance might result from a lack of cognitive effort to draw the inference from the available data or a lack of necessary experiential data from which to draw an inference (Cassam, pp. 194-95). I might fail to know that I have a particular belief because I might not have encountered any occasion to make the inference that I hold this belief. In other cases, even if I

have encountered such an occasion and have available experiential data to make an inference from, I might not have put any cognitive effort to do so.

Reading literary works might be one way to reflect on issues and situations we have not experienced and have not had the occasion to think about. Novels, in other words, might offer the experience we need to make the necessary inferences about our own values, belief and attitudes that we have not reflectively endorsed by emotionally engaging us with the characters and situations in which these characters are. How this process works will be the focus of Chapter 5.

5.2.2. Self-deception

Self-deception points to the possibility that we go through our lives with distorted beliefs about ourselves, other people and the world. Naturally, it has serious repercussions on our moral lives as it may cause estrangement from ourselves and compromise our moral integrity.

Self-deception is a controversial topic in philosophy. There are different views on different aspects of it and even on its definition. On some accounts, self-deception is considered to be analogous to interpersonal deception (Pears, 1984; Davidson, 1985, 2004). Interpersonal deception is intentional and entails that the deceiver knows or believes that ~p and gets another to believe that p. If John intentionally gets Jim to believe some proposition p, although he knows or believes that ~p, this is a case of interpersonal deception. Therefore, when interpersonal deception is used as the model for self-deception, self-deceivers intentionally get themselves to believe that p, although they know or believe that ~p.

One advantage of this model is that it sets self-deception apart from mere error, since the acquisition and retention of the false belief are not accidental but intentional. However, this view of self-deception also poses some challenges. The most important challenge this view of self-

deception has to deal with is what has been labeled as the 'static' paradox by Alfred Mele (2001, p. 7): A person who is deceiving himself must believe that ~*p* as the deceiver, and, must believe that *p* as the deceived. Accordingly, the person consciously believes that p and ~p simultaneously. But how is it possible that a person holds contradictory beliefs at the same time? Another challenge this account of self-deception faces is called the 'dynamic' paradox (Mele, 2001, p. 9). As deceiver, one must be aware that she's deceiving but, as the deceived, she must be unaware of the deception for it to be effective. How could, then, one be the deceiver and the deceived at the same time if she knows that she is deceiving herself?

Some philosophers considering these problems with this view of self-deception argue that self-deception is conceptually impossible (Kipp, 1980; Haight, 1980). Others offer various strategies to solve these problems (Mele, 2001; Johnston 1988). Philosophical accounts explaining self-deception might be examined in two broad groups. One group of philosophers, intentionalists, supports the view of self-deception modelled on interpersonal deception described above and they maintain that self-deception involves intentional manipulation of evidence (Davidson 1985, 2004; Pears 1984). In other words, they hold that the self-deceiving person handles evidence to support the belief he wants to be true. The self-deceiving person, motivated by a desire, intentionally adopts the false belief that p is true despite, and indeed because of, strong evidence that it is false. Intentionalists deal with the challenges mentioned above by proposing that self-deception involves a division in the mind. There are different versions of the intentionalist view. One prominent version has been the one developed by Donald Davidson (1985, 2004). Davidson suggests that the mind has more than one part and while one part believes that p, the other believes that ~p and that one part of the mind actually deceives the other. He suggests that the self-deceiving individual forms his false belief by "obtaining new

evidence in favor of believing' what he wishes to be true, and by 'pushing the negative evidence into the background or accentuating the positive" (Davidson, 2004, p. 209). This individual is irrational because he realizes he does not have enough evidence for his belief, nonetheless he manipulates the evidence to find some reason for his belief.

Philosophers in the other group, deflationists, reject this intentionalist explanation. They suggest that understanding self-deception on the model of interpersonal deception is misguided and once the idea that self-deception is intentional is discarded, the paradox dissolves (Mele, 2001; Johnston 1988). Alfred Mele remarks that desires can influence one's beliefs and if one's desiring that p be true leads one to falsely believe that it is true, it need not do so "as part of an attempt to deceive oneself" (Mele, 2001, p. 18).

Both groups, intentionalists as well as deflationists, agree that self-deception is motivated and it involves forming or retaining a biased belief. In other words, they both believe that when one desires that something be true, this desire might lead him to falsely believe that it is true. The main disagreement between these two accounts is on whether self-deception is intentional or not. Whether intentional or not, the important point is that self-deception is motivated. On this point there seems to be a broad consensus among philosophers.[34] That is, our desire that a certain proposition p is true can influence the way we assess and interpret the available evidence and lead us to believe that p in various ways in instances of self-deception. In other words, a desire that p is true may lead us to misinterpret evidence to the contrary as not going against p or even as supporting p that we would consider as going against p, if there were no such desire. For

[34] One exception is Cassam. Cassam develops a non-motivational account of self-ignorance. Pointing out that "a non-motivational approach needn't deny that self-ignorance is sometimes motivated", he develops "a core account of self-ignorance which makes no mention of motivational factors" (2014, p. 194). The reason for his reluctance to bring motivational factors to his account is that the evidence for the repression mechanism that lies under such motivational factors, he says, is suggestive at best.

example, John is attracted to his colleague Mary. Desiring it to be true that Mary is attracted to him, too, he may interpret her indifferent actions as playing hard to get and as evidence for her being attracted to him. Moreover, desires can affect the way we collect evidence causing us to ignore important evidence to the contrary or to search for or notice the instances that support the view that we desire to be true more often than the ones that do not.

Although in the prevailing accounts of self-deception examined above the emotional element of self-deception is implied, it has not been the focus of attention. Emotions, however, play a major role in most cases of self-deception. Mele points to this: "Perhaps, for example, in straight cases of self-deception that p, it is not a mere desire that p that plays a central explanatory role, but rather a fear that ~p……...because fear that ~p is plausibly understood as being partly constituted by desire that p" (2001, p. 100).

As I have discussed in chapter 2, emotions are important factors in processing the information related to the situations we are in as they direct our attention to certain features of these situations. Emotions give focus to our lives by enabling us to attend to what is salient for us from among a huge amount of options. Emotions in this sense solve what de Sousa calls the 'philosopher's frame problem' making it easier for us to form judgements and make decisions (de Sousa, 1987, pp. 190-96).[35] As also mentioned in chapter 2, it is now commonly accepted that there are two levels of mental processing. The first is heuristic, automatic and fast, but is prone to biases. The second is slow, rule based and requires effort. When I am angry with my friend, for example, what she did that makes me feel wronged is more salient for me than her kind acts in the past. I might, then, begin to see her as an uncaring and a selfish person. Under the influence of my anger, I will be more prone to adopt a distorted view, since negative past

[35] See Chap. 2, pp. 57-58

experiences with my friend will be more salient to me rather than the instances where she was helpful and caring. My point is that my present anger might cloud my judgement of her; that is, even if my anger is appropriate, this does not entail ignoring all the kind acts she has done in the past and viewing her as a selfish, uncaring person overall. Lazar gives an example to show that when we are in the grip of a strong emotion we may dismiss the available evidence and entertain a belief that is most likely to be false to escape mental discomfort:

> When notified of her son's death in battle, the distressed mother rejects this proposition despite conclusive evidence for the tragic state of affairs. She may say that, "in her heart", she knows that her son is alive. (Lazar, 1999, p. 281)

The love the mother feels for her son and her hope that things will turn out otherwise will lead the mother to ignore evidence that does not support her wishes.

Up to now, my focus has been on the paradigmatic cases of self-deception which Mele labels as ‘straight’ self-deception, i.e., the kind of self-deception that involves acquiring the belief that p due to the existence of a desire that p is true (Mele, 2001, p. 4). However, there are other cases of self-deception which are ‘twisted’ (Mele, 2001, pp. 94-118). In twisted self-deception, a person acquires a belief that he does not want to be true. For cases of straight self-deception, I have explained that my desire that p is true leads me to believe that p is true. In cases of twisted self-deception though, this explanation does not work because in twisted self-deception the person acquires a belief that he does not want to be true. So how does twisted self-deception work?

Emotions are significant again in explaining cases of twisted-self-deception. Leontes’s case in Shakespeare’s *The Winter’s Tale* might be the perfect example of a twisted self-deception. Without any manipulation from outside, such as Iago’s plots in *Othello*, Leontes

finds himself in the grip of jealousy, believing that Polixenes and his wife are acting like two secret lovers. His jealousy of his wife Hermione breaks out all of a sudden leading him to accuse his wife of infidelity with no good reason. He finds evidence in innocent actions of his wife. He looks at the past, gathers even more evidence of her betrayal which makes him feel confirmed in his suspicions. His unfounded jealousy leads him to question if he is the real father of Mammillus and to ignore not only Hermione's denials, but even the "innocent" verdict of Apollo's oracle at Delphi to which he himself sent messengers asking for the revelation of the truth. Although there is no desire for his wife's infidelity, pangs of jealousy leads Leontes to focus his attention on his wife's past and present behavior that he sees as flirtatious, to ignore all the evidence to the contrary and eventually to believe that his wife is betraying him.

I have explained in Chapter 2 that an emotion saves us from having to deal with an infinite amount of information by limiting the range of information we will take into account in decision-making process by imposing 'determinate patterns of salience' on our cognitive processes and guiding "our attention, lines of inquiry, and inferential strategies" (de Sousa, 1987, pp. 195-96). Indeed, research suggests that emotional states draw our attention toward stimuli that are congruent with our emotional state and have significant influence on information processing (Derrybery, 1988). Although this function of emotions is an important contribution of emotions to our practical life, in cases such as Leontes's, it may also lead one to self-deception. Leontes' case is a good example of twisted self-deception cases, that is, how twisted self-deception is different from the straight self-deception cases. In twisted self-deception one does not wish it to be true but believes it anyway. In the grip of his jealousy he makes erroneous judgements. So, emotions play a central role both in twisted and straight self-deception. However, there is a question that arises here: The jealous husband fears that his wife is betraying

him and wants it to be true that she is not betraying him. But, then, why does his jealousy lead him to believe that she is unfaithful rather than his fear leading to a belief that she is faithful? This problem is also pointed out by Mele as follows:

> If his jealousy affected his attention, his framing of hypotheses, or the salience of his evidence in a way that contributed to his acquiring a belief that his wife is unfaithful, why did it not happen instead that his fear—or his desire that she not be having an affair—affected these things in a way that contributed to his acquiring a belief that she is faithful? Alternatively, why didn't his fear block the relevant potential effects of his jealousy, with the result that his evidence carried the day? (p. 100)

The answer to this question lies in what Goldie calls the 'recognition-response tie' and that I have explained in Chapter 2. To remind again, in the course of an emotional experience the way we perceive the world (recognition) and the way we respond to it (response) are closely connected and this connection is instilled in us not only by our biological and cultural background, but also by our upbringing and past experiences. This explains both the commonalities and diversities among different people in the content of their recognitions and responses these recognitions demand (Goldie, 2000, p. 28). Understanding the particulars of the recognition-response tie in a specific situation entails understanding ourselves within a broader biological and cultural background and within a distinctively personal narrative, which includes our character, past experiences, mood, etc. that define and explain the similarities and differences in our "paradigmatic recognitional thoughts and paradigmatic responses involving motivational thoughts and feelings, as well as bodily changes, expressive activity, action, and so forth" (p. 33).

As our paradigm scenarios and individual narratives are the sources of our emotions, individuals' differences in their emotional responses, intensity of their emotions and conditions that trigger the emotion or, to use de Sousa's term, emotional 'dialects' will naturally be different from one another.

5.3. Self-deceptive Emotions

Apart from the causal role emotions play in self-deception, emotions might also become directly self-deceptive. Self-deceptive emotions are possible due to the fact that appropriate emotions are to a certain extent determined by social and cultural norms in a given situation (de Sousa, 1988, p. 334). The influence of the socialization process on particular emotions, what de Sousa calls 'ideology of emotion', generates in some cases self-deceptive emotions (de Sousa, p. 334). Gender socialization might illustrate this point well. People learn a complex network of emotions, concepts and symbols associated with gender stereotypes from their culture and this type of learning or socialization, in addition to motivating individuals to act in accordance with gender stereotypes, affects the way they perceive their own and others' behaviors. Such socialization can influence our emotions without us even being aware (p. 334). Emotions which incorporate gender stereotypes learned in the socialization process might then be deceptive and when they are, one "connives rather than originates" (p. 334). De Sousa warns:

> We are responsible only to the extent that we are generally motivated to conform to the social and gender roles assigned to us, and that we allow ourselves to be taken in by the self-feigning that this necessarily requires. (p. 334)

As de Sousa rightly points out, to avoid self-deception, we should be aware that cultural precepts feed us with gender stereotypes and show purportedly how males and females should live their emotions. We should question ourselves to see if our values, ideals and the norms that

guide us are the norms of gender socialization. Self-reflection and being aware of such gender socialization might prevent us from feeling such self-deceptive emotions.

What we need however is an account explaining the process of the critical reflection that we need to engage if we want to prevent failures of self-knowledge. In the next section I will give an account of one way of acquiring self-knowledge and how emotions, imagination and self-knowledge can function together in this process.

5.4 . Critical Reflection, Emotions and Self-knowledge

We can define critical reflection as an "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge, in light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends" Dewey (1933, p. 9).

Critical reflection involves:

- Reflecting on different perspectives encountered
- Becoming aware of one's assumptions and beliefs
- Making them explicit by articulating them
- Examining these assumptions and beliefs by exploring their sources and questioning their validity and accuracy taking into consideration the new perspectives
- Searching alternatives to respond to the situation that creates conflicting emotions and thoughts

Critical reflection involves clarifying one's point of view and understanding others' ways of seeing and developing alternative perspectives. Critical reflection should not be understood as an intellectual process that solely involves analyzing the situation from a detached viewpoint. This process can also employ imaginative skills and emotions. Imagination contributes positively

to moral deliberation by helping us develop alternative perspectives and envisage how certain scenarios might play out in future, without having to actually perform those actions or deal with their possible negative consequences. For this process to succeed, individuals, seeing different possibilities before them and being aware of their emotions aroused by their imaginings of these different possibilities, should be able to interpret the emotional imports associated with each alternative; i.e., what their emotions reveal to themselves about their values, cares and concerns. By reflecting on our emotional responses to our imaginings, examining what trigger our emotions and evaluating what thoughts and memories they give rise to, we may be able to identify our emotional schemas and recognize how these uncritically acquired schemas have shaped our habitual perceptions of the world. Through such reflection we might, then, discover aspects of ourselves that we had not acknowledged previously.

To gain self-knowledge we look both inward and outward. These two ways of knowing about the self complement each other: By looking outward we see ourselves as embedded in a social environment, situated in relation to other people and recognize the important roles social and intersubjective dimensions have played in the formation of our interpretative frameworks. By looking inward, we focus on our private experience; we reflect on our emotions and what these emotions reveal to us about ourselves.

Critical reflection is crucial for gaining self-knowledge and self-transformation because without critical reflection, we cannot move beyond conditioning. When we think critically, we become aware of the diversity of values, social norms and structures in the world. As we become aware that actions and practices are never free from context and that our social norms and conventions reflect the times and cultures we live in, we acquire the ability to recognize the apparently inevitable and natural as socially constructed. We can eventually move from an

unconscious participation in these dominant discourses, stereotypical notions about genders and different races and moral conventions that do not make sense any more. Even if at the end of the reflection process we come to reaffirm our beliefs, having subjected them to critical scrutiny, we now know the reason why we endorse a particular belief.

Self-knowledge, defined as essentially concerned with our moral lives, is closely linked with emotions since our emotions play an important role in forming our moral judgements. The essential claim of the perceptual theory of emotions is that emotions are perceptions of values. On this theory, emotions are conceived of as a form of perception informing us in an experiential way about the evaluative properties of a situation by making these properties salient. Emotions, therefore, function to give access to reasons for practical judgements. Feeling sad is perceiving a loss and feeling fear is perceiving a danger. This approach to emotions establishes a connection between emotions and evaluative judgments, which is similar to the connection between visual perceptions and perceptual judgments.[36] To remind again, for example, the connection between one's feeling shame in a situation and one's judging that the situation is shameful is analogous to the connection between seeing a red circle and judging that there is a red circle there. In both cases, perceptual experiences cause the associated judgments. The analogy with visual perceptions proves to be a very helpful way to understand the nature of emotions, but there is also an important difference between visual perceptions and emotions that we should not miss. The important difference between them is that emotions, unlike visual perceptions, are closely connected with the beliefs, character traits, past experiences of the individual experiencing the emotion. In other words, unlike visual perceptions, they are dependent on one's paradigm

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[36] See pages pp. 45-47 in chapter 2.

scenarios or interpretive frameworks developed throughout one's life and this is the very reason why the same situation might elicit different emotions from different individuals.

As discussed in Chapter 2, our emotional understanding begins to develop in the earlier years of our lives through paradigm scenarios that teach us particular emotions, and in time as we grow older, we acquire different experiences which deepen our emotional understanding. Our emotions eventually come to reflect both our personal histories and the social and cultural norms of the society in which we live. Consequently, emotions provide us with information about the world as seen from a particular point of view. Therefore, to understand the emotional responses of an individual, we need to understand how he perceives the world or how he has come to interpret the situations in the way he does. This ultimately entails an understanding of the paradigm scenarios of the individual. De Sousa gives Othello and Iago as an example (de Sousa, 1987, pp. 195-6). Iago is able to manipulate Othello's emotions and his perceptions of Desdemona and Cassio through his strong understanding of Othello's paradigm scenarios and interpretive framework, that is, the way he has come to see the world.

In a similar vein, to know ourselves better we might need to be aware of and understand our own paradigm scenarios. Interpersonal relations can be pivotal to the process of gaining self-knowledge. Acquiring self-knowledge cannot solely be a solitary activity because sometimes the reasons that guide us in our practical life might reveal themselves in our interactions with others. Through encounters with others and by reflecting on their paradigm scenarios we can come to see the situations through the lens of their emotional paradigms and this might not only enable us to strip ourselves of our egotistic outlook, but also provide us with a fresh perspective from which we can question our own understanding of these situations and our own interpretive frameworks. A very effective way, then, to acquire self-knowledge might be through

encountering and engaging with different emotional scenarios. Novels, as they supply us with many different emotional schemas and ways of seeing, might serve us as a source.

Encountering others' paradigm scenarios and trying to understand situations from their point of view can make other factors in the situation salient, which might then cause a shift in our emotions and evaluations. The emotional shift that we experience as a result of seeing a situation from another's perspective is analogous to the shift in our visual perceptions when we change our focus in looking at certain images. One such image is the Rubin's vase in which the contours of two faces in profile can also be seen as the contours of a vase. When we alter our focus with regard to which parts of the image we consider to be the foreground or the background, we perceive the image either as a vase or as the profiles of two faces. There is only one image but our perception of it changes as we alter our focus.

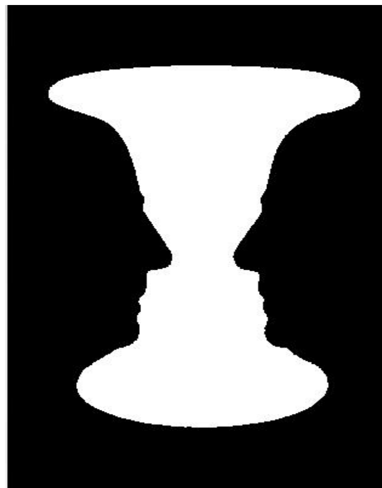

Figure 1. Rubin's Vase[37]

Just like our visual perception of the image shifts when we change our focus, our perception of a situation might shift in the deliberation process once we focus our attention on

[37] [Public domain] (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rubin2.jpg) John Smithson 2007 at English Wikipedia.

the aspects that were in the background i.e., not salient to us before. This gives us an opportunity to evaluate our reasons for our moral decisions, assess their adequacy, and revise them if we recognize that they are inadequate to understand and deal with the situation at hand. Being able to do this, of course, requires being open to alternative reasons for action.[38]

Another example, also used by Roberts C. Roberts in explaining his perceptual theory of emotions, is the well-known old woman/young woman figure (Roberts, 2003, pp. 70-2). When we see this image, we perceive it as an old woman or a young woman depending on the way we make sense of the lines and shades before us. Being able to see the old woman or the young woman in the figure requires different configurations of the elements. When a person is unable to see the figure as an old woman, he is not able to perceive one of the two possible organizations of these lines and shades. They can see the lines and shades but cannot configure the organization right to perceive the old woman.

Figure 2. Old/Young Woman[39]

[38] See chapter 2, section 3.3.
[39] [Public domain] (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:My_Wife_and_My_Mother-In-Law_(Hill).svg) W. E. Hill.

Similarly, being able to perceive the same situation from another point of view is being able to organize the elements of the situation into a new gestalt. Just like the old woman's mouth becomes the young woman's necklace or the old woman's eye becomes the young woman's ear as we switch from our perception of the figure as an old woman to the perception of it as a young woman, the aspects of a single situation can be reconfigured in different manners and by doing so the same situation can be interpreted in a number of ways.

The case of the mother and the daughter-in-law that Iris Murdoch talks about in her *Idea of Perfection* might be helpful as an example in explaining what I mean here. A mother, M, feeling hostile to her daughter-in-law, D, finds her "unpolished and lacking in dignity and refinement" (Murdoch, 2014, p. 16). She perceives her as being "inclined to be pert and familiar, insufficiently ceremonious, brusque, sometimes positively rude, always tiresomely juvenile" (pp. 16-17), but her actions towards D never reflect these judgements of her as she always treats her with dignity and respect. As time passes, M holds onto this picture of D she has formed and thinks: "my poor son has married a silly vulgar girl" (p. 17).

Nevertheless, Murdoch remarks, M being a "well-intentioned person, capable of self-criticism, capable of giving careful and just attention to an object which confronts her" (p. 17) takes upon herself the task of forming a more accurate picture of D, free from her prejudices, saying to herself: 'I am old-fashioned and conventional. I may be prejudiced and narrow-minded. I may be snobbish. I am certainly jealous. Let me look again" (p. 17).

Murdoch remarks:

> Here I assume that M observes D or at least reflects deliberately about D, until gradually her vision of D alters. … D is discovered to be not vulgar but refreshingly simple, not

> undignified but spontaneous, not noisy but gay, not tiresomely juvenile but delightfully youthful, and so on. (Murdoch, 2014, p. 17)

Murdoch's main point in talking about M and D in her essay was to emphasize that morality is not only about actions. Reflection, as a result of which we become aware of our own biases and be able to see others more accurately, is a moral activity as well; hence the change in our perception that comes about as a result of reflection is morally significant. The other point of the example was to illustrate that most often we are unable to see other people correctly as we are inclined to represent them to ourselves in ways that serve to gratify our own egos. On these two points I am completely in agreement with Murdoch. The mother-in-law, critically reflecting on her emotions and perceptions, becomes aware that her own jealousy might be distorting her perception and this enables her to see her daughter-in-law more accurately and in a way that is more fair to her. Her perspective shifts once she has recognized that she is looking at the situation from the lens of some particular point of view. She says: "I am old-fashioned and conventional. I may be prejudiced and narrow-minded. I may be snobbish. I am certainly jealous. Let me look again". In some situations, an emotion may be so compelling that we are simply helpless in the face of it. However, as we reflect on it and focus on some other aspects of the situation, sometimes by the help of a friend or a therapist who offers a new interpretation of the same situation, our cognitions about the situation may change and we may be able to distance ourselves from that emotion which felt so compelling.

According to William James' theory of emotions we are advised to "go through the outward motions of those contrary dispositions we prefer to cultivate", if we want to change the emotions we feel in a certain situation (James, 1884, p. 198). In contrast to this, according to the perceptual theory, to change our emotions in response to a certain situation, we try to change the

way the situation appears to us by attending to details which were not salient to us at first. Considering a situation from another point of view, then, might help us feel more empathy towards others and prevent us from having the same knee-jerk reactions which we are conditioned to have by our own emotional paradigms. Eventually we might have a more accurate and clear vision of the situation at hand.

To have a more accurate picture of a situation we sometimes might need to go inward first and clarify our assumptions, motives and beliefs that are influencing our vision. To see the importance of clarification of one's point of view, let us now turn back to the case of M and D that I mentioned above. It is clear that for M, to be able to see her daughter-in-law accurately requires that she, M, has to achieve a degree of self-knowledge. As Murdoch remarks, "Our minds are continually active, fabricating an anxious, usually self-preoccupied, often falsifying veil which partially conceals the world" (2014, p. 82). Clarification of our point of view through reflection acts as a corrective measure against this activity that obscures our vision. Once M recognizes that she might be jealous and snobbish, she also recognizes that her views about D might be arising out of her jealousy and snobbishness. Her self-knowledge makes her recognize that there is reason to reconsider again her perceptions about D. Coming to the awareness of one's limiting beliefs or shortcomings as in this example is tremendously helpful in correcting our perceptions.

Self-knowledge plays a crucial role in morality because it provides us with the necessary means for shaping our moral life more deliberately. Without the awareness of the frameworks we are operating from, we hold little chance, if any, to transform our perspective. If like M in the example Murdoch gives, we become aware that we might be operating from a particular point of view that involves jealousy for instance, then we have a chance to change our perspective.

My aim here is to emphasize the importance of becoming aware of our emotions and interpretive frameworks to reach a self-knowledge through reflection. That we have the capacity to engage with our emotions through reflection shows that we are not doomed to be the passive subjects at the mercy of our genetic, social, cultural background and individual biographies that determine our emotions. However, to achieve autonomy it is important to become aware and understand our own emotional scenarios and how we come to be conditioned to feel the way we feel rather than another. Having seen the shortcomings of our previous perspectives and validity of new perspectives we have encountered, we try to determine the best solution to the difficulty that adequately expresses the competing tendencies. The individual who has become aware of her unquestioningly acquired point of view and explored other possibilities and the ways of seeing a certain situation comes to understand the respective importance of different commitments for her. The individual upon clarifying his position and exploring alternatives through the process of critical reflection reaches a deeper understanding of himself. He might then discard some of his beliefs and values, acquire new ones, refine others or rearrange the significance of his commitments, concerns and cares in consideration of the other factors which were not salient to him before.

5.4.1. Reaching a Reflective Equilibrium

As our emotions often give insights to ourselves, it is necessary to reflect on them for acquiring self-knowledge and transforming ourselves morally. A question, though, that may arise here is this: Emotions are perceptions of value but this does not mean that our emotions always get things right. Pride, for example, might be a useful emotion from an evolutionary point of view but is it something that we should embrace from a moral point of view? This issue ultimately raises other problems: Should we always trust our emotions? How can we distinguish

between trustworthy and untrustworthy emotions? How can our emotions morally guide us? Can our moral judgements be based legitimately on emotions?

An action caused whether by emotions or judgements is reason-responsive provided that the agent has well-tuned self-monitoring habits. Jones calls these self-monitoring habits 'regulative guidance' (Jones, p. 196). Regulative guidance involves "the on-going cultivation and exercise of habits of reflective self-monitoring of our practical and epistemic agency" (Jones, p. 194). Reason-responsiveness, therefore, does not exclude acting on the basis of emotions provided that we foster our capacity of regulative guidance. The only way we can achieve this is through cultivating our critical reflection habits. Reading novels and reflecting on them might be one way of cultivating this ability.

Axiological Holism, a concept that de Sousa has developed might also be helpful in dealing with the question of how our moral judgements can be based legitimately on emotions. Axiological Holism refers to a kind of reflective equilibrium that provides coherency among our emotions by which our second-order emotional responses arbitrate among our first-order responses (de Sousa, 2011, p. 38). In other words, our emotions by interacting dialectically with both one another and also with changes in the social context reach a new equilibrium and produce new paradigm scenarios. Again, the analogy with visual perceptions might be useful here. Just as we test the veracity of our visual perceptions by appealing to other perceptions, we might test the veracity of our emotions by appealing to other emotions. In de Sousa's words:

> We are forever launched into a dialectical dance: our emotional dispositions respond to new contexts, but also create them. We obviously can't judge new situations with anything other than our old dispositions, but if we apply ourselves to take as comprehensive a view of the new context as possible, the totality of our emotional

> reactions will generate new paradigm scenarios, from which fresh axiological judgments emerge. (1988b, p. 338)

The reaction against legal changes recognizing same-sex marriages and the repulsion felt by some people towards these marriages might be considered to illustrate this point (de Sousa, 2011, p. 104). Some people found it hard to accept same-sex marriages, although these same people, having lived in western liberal and democratic societies, had held values such as love, equality and freedom very dearly.

Emotions are both biologically inherited and constructed to a certain extent. They are the products of a very complex process in which our biological origins, social evolution, cultural backgrounds and individual biographies have played significant roles. As such, they are perceptions that give us information about our surroundings and about ourselves by making certain things salient to us. Emotions should thus be considered as playing a significant role to practical deliberation rather than as interfering with it and disturbing it. However, it is also important to note at this point that being overwhelmed with an emotion might prevent us from keeping the necessary distance to engage in the critical reflection process, and thus incapacitates our ability to judge properly and prevents us from making a proper assessment of the situation.

To sum up, seeing a new situation through the lens of an unquestioned paradigm scenario which have become entrenched over the years might make us unable to bring together our firmly held values and apply them to new situations. However, through encounters with new situations both in life and in artworks such as novels and movies, and by reflecting on our emotions, we might be able to add nuances to our existing paradigm scenarios making them more refined and we might develop new paradigm scenarios from which new moral norms arise.

6. Chapter 5: Reflective Moral Transformation through Emotions in Literature

In this chapter, I develop an account of how readers could undergo a morally transformative process which is triggered by an attentive emotional engagement with characters and their situations in reading a realistic novel. I start by explaining in what sense I am using the term 'reflective moral transformation'. I proceed, then, by distinguishing two phases of a reader's engagement with a realistic novel. Next, I give an account of how these phases develop. To illustrate the reflective moral transformation process a reader could undergo, I will use Edith Wharton's novel, *The Age of Innocence*.

6.1. Defining Reflective Moral Transformation

We all experience the world through a unique point of view. A 'point of view' or what I also refer to as an 'interpretive framework' is defined as a way of seeing that results from the interactions between our emotional schemas, assumptions, values, beliefs and desires which are shaped by our biological, social, cultural backgrounds and our individual biographies. The point of view we acquire through various experiences in our lives often involves distortions, stereotypes, and prejudices. As such, it provides us only with a skewed vision of the world. However, if we understand how we have acquired our beliefs and values, and how we have been conditioned by our paradigm scenarios to think and act in certain ways, we might realize that it is possible for us to change and shape our ways of seeing, at least, to a certain extent.

I define 'reflective moral transformation' as a shift in our perspective that comes about by developing a critical awareness of the elements of our point of view and by reconsidering our normative commitments while taking into account the new perspectives and the various cases we encounter. Through the transformative process we might not only come to realize how our point of view might be distorting the way the world appears to us but also liberate ourselves from

social conventions and gender stereotypes that exert control over our lives, which we probably have never questioned.

6.2 Two Phases in the Reader's Engagement with a Realistic Novel

I distinguish two phases in a reader's engagement with a novel based on the distinction Wollheim makes in his analysis of imagination between internal audience and internal observer (1984, pp. 62-96).[40]

Wollheim develops an analogy with theatre to illustrate the different roles the imaginer plays within the framework of the imaginative project he is engaged with. These roles are internal dramatist, internal actor, internal audience, and internal observer (pp. 65-72, 81-2). The imaginer as the 'internal dramatist' creates the content of the imagination, i.e., constructs the characters and makes up actions and events. The imaginer, then, as the 'internal actor' represents himself in the imagined scenario which the internal dramatist has created. The imaginer as the 'internal audience' is affected by what is represented by the internal actor (p. 69). In other words, what the internal actor represents leaves the internal audience in a particular "cognitive, conative, affective" state (p. 69). Wollheim refers to this state as 'residual condition' (p. 70). The internal audience can be sympathetic/reactive, detached or empathetic (pp. 67-9). The detached audience is not involved emotionally with the characters. He merely comprehends and notes the mental states of the characters but does not get emotionally engaged. Sympathetic/reactive and empathetic audiences are involved emotionally. If one feels the same emotions as the imagined character, then he is empathetic. On the other hand, if the audience feels a corresponding emotion but not the same emotion, for example, if he feels pity when someone is imagined to be suffering, he is sympathetic/reactive. The sympathetic/reactive audience's emotional responses

[40] Wollheim analyzes imagination in the framework of the private imaginings of a person. I am borrowing this analysis and applying it to our imaginative engagements with fictions.

to characters are based on the judgements he makes about these characters. Wollheim, in an earlier work, gives the example of the audience watching *King Lear* to illustrate the difference between empathetic and sympathetic/reactive audience (1973, p. 66). Watching the blinding of Gloucester in *King Lear*, the empathetic audience, as opposed to the sympathetic/reactive audience is, "that part of the audience which feels what Gloucester feels, not that part which feels for Gloucester" (1973, p. 66). The empathetic audience, on watching Gloucester's blinding, feels terror, but the sympathetic/reactive audience feels pity; or, if he thinks Gloucester deserves this fate, he will feel satisfaction (1973, p. 66). In imagining, the imaginer as internal audience is caught up in the imagination. In responding empathetically, he simulates the experiences the character goes through and finds himself in the same emotional state as he would have been if he had actually experienced the situation that the imagining simulates to the extent that this is possible, as it has been discussed in the third chapter.[41] In responding sympathetically, the imaginer finds himself in the same condition in which he would have been left if he were present in the imagined scene and judged the characters in the same way, and, therefore, emotionally responded to these characters in the same way (p. 67).

The internal observer, as opposed to the internal audience, is not caught up in the imagination (pp. 81-2). The internal observer, reflecting on the imagination and on his emotions aroused by the imagining, i.e., the emotions of the internal audience, responds with emotions which might be different from those of the internal audience. Therefore, the internal observer's point of view is external to the imagination. Wollheim in making the distinction between the internal audience and the internal observer gives the example of an imaginer who, on imagining an erotic scene where he centrally imagines himself engaging in some sexual activity, feels

[41] See p. 89 in Chapter 3.

sexually aroused. The imaginer, on reflecting on his imagining and the excitement aroused by it, may feel different emotions such as surprise, embarrassment, disgust, relief or more excitement. The emotions that arise on reflecting on his arousal are not part of the imagining and are the emotions of the internal observer; while the sexual arousal he feels in imagining the scene is part of the imagining and the emotions of the internal audience (p. 82).

The first phase in a reader's engagement with a novel which I will call 'narrative immersion' occurs during the reading process. The first phase acts as the trigger for the transformation of the reader. I will explain how the first phase works in detail in the next section.

In the second phase, the reader reflects on the events and investigates characters deeply, examining their beliefs, actions, motivations, and responses to situations. Based on this investigation, he can, then, make an interpretation of the novel. Furthermore, the reader could, by reflecting on the themes of the novel, the characters' behaviours and beliefs systems, and the emotions he experiences during the reading process, clarify his own beliefs, reconfigure his normative commitments and acquire a new perspective on the issues presented in the novel.

In the next section, I proceed by explaining what the first phase of a reader's engagement with a realistic novel involves.

6.3. First Phase: Narrative Immersion

The first phase of our engagement with a novel which I call 'narrative immersion' involves emotional engagement with the characters and their situations. To explain what this entails, I will start by reminding a few points from my discussion concerning emotions which have been discussed in Chapter 2.

In Chapter 2, I explained that according to the perceptual theory of emotions, an emotion represents an evaluative property and provides an individual with information about his situation

or environment, focusing his attention on the important features of the situation. When an individual has an emotional response to something, he has an evaluative perception that picks out that thing as significant to him. Emotions occur in situations where our desires, interests or goals are involved and draw our attention to certain elements in the situation or environment by representing their evaluative properties.

Further, emotions, as we have seen in the previous discussion of emotions, have appropriateness conditions.[42] An emotion can be said to be appropriate if it represents its object correctly. So, for example, my anger will be appropriate if the particular object of my anger, say a remark or an action from my colleague, is indeed unfair.

Another point to remember has to do with emotional gestalts or paradigm scenarios which we develop throughout our lives starting from our childhood. As suggested by Ronald de Sousa, individuals possess emotional schemas or 'paradigm scenarios', which involve two aspects: a situation-type that provides characteristic formal or particular objects of a specific emotion and a set of characteristic responses to that situation which is determined by one's biological, cultural and biographical background (de Sousa, 1987, pp. 181-84; 2011, p. 34).

There are certain implications of this account of emotions for our reading experience of a novel. First, since emotional responses occur in situations where we find that something significant to us is involved, in order to get readers emotionally engaged with the novel, the story is often told in a way that makes readers care about the characters and their fate. In reading *David Copperfield,* I find myself responding emotionally to David Copperfield: I don't want him to be bullied and beaten by his step-father. I want him to be cared and protected by his aunt, Miss Trotwood. I keep wondering what will happen to him, hoping that he is going to end up

[42] See pp. 45-50 in Chapter 2.

alright as I read on. Thus, in reading the novel I find myself emotionally engaged with David Copperfield and his predicaments; that is, I find myself caring about him.

Second, as emotions focus our attention on certain features in a situation and make them salient, a text by arousing its readers' emotions can, too, make certain aspects in the situation of a character salient. Our emotions aroused during the reading process might thus enable us to perceive the significant aspects in the text that we might otherwise miss (Robinson, 2005, p. 106). In real life, understanding other people is closely related to being able to direct one's attention towards their focus of attention. Once we do this, we may proceed with making inferences about their mental states or emotions. This is evident from the findings of various research regarding autism which suggest that individuals with autism who typically have attention deficits lack also the ability to understand others' mental states (Charman, T., et al., 1997). To explain this with an example, let us say X is the autistic person. This means that X is unable to focus his attention, i.e., X has attention deficit. X, to understand other people, say Y, needs to turn his attention towards Y's focus of attention. But since X is unable to do this, he will fail to understand Y's emotions. Similarly, to understand characters in fictions we turn our attention towards their focus of attention as guided by the text (Oatley, 2008, p. 176). Novels often invite readers to attend to essential elements in the text by directing the attention of the readers through their emotions. Our emotional responses might be vital in understanding a text as we gather important information about characters and plot through our emotional responses (Robinson, 2005, p. 120). Robinson gives this example from *Anna Karenina*:

> [S]he returns surreptitiously to her old home in order to visit her son Seryozha, whom she has not seen since she abandoned her husband to go away with Vronsky. We know that Anna has longed to see Seryozha and has looked forward joyfully to

> her visit. She buys a great many toys to take with her for his birthday, and arrives at the house early in the morning before Karenin is up. The boy is half asleep and seems to think that she is part of a happy dream. Seeing and touching him again, she is moved by how much he has grown and how much she has missed him. The visit is short; Karenin wakes up and the servants warn her to leave; she has to go in a hurry. When she has gone, Tolstoy comments poignantly: 'She had not had time to undo, and so carried back with her, the parcel of toys she had chosen so sadly and with so much love the day before". (Robinson, 2005, p. 108)

Referring to this example, Robinson further remarks:

> Tolstoy does not say that Anna Karenina is in a *poignant* [Robinson's emphasis] situation: he describes her situation and lets us experience it emotionally for ourselves. It is through our emotional responses that we gather important information about characters and plot. If this is right, then our emotional responses are a vital part of understanding a narrative text. (p. 122)

Novels are purposefully designed to guide and focus our attention to certain features of the situations to elicit a specific emotional response. Various elements in a situation are selected and made salient by using linguistic and narrative techniques in order to create a particular emotion in the reader. Texts elicit specific emotions from readers by presenting situations and stimuli that are commonly believed to raise these emotions. Jo, the street sweeper, is a minor character in Charles Dickens' *Bleak House*. He is poor, homeless and has no family. He spends his days sweeping the streets. Dickens' description of Jo elicits compassion: "Homely filth begrimes him, homely parasites devour him, homely sores are in him, homely rags are on him" (Dickens, 1997, chap. 47). If the reader, in reading about Jo, responds in an emotionally

appropriate way, he feels compassion for him. Appropriate emotional responses are often necessary to understand a text because the text conveys important information about the characters or situations by arousing the readers' emotions (Robinson, 2005, p. 108). As Jenefer Robinson points, "Unless we laugh and cry in the right places, we haven't really understood what we're reading" (2005, p. 105).

Noël Carroll suggests that narratives engage our emotions through what he calls 'criterial pre-focusing'. According to Carroll, a criterially pre-focused text portrays events so that they fall into certain categories of emotions such as anger, disgust, sadness or fear. In Carroll's words, a criterially pre-focused text is:

> [A] text structured in such a way that the description or depiction of the object of our attention is such that it will activate our subsumption of the event under the categories that are criterially relevant to certain emotional states. Once we recognize the object under those categories, the relevant emotion is apt, in certain conditions to be discussed below, to be raised in us. (2003, p. 228)

The excerpt below is from Sebastian Faulks' novel *Birdsong* which is set in World War I. It describes soldiers collecting the bodies of their dead comrades in a battlefield. This passage is an example of a criterially pre-focused text designed to evoke horror in us. If we were to laugh or find these scenes amusing in reading the novel, our emotion would not be appropriate.

> Goddard, releasing his mask, breathed in worse than he had expelled. Weir's hands in double sandbags stretched out tentatively to a sapper's uniform, undressing the chest in search of a disk which he removed, bringing skin with it into his tunic pocket. Jack's recoil, even through coarse material, to the sponge of flesh. Bright and sleek on liver, a rat emerged from the abdomen; it levered and flopped flatly over the ribs, glutted with

> pleasure. Bit by bit on to stretchers, what flesh fell left in mud. Not men, but flies and flesh, thought Stephen. Brennan anxiously stripping a torso with no head. He clasped it with both hands, dragged legless up from the crater, his fingers vanishing into buttered green flesh. It was his brother. (Faulks, 1997, pp. 336-37)

In reading a novel we often read detailed descriptions of protagonists' emotions as they encounter various situations. I take 'protagonist' to mean the main character of the novel whose emotions and inner thoughts to which readers have access through the various techniques employed in the text, such as free indirect style. In this sense, the protagonist is the character in a novel through whose point of view we experience the unfolding events in the text, at least partially.

A novel might present a situation from various perspectives. As led by the text, the reader might sometimes see things from the protagonist's point of view, sometimes from other characters' points of view and sometimes from the narrator's point of view. The reader, then, to understand the text must be able to engage with each of these perspectives.

In some cases, one of the characters might be the narrator. However, even if these two perspectives belong to one and the same person, the narrator's perspective is often distinct from the character's perspective, "shaping and coloring the narrative, and thereby indicating the narrator's own evaluation of what happened, and his or her emotional response thereto, as well as inviting from the audience a similar sort of response" (Goldie, 2003b, p. 203). For example, in *David Copperfield*, the narrator of the novel and the main character are the one and the same person, David Copperfield; but even so the point of view of David Copperfield as the narrator is distinct from the point of the David Copperfield as the main character. This is because it is the

adult David Copperfield who recounts the events which the character David Copperfield, his young remembered self, encounters. Here is an excerpt from *David Copperfield*:

> Gradually, I became used to seeing the gentleman with the black whiskers. I liked him no better than at first, and had the same uneasy jealousy of him; but if I had any reason for it beyond a child's instinctive dislike, and a general idea that Peggotty and I could make much of my mother without any help, it certainly was not THE [original emphasis] reason that I might have found if I had been older. No such thing came into my mind, or near it. I could observe, in little pieces, as it were; but as to making a net of a number of these pieces, and catching anybody in it, that was, as yet, beyond me. (Dickens, 1996, chp. 2)

David Copperfield, in relating the events in a certain period of his childhood, talks about how he felt, then, about Mr. Murdstone who would later marry his widowed mother. Here, although the narrator and the protagonist are the same person, i.e., David Copperfield himself, there are two different perspectives. One belongs to David Copperfield as a young child and the other belongs to the adult David Copperfield who is now narrating his life story. The word "THE" written in capitals is an indication that these two perspectives are different. As a young child, he did not know "THE reason" why he had a dislike for this man, but as the narrator he now knows the reason which is Mr. Murdstone's intention to marry his mother. To understand a novel, therefore, we need to be able to engage with these two levels of perspective as the text guides us.

Third, my emotional engagement with the novel might influence the way I see things after I have finished the novel by creating new paradigm scenarios or refining my already existing paradigm scenarios. Researchers working empirically on the effects of reading literature

on readers suggest that readers' emotions aroused in reading a novel can influence their perspectives after reading the novel (Mar et al., 2011, p. 829; Robinson, 2010, p. 74; Tooby & Cosmides, 2000, p. 24). For example, Mar and his collaborators remark in their article:

> The emotions evoked by literary fiction also have an influence on our cognitive processing after the reading experience has ended. Novels can act as a powerful emotional prime, and once an emotional state has been induced we would expect to see differences in cognitive processing associated with this new emotional state. Effects on cognition, perception, and action would be expected. (Mar et al., 2011, p. 829)

A novel often gives detailed descriptions of emotionally-laden views and mental states of the characters and shows how their perspective changes through their emotional experiences. As we read, we see how the situation appears to them from their point of view. Over the course of the novel characters often go through various experiences. The reader, following the track of the characters' experiences, might learn from their experiences. At this stage, therefore, one way in which we learn from novels is by acquainting ourselves with characters' emotional schemas and perspectives, which might be different from our own. In novels, readers are not given propositional knowledge; instead, they learn from characters and their situations as they follow the track of characters' experiences in reading. The reader might learn about the significance of emotions by reading the descriptions of characters' emotional states. More specifically, he could learn about the nature of emotions as he reads how a character's focus of attention shifts as he experiences an emotion, about how his emotions might reflect his values, concerns and interests and also about how they might form beliefs about themselves and their situations, once they reflect on the aspects of the situation on which their attention is focused. Martha Nussbaum emphasizes the importance of this kind of learning:

> We learn how to feel and we learn emotional repertoire. We learn our emotions in the same way that we learn our beliefs--from our society. But emotions unlike many of our beliefs, are not taught to us directly through propositional claims about the world, either abstract or concrete. They are taught, above all, through stories. Stories express their structure and teach us their dynamics. These stories are constructed by others, and then taught and learned. But once internalized, they shape the way life feels and looks. (Nussbaum, 1990, p. 217)

Jenefer Robinson follows a similar line of argument. Robinson says, "The reader watches the education of the characters' emotions, and is thereby given a lesson in how the emotions function as teachers" (Robinson, 2005, p. 158). I agree with both Nussbaum and Robinson. Reading a novel can teach us about how emotions can function by describing characters' emotional states and showing how characters can change through their emotions. In reading a novel, we see how emotions draw a character's focus of attention to a certain situation or object and maintain it on that situation or object. Novels can also show how characters' emotions and point of view about the situations on which they are focused might be reflecting their values, concerns, interests, and desires. Moreover, novels can show how characters by reflecting on their emotions and point of view can acquire self-knowledge, reconsider their beliefs and deepen their moral understanding. The reader, therefore, reading how characters could change through their emotions might come to understand how emotions might have the capacity to change us if we reflect on them.

Immersion in a narrative leads to stronger emotional responses to characters and their situations and thus might play a role in bringing about changes in the attitudes of emotionally engaged readers (Green, Chatham, & Sestir, 2011; Escalas, Moore, & Britton, 2004). For

example, if a reader likes a character, opinions expressed by that character or consequences of events that the character experiences may carry particular significance for the reader (Bandura,1986; Singhal, Cody, Rogers, & Sabido, 2003). Green, similarly, suggests that when a reader is immersed in a narrative world, the lessons implied by the events in the narrative may be more powerful (Green, 2004). Green and Brock, to test the effect of narrative immersion conducted a series of experiments in which they asked participants to read a story about a mental patient who commits murder (2000). They found that readers who were found to be more immersed in the story were more likely to take up on attitudes implied by the story, such as a sense that violence is common, or a belief that the world is unjust.

However, not all reading experiences result in emotional engagement with characters or narrative immersion. The extent of a reader's immersion with the novel will depend on various factors. The characteristics of the reader, the text and the reader's situation can all have an impact on the success and the extent of the emotional engagement. For example, the reader must be attentive in reading the narrative. Readers, if they find the text boring, might comprehend the text but they may not be able to engage emotionally with the characters and their situations. Some readers who are not avid readers of fiction or others who enjoy reading fiction but have an adverse state of mind at the time of readings, such as overwhelming stress or anxiety, might not be able to engage with the narrative fully.

Various studies have been conducted to investigate the factors influencing the level of a reader's immersion in a narrative.[43] One of the factors, these studies have found, is the quality of the text. Readers are likely to be immersed more easily into well-structured and well-written narratives. In the experiments conducted by Green and Brock, for example, best sellers or classic

[43] The terms immersion or transportation are used interchangeably.

texts are rated as more transporting than narratives used and created by psychologists for these experiments (Green & Brock, 2000). On the other hand, stories in which the logical order of events is disrupted have been found to reduce transportation (Wang & Calder, 2006).

Another factor that influences reader's immersion into a narrative is the differences in readers' abilities and dispositions to easily leap into narrative worlds. Researchers have found that some people might be more likely to become deeply engaged with a narrative than others when situational factors and narrative features are held constant (Dal Cin, Zanna & Fong, 2004; Green, 1996). In addition to this, it is found that readers who feel that it was their choice to read a narrative are more easily transported into a narrative compared to those who were compelled to do so by some external force (such as a class assignment) (Shedlosky-Shoemaker, Brock, & Costabile, 2007).

One other factor that increases the level of immersion of the reader into the text is found to be the match between the content of a narrative and the reader's familiarity with the themes in the text. For instance, readers who reported having greater knowledge about fraternities and sororities were more immersed into a narrative about a man attending his fraternity reunion. Again, individuals who had homosexual friends or family members were more immersed into a narrative where the protagonist was homosexual than those who did not (Green, 2004).

Readers' goals in reading the text is another factor that can influence the readers' immersion in a text. Green & Brock (2000) found that proofreading a text that makes the reader focus on the surface aspects of a story can reduce transportation (Green & Brock, 2000).

In the next section, I discuss how the reading process and the narrative immersion might act as a trigger for the reflective moral transformation process.

6.3.1. Narrative Immersion as a Trigger to Reflective Moral Transformation

The reflective moral transformation process is often triggered by experiencing a dilemma which our currently held moral beliefs fail to resolve or sometimes by encountering a new perspective which is different from our own, provided that we are open-minded and willing to question our own perspective. The crucial aspect of transformation lies in the critical examination of our views which make us move beyond our conditioning. I will call the situation that triggers the transformative process as the 'triggering situation' and the critical examination of the aspects of our point of view the process of 'critical reflection'.[44]

The dilemma or the new perspective one encounters, causing tension and conflicting thoughts in the individual, might lead him to a process of reflection that includes self-scrutiny and an exploration of alternative ways of seeing things. If you are open minded, encountering another person's perspective might create the same effect which a dilemma creates in your mind. Suppose that I eat meat and love eating meat. I encounter someone who is a vegetarian. She explains to me that she does not eat meat because eating meat is cruelty to animals. If I am open minded enough, encountering another's perspective might lead me to question my eating habits. In other words, it creates a dilemma for me although I was not in a dilemma before encountering her perspective. Thus, these two occasions, that is, encountering a moral dilemma or encountering another's perspective (by creating a dilemma in one's mind) might trigger the reflection process in quite the same way. The reflection process involves first, making one's assumptions explicit; second, putting them into question; third, assessing their adequacy, and finally, refining them by way of adding nuances where necessary. The individual eventually resolves the dilemma by engaging in a negotiation process within himself between his various

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[44] How this critical reflection process works is discussed in Chapter 4 pp. 122-33.

concerns. At the end of this process, he may refine and reorganize some of his moral beliefs, i.e., clarify the respective importance of his commitments, acquire new ones or discard some of them. To achieve this, though, one needs to put in considerable cognitive effort and employ various cognitive skills. More importantly, he must be willing to engage in self-scrutiny to gain self-knowledge and to improve his moral understanding.

Critical reflection, as I have said, lies at the center of the process of reflective moral transformation. However, we are not always open to reflection and thus not ready for transformation. In such cases, a dilemma and the ensuing discomfort might act as the trigger for the transformative process to take place.[45]

Through encounters with new situations both in life and in artworks such as novels and movies, we might come to the awareness of new ways of seeing which might lead us to reflect on our existing paradigm scenarios and the validity of our normative commitments. The necessary conditions for this awareness to have any impact are, of course, the willingness to engage in self-scrutiny in order to acquire self-knowledge and the willingness to improve one's moral understanding. Novels can provide readers with vicarious emotional experiences which they have not had any occasion to experience in their lifetimes. They often present the events from the point of view of several characters which might sometimes be conflicting. Understanding different perspectives on the same situation which might sometimes be in conflict with each other requires perspective taking. Readers are, therefore, often induced to take different perspectives on the same situation. By reading novels we exercise our ability to recognise various interests and concerns in a certain situation, and how they weigh against each other or relate to each other.

[45] How this process works will be explained in section 6.4.2.

Novels, by problematizing some situations and bringing them up as something we need to explore, often present those 'triggering situations' and invite us to reflection. In fact, when we experience triggering situations through our engagements with characters in reading novels, due to the aesthetic distance which puts these situations "out of gear with our practical, actual self" and allows them "to stand outside the context of our personal needs and ends" (Bullough, 1977, p. 759), we might be in a better position for critical reflection than in real life situations. In real life situations if we are overwhelmed by emotions, the intensity of our emotions might act as obstacles for critical reflection.

A 'triggering situation' refers to a conflict situation which creates perplexity or inner discomfort for the individual, which calls for reflection for its resolution. Acquired and deeply embedded assumptions and beliefs which we possess might remain unquestioned until we experience a dilemma that brings them to our attention. When we encounter a triggering situation, we might, through reflection, become aware of our interpretive frameworks that are usually held under the threshold of our conscious awareness.

Once the individual finds himself in a triggering situation, the newly encountered perspective or the dilemma experienced can be dismissed by the individual or it can lead him to a scrutiny of previously held moral beliefs, values, and assumptions. In the latter case, the potential for transformation exists. Evidently, one has to be open-minded for this potential to be actualized, as I pointed out. By open-mindedness, I refer to a willingness to revise or even discard one's own beliefs and assumptions, as well as a willingness to entertain new ideas. If we cannot accept that new ideas need to be taken seriously or our present views may need to be modified, this might mean that we are not willing to question our assumptions and beliefs critically. In this case the transformative process will be stalled.

When things are running smoothly, we might not feel the need to reconsider our ways of thinking and acting. It is often the problematic situations that prompt reflection. Once we find ourselves in a conflict situation in which our long-held assumptions are challenged, we may feel confused and dissatisfied. The confusion, dissatisfaction and the discomfort we feel might be pointing to the shortcomings of our habitual ways of thinking and acting. When our habits are not working anymore, we might find ourselves at a loss about what to do next. Triggering situations might then produce the motivation necessary to search for new understandings; that is, we might be compelled to explore alternative routes to find a solution to what appears to be an unsolvable dilemma.

Psychologists working on motivation theories and particularly on cognitive dissonance suggest that discomfort and tension arise from conflicting cognitions and motivate individuals to seek its reduction (Heider, 1946; Festinger, 1957; Aronson, 1968). The theory of cognitive dissonance, one of the most influential theories in social psychology, was first developed by Leon Festinger in 1957 as primarily a theory of motivation, referring to internal processes. Since then, it has been studied extensively and inspired various versions.

Cognitive dissonance is a state of mental discomfort and interior tension created by the simultaneous presence of two cognitions that are incompatible. Cognitive dissonance theory suggests that individuals tend to maintain consistency among multiple cognitions which may be in the form of thoughts, emotions, attitudes, values, or beliefs and that a dissonance that arises among these cognitions produces psychological tension and discomfort for the individual. The dissonance, being psychologically uncomfortable, will, then, motivate the individual to try to reduce the dissonance and restore harmony. (Festinger, 1957, p. 3). Festinger observed that when there is an inconsistency among cognitions, the cognitions that do not fit "capture our interest

primarily because they stand out from a background of consistency" (1957, p. 1). Individuals, then will re-evaluate their cognitions by seeking new information to reduce dissonance but they will also tend to avoid situations and information which would be likely to increase the dissonance (Festinger, p. 3). As I will discuss below, reluctance to reflect on what does not resonate with our current beliefs in order to avoid discomfort constitutes the phenomenon which I will refer to as 'resistance to reflection', following Catriona Mackenzie (2002). As self-knowledge often requires reflection, resistance to reflection will naturally lead to self-ignorance and self-deception.

The perceptual theory of emotions and understanding emotions as gestalts might help us explain the phenomenon of resistance to reflection (MacKenzie, 2002). As we grow up, we absorb the values, assumptions and beliefs we encounter in our family, community, and culture.[46] Our emotional schemas become entrenched over time and determine in part the reasons for our actions. By the time we reach adulthood, we find ourselves with a way of seeing; an interpretive framework through the lens of which we experience the world. At times, we might not be even aware of the assumptions and beliefs we are operating from. Thus, when our values, assumptions and beliefs which we have acquired throughout our lives become firmly entrenched, we might be reluctant to question them. Following Mackenzie, I will call the reluctance to question the elements of our point of view 'resistance to reflection' (2002).

In chapter 2, I talked about recalcitrant emotions. To remind again, in some cases even if the belief associated with a certain emotion changes, the emotion may still stay the same. For instance, I might have a fear of spiders. However, it is often the case that even when I believe and know that the spider I see is absolutely harmless, the emotion of fear still persists; i.e., it is

[46] Even though children do a lot of questioning, nonetheless the answers are given by their family and relatives.

recalcitrant. In such cases, emotions are in conflict with our judgements. The reason for this is that our emotions cannot be reduced to judgements. Our emotions are, as the perceptual theory maintains, analogous to visual perceptions in that they both have nonconceptual representational content. An example much discussed in the context of emotions as value perceptions and inverse akrasia is the case of Huck Finn (Tappolet, 2003; Döring, 2008, Mackenzie, 2012). I would also like to use this example. However, my aim in discussing this case here is different. By discussing the story of Huck Finn, I want to illustrate how the 'resistance to reflection' might be overcome by experiencing a dilemma.

In the story, Huck Finn, after his escape from the cabinet in which his father locked him, crosses paths with Jim, a slave running away from his owner, Miss Watson, who plans to sell him to a plantation in the south where he would be treated horribly. Huck promises to Jim that he is going to keep quiet about him and not turn him in to authorities. Teaming up, Huck and Jim go through a series of adventures. When they finally get close to the place where Jim will become legally free, Huck experiences pangs of conscience and wrestles with the emotions of guilt and regret for helping Jim run away. As these emotions get unbearable, he decides to turn him in to the authorities. He says to himself:

> I couldn't get that out of my conscience, no how nor no way.... It hadn't ever come home to me, before, what this thing was that I was doing. But now it did; and it stayed with me, and scorched me more and more…..Conscience says to me: 'What had poor Miss Watson done to you, that you could see her nigger go off right under your eyes and never say one single word? What did that poor old woman do to you, that you could treat her so mean?.... . . 'I got to feeling so mean and so miserable I most wished I was dead……. My conscience got to stirring me up hotter than ever, until at last I says to it: 'Let up on me—

> it ain't too late, yet—I'll paddle ashore at first light, and tell.' I felt easy, and happy, and light as a feather, right off. All my troubles was gone. (Twain, 2006, chp.16)

Huck feels guilty about his decision to help Jim escape. As we can see clearly from the above paragraph, the right of Miss Watson as a property owner is salient in the situation to Huck rather than his friendship with Jim and Jim's right as a human being to have a free life in the way he likes with his family. As Bennett puts it:

> When Jim rejoices in Huck, as his only friend, Huck doesn't consider the claims of friendship or have the situation 'come home' to him in a different light…..Again, Jim's words about Huck's 'promise' to him don't give Huck any reason for changing his plan: in his morality promises to slaves probably don't count. Their effect on him is of a different kind: 'Well, I just felt sick'. (Bennett, 1974, p. 127) [47]

Once we understand the way Huck perceives the world and how he acquired this perspective in the first place, his decision to turn Jim in becomes intelligible to us. Growing up in rural Missouri all his life where ownership of black people as slaves is legally right, Huck sees turning Jim in as the right thing to do. Violating a norm, that is, not informing the authorities about Jim's escape although he could easily have done so, and doing wrong to Miss Watson by helping her slave escape are salient factors for him in the situation. Through his interpretive framework the world is intelligible to him. Therefore, he feels guilty about helping Jim. Huck's acceptance of the norms of rural Missouri and his guilt and regret arising from helping Jim frame the way the world appears to him and prevent him from recognizing other reasons for not turning

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[47] Slaves are regarded as property. And Jim, being Miss Watson's slave, is connected to Ms. Watson's property rights.

him in. This is why those pangs of conscience scorch him more and more.[48] It does not even occur to Huck to question the validity of owning a person as a property. He is totally blind to this way of seeing the world. For Huck, doing wrong to Miss Watson who has done nothing to him by helping Jim, her *property*, escape is salient. His friendship with Jim and Jim's rights as a human are not as salient compared to Miss Watson's rights as a property owner. If his reasons for his decision to turn Jim in arose from his emotional schemas/interpretive frameworks which made the world intelligible for him, then how would it be possible to make the reasons for not turning Jim in salient which were not salient to him before?[49] The answer is a dilemma, a triggering situation, so to speak, which would put his current perspective in question. Huck's dilemma is between his entrenched perspective and the new way of seeing things. When his perspective shifts through his emotions and his reflection on these emotions, the reasons for not turning Jim in become salient and he resolves the dilemma.

Huck agrees to help Jim at the outset, but the real moment of decision arrives later when he is actually confronted by the slave hunters. He then has to decide whether to protect him or to turn him in. At the start his decision is untested, just lip service so to speak. We can see this is the case in the above excerpt. He says: “It hadn't ever come home to me, before, what this thing was that I was doing”. When the time comes, Huck indeed changes his mind again and lies to slave hunters to protect Jim. The reason for this change is the conflict which he experiences between his firmly established perspective that he had assimilated unquestioningly (according to which he considered slaves as

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[48]In the excerpt above we read that his conscience is scorching him because he feels guilty about helping Jim and doing wrong to Miss Watson, not because he is sensitive to the reasons for not turning him in.

[49] He is not equally sensitive to the reasons whether to turn Jim in or not to turn him in. Doing wrong to Miss Watson is scorching his conscience as we can see from the above excerpt. The question is how one set of considerations becomes more salient than the other, that is, how a perspective shift can come about. It is not a matter of coherence.

properties) and the new perspective he acquired once he developed a friendship with Jim through the course of their adventures together (through which he came to recognize him as a human being and not as a property). In other words, once he finds himself in a dilemma, the reasons for alternative actions, i.e., reasons to protect Jim, become salient to him through his emotions. Thinking to himself, he feels compassion and sympathy. He says:

> And got to thinking over our trip down the river; and I see Jim before me all the time: in the day and in the night-time, sometimes moonlight, sometimes storms, and we a-floating along, talking and singing and laughing. But somehow I couldn't seem to strike no places to harden me against him, but only the other kind. I'd see him standing my watch on top of his'n, 'stead of calling me, so I could go on sleeping; and see him how glad he was when I come back out of the fog; and when I come to him again in the swamp, up there where the feud was; and such-like times; and would always call me honey, and pet me and do everything he could think of for me, and how good he always was; and at last I struck the time I saved him by telling the men we had small-pox aboard, and he was so grateful, and said I was the best friend old Jim ever had in the world, and the only one he's got now; and then I happened to look around and see that paper. (Twain, 2006, chap. 31)

When we try to do the right thing in a certain practical situation, we try to identify an option which responds to reason-giving considerations. The access to these reason-giving considerations is not only through our judgements, that is, judgements are not the sole cognitions which might provide an individual with reasons for an action (Jones, 2003, p. 184). According to the perceptual theory, emotions are also cognitive and thus they also might give us access to

reasons for actions. A conflict between different ways of seeing a situation might prompt us to reflect on our emotions. Emotions, as non-conceptual perceptions of values, might enable an individual to discover the reasons for an alternative course of action. We might then be able to articulate these reasons and thus modify our judgements or refine existing ones. One can, then, say that emotions have the capacity to attest to the presence of reasons without necessarily providing that information in a consciously articulated form and even despite our consciously held judgements that the situation presents no such reasons (Jones, p. 187).

Huck experienced emotions, compassion and sympathy to be more specific, which pointed to moral considerations for not turning Jim in. Emotions give us access to evaluative properties and practical reasons and by doing so play a significant role in discovering new reasons; and therefore, to deepen our moral understanding.

Even though the dilemma Huck experienced did not lead him to question the validity of owning a person as a property, it did trigger critical reflection for him to a certain extent and made him feel the weight of relevant considerations other than the well-established views in making his decision. As can be seen from the excerpt above, Huck reflects on his memories with Jim. He feels sympathy for Jim; he is touched by Jim's friendliness and his goodwill towards him. Huck's sympathy for Jim and reflections give him access to the reasons why he should protect Jim. Huck's story shows us how a dilemma can break the resistance to reflection and trigger the reflection process.

Novels by presenting their readers various 'triggering situations' might break their resistance to reflection and draw them into a reflection process which might eventually lead to a transformation of their perspective. I will demonstrate how this process works in the next section.

6.4. Second Phase: Transformation Process

The second phase, which I call the 'transformation process' is triggered by reading the novel and it involves, first, reflecting on the novel, events, characters, and their situations. During the reading process, we may stop and reflect on some parts of the novel but we will be in a better position to form opinions on characters and their reactions to events or situations after finishing the novel since only then we will have the whole picture in front of us with all its twists and turns. In this phase the reader investigates characters deeply, reflecting on their beliefs, actions, motives and responses to situations. The reader, based on this investigation can, then, try to arrive at a consistent interpretation of the novel.

This phase also involves critically reflecting on our own values, desires, normative commitments and action tendencies in relation to the issues it presents. Our engagement with the novel might encourage us to reflect on the significance of what we have read. Thus, through novels we may increase our self-knowledge. I will elaborate on this process in section 6.4.2. Before that however, some important points about interpretation are in order.

6.4.1. Interpretation

Interpreting a text means "attempting to discover or, at least, ascribe on some basis, a meaning in or to the work in question, or to determine what significance the work has for us" (Stecker, 2013, p. 309). There are various views regarding where the source of the meaning of a work lies. We can, broadly speaking, identify three sources: the text, the author, and the reader. Many literary theories have been developed arguing in favor of as well as against each of these sources in interpreting a work. It has been argued, for example, against the idea that the intentions of the author determine the meaning of a work (Wimsaat & Beardsley,1946). This approach to literary criticism embodied in the works of New Criticism theorists focusses solely

on the text and suggest that the meaning of a work is not what the author had intended in writing the work or what the author thinks it means after he has finished writing, but rather what he has achieved in writing it. Reader-response criticism emerged in the 1970s, as a reaction against new criticism that treated the text as the unique source of meaning and ignored the experience of the reader completely. Wolfgang Iser, a leading reader-response theorist, argues against approaching a text to uncover “a single hidden meaning” within the text (1978, pp. 10-2). Similarly, another literary critic, Hans Robert Jauss who formed the Constance School along with Wolfgang Iser, in his *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* reacts against those who see the meaning of a literary text as fixed (1982).

Jauss suggests that responses of individual readers do not occur in a vacuum but are situated within a framework of expectations and assumptions. He calls this framework of assumptions and expectations ‘horizon of expectations’. Horizon of expectations is formed by factors such as the prevailing conventions regarding technique, style, structure, or subject-matter or current moral codes and cultural norms that shape the way in which readers understand a literary work at a given time. He suggests that readers’ interpretations will vary depending on their ‘horizon of expectations’. According to Jauss, a literary work cannot always be congruent with the ‘horizon of expectations’ of its contemporary readers; that is, it does not offer the same view to every reader in every period. A reader in the 1920s approaches *The Age of Innocence* with expectations which are different from those of a contemporary reader. The contemporary readers of a particular text read it within a dominant 'horizon of expectations' which may or may not be shared by the writer. Jauss says that a literary work “is not an object that stands by itself and that offers the same view to each reader in each period. It is not a monument that monologically reveals its timeless essence” (Jauss, 1982, p. 21).

Iser suggests that in reading a text, the reader is not driven so much by what is said as by what is not said, i.e., the gaps in the text. Gaps activate our thought processes which then can lead to an interpretation of the text (pp. 167-68). In Iser's formulation:

> What is missing ... is what stimulates the reader into filling the blanks with projections. He is drawn into the events and made to supply what is meant from what is not said. What is [author's own emphasis] said only appears to take on significance as a reference to what is not said; it is the implications and not the statements that give shape and weight to the meaning. (1978, p. 168)

To fill in some of these gaps in the text, the reader must reflect on the particular cognitions, actions, thoughts and beliefs of the characters, drawing on his real-life experiences. The reader might then, by filling in these gaps, arrive at a consistent interpretation of the novel. Thus, a literary text admits multiple readings due to the gaps in the text which might be filled in different ways by different readers. However, this is not to say that meaning is "purely subjective" (1978, p. 230). According to Iser, in interpreting a text we are constrained by the text itself. We cannot make a text mean just about anything with our interpretation. For an interpretation to be an interpretation of a certain text and not of another, it must be grounded in the text itself. The interpretation must be supported by scenes and lines in the text. A text can be interpreted in different ways due to the gaps in the text but still the text limits our interpretations. Thus, for every text there is also a range of acceptable interpretations. The burden to relate a particular interpretation to a particular work is on the reader who gives the interpretation. Our evaluations and judgements of the characters and their actions we arrive through our reflections in this phase lay partly the foundation of our interpretation of the text. I will illustrate how this process might work for the reader below by filling in the gaps as I go along. However, it is

important to note that this is only one possible way of interpreting *The Age of Innocence*. Some of the gaps in the story that may need to be considered and reflected upon are, for example: Why did Archer vacillate between Ellen and May so much? Was it self-deception, conformism or confusion? Why didn't he break the engagement with May? When May asked him why he wanted to advance the date of the wedding and offered her own conjectures, why did he deny them? Were they true or not? Was he ashamed or was he not even aware of his reasons for doing so? The answers to such questions are not simply derivable from the text itself. The author does not say Archer felt confused, deceived himself or that he chose to conform to the social conventions because he is not courageous enough to face the consequences of not complying to them. We read about Archer's inner thoughts, the way things seem to him and his actions. By describing all these but leaving open why he might have behaved in the way he did the text invites us to reflect on his states of mind.

a. An Interpretation of *The Age of Innocence*. *The Age of Innocence* is set in the upper-class society in New York in the 1870s. The major characters in the novel are Newland Archer, May Welland and Countess Olenska. The plot is in the framework of a love triangle that involves these three people. The viewpoint switches between the narrator's viewpoint and that of Archer. The former relocates itself sometimes in the latter, saying for example, "These things passed through Newland Archer's mind" after narrating certain thoughts; and sometimes distances itself from it by irony. Among the three main characters, the only character we see from the inside is Archer.

Newland Archer, going through various emotional episodes, experiences a dilemma which then triggers him to engage in critical reflection. In the novel, as we will see below, Archer, gradually acquires self-knowledge and eventually changes through his emotional

experiences and reflections on these emotions. In my interpretation below, I will follow the track of the change in Archer's perspective.

Newland Archer who belongs to one of the best families in New York is about to announce his engagement to May Welland, a young woman belonging to an equally respectable family. Countess Ellen Olenska, May's cousin, born and raised in this society too, returns unexpectedly to New York from Europe and enters their life. She has lived in Europe for many years with her husband, a Polish Count, who is notoriously unfaithful and reportedly a "brute". Countess Olenska, reputed to run away with her husband's secretary, is now seeking the protection and comfort of her family following her separation from her husband.

Countess Olenska and May Welland are diametrically opposed in character. Countess Olenska is "different", bohemian, and artistic. She had an "eccentric" upbringing by her aunt Medora Manson who took charge of her after she lost both of her parents (p. 31). Medora has an unconventional personality and is known for habitually defying the conventions of their society. In mourning for Ellen's father, her brother for example, Medora disregarding "the unalterable rules that regulated American mourning" had scandalized her family by wearing a veil that was "seven inches shorter than those of her sisters-in-law" and let little Ellen, who was expected to be in black, wear "crimson merino and amber beads, like a gypsy foundling" (p. 47). Ellen had received an education, "which included 'drawing from the model,' a thing never dreamed of before, and playing the piano in quintets with professional musicians" (p. 48). We learn that as a child she was "a fearless and familiar little thing, who asked disconcerting questions, made precocious comments, and possessed outlandish arts, such as dancing a Spanish shawl dance and singing Neapolitan love-songs to a guitar" (p. 47). Apart from the upbringing and education she received, having lived for a long time in a Bohemian circle of singers, actors and musicians in

Europe with her husband, she no longer fits in the New York Upper class society to which her family belongs.

i)Emotions of the Characters. At the beginning of the book, we see Newland Archer as a self-assured man, certain of his ideas which have been shaped by the values, conventions and norms of the social class to which he belongs. He arrives late at the opera as he knows that it is "not the thing" to arrive early and we learn that "what was or was not 'the thing'" plays an important part in his life. (p. 2). He sees social proprieties as natural and their observance a duty even to the smallest details like "the duty of using two silver-backed brushes with his monogram in blue enamel to part his hair, and of never appearing in society without a flower (preferably a gardenia) in his buttonhole" (p. 2). He sees natural even the most ridiculous practices his 'tribe' deems right such as a rule of the musical world which "required that the German text of French operas sung by Swedish artists should be translated into Italian for the clearer understanding of English-speaking audiences" (p. 2).

In reading about Archer's habits, we engage both with Archer's and the narrator's perspectives: We not only see how important it is for Archer to observe all the social conventions to the smallest detail but also by engaging with the narrator's perspective, we find it amusing that these silly social conventions rule Archer's life just like "the inscrutable totem terrors that had ruled the destinies of his forefathers thousands of years ago" (p. 2).

Archer, although he feels himself superior to other members of New York gentility in intellectual and artistic matters, feels compelled to "accept their doctrine on all the issues called moral" as "in this respect it would be troublesome--also rather bad form--to strike out for himself." (p. 5)

May Welland, Newland Archer's fiancé, represents the kind of woman New York's upper-class society deems most proper. May, being a "product of the system" is socially impeccable, beautiful, innocent and represents the epitome of womanhood as conceived by their society whose views are articulated by Archer's mother who tells Archer, "dear May is my ideal" (p. 129). As we read, we see how Archer has come to accept the values of his society as his own; that is, how he internalized them. The ideal bride he imagines for himself is the kind of woman the members of the society consider ideal. May with her "abysmal purity" is the object of Archer's "tender reverence" (p. 4) and he believes himself to be very much in love with May.

At first, Archer is annoyed by Ellen's arrival as he thinks Ellen's return will taint the reputation of his fiancé's family. At the opera, Lawrence Lefferts who is regarded as "the foremost authority on 'form' in New York" (p. 5) draws the attention of the "masculine New-York" to the Mingotts' box, expressing his shock over the arrival of Countess Olenska. Once it dawns on Archer that Ellen Olenska is in the box with her fiancé's family, a "rush of indignation" comes over him (p. 8). Although he approves the family solidarity Mingotts show in supporting "the few black sheep" in their family and their kindness to Countess Olenska "in private", he finds their indiscretion in allowing her to appear in public offensive. Countess Olenska sits in her corner of the Mingotts' box, her dress revealing "a little more shoulder and bosom" than New York society is used to seeing. Archer feels contempt for Ellen as he watches her from a distance. Archer examining Countess Olenska from a distance, finds her dress distasteful and is repelled by the idea of May's "being exposed to the influence of a young woman so careless of the dictates of Taste" (p. 11).

As we get to know Archer more, his emotional responses become more intelligible to us. We see how the situation is seen from his point of view and how they reflect his values, concerns, and interests:

> Few things seemed to Newland Archer more awful than an offense against “Taste,” that far-off divinity of whom “Form” was the mere visible representative and vicegerent. Madame Olenska's pale and serious face appealed to his fancy as suited to the occasion and to her unhappy situation; but the way her dress (which had no tucker) sloped away from her thin shoulders shocked and troubled him. He hated to think of May Welland's being exposed to the influence of a young woman so careless of the dictates of Taste. (pp. 10-1)

While watching the opera, Archer daydreams about his marriage to May. The reader is given access to his inner thoughts:

> He did not in the least wish the future Mrs. Newland Archer to be a simpleton. He meant her (thanks to his enlightening companionship) to develop a social tact and readiness of wit enabling her to hold her own with the most popular married women of the "younger set," in which it was the recognised custom to attract masculine homage while playfully discouraging it […]. How this miracle of fire and ice was to be created, and to sustain itself in a harsh world, he had never taken the time to think out; but he was content to hold his view without analysing it, since he knew it was that of all the carefully-brushed, white-waistcoated, button-hole-flowered gentlemen who succeeded each other in the club box, exchanged friendly greetings with him, and turned their opera-glasses critically on the circle of ladies who were the product of the system. (pp. 4-5)

This except shows in a striking way how Archer has come to be conditioned by the values of the men in his society without even giving it a second thought. It illustrates how elements of our point of view acquired unreflectively throughout our lives operate in our daily lives and influence the way we see things. The kind of wife Archer wants for himself is the collective ideal of the men in his society which he has unquestioningly absorbed as his own.

After the Opera, the Beauforts hold a ball at their home as they do every year. Archer is nervous as he thinks the Mingotts may bring Countess Olenska. To his relief, she does not come. May explains that Ellen has not come to the ball as she thought her dress was not smart enough. Archer, noticing that May avoids discussing Ellen and her problems, admires his fiancé's "determination to carry to its utmost limit that ritual of ignoring the "unpleasant" in which they had both been brought up" (p. 20). Archer thinks to himself: "She knows as well as I do, […] the real reason of her cousin's staying away; but I shall never let her see by the least sign that I am conscious of there being a shadow of a shade on poor Ellen Olenska's reputation" (p. 20). We see here that Archer and May are both plagued by the hypocrisy that pervades the New York Upper class society where one always has to participate in a charade: No one says what they mean or mean what they say. They live "in an atmosphere of faint implications and pale delicacies" (p. 12). They use symbols and signs to communicate or allude "by the merest hint" rather than talking straightforwardly (p. 73).

Countess Olenska, reputed to have eloped with her husband's secretary, offends the moral sensitivity of New York's upper class with her behaviors such as appearing publicly at the Opera, and walking up the Fifth Avenue freely with Mr. Beaufort, a gentleman known for his loose morals. Archer's reaction to these incidents is to thank heaven "that he was a New Yorker, and about to ally himself with one of his own kind" (p. 24). Again, we see here how Archer's

point of view functions in his daily life and determines the way he sees things. This is important as later we will see that once a change occurs in his established cognitive framework, the way things appear to him, too, changes.

Arousing the curiosity of the society, Ellen quickly becomes the subject matter of dinner table conversations. Archer's mother, Mrs. Archer, invites Sillerton Jackson to dinner as she always does whenever something happens in their society she wants to know more about. This time, she aims to satisfy her curiosity about Ellen. As Archer, his mother and sister dine with Mr. Jackson, Mrs. Archer and her daughter try to find out all the details about her from him. They talk about Ellen's marriage, rumors surrounding her escape from her husband and her wanting to divorce.

After the dinner is over and Mr. Jackson leaves, Archer retreats to his room where he drifts into thoughts. He reflects about May and the marriage into which he is preparing to enter soon with her. He pictures his marriage with May as "a passionate and tender comradeship". He is aware that the kind of marriage he imagines requires "the experience, the versatility, the freedom of judgment" from her; things which May Welland "had been carefully trained not to possess" (p. 35). He realizes that her innocence is only "an artificial product" and her purity is, "cunningly manufactured by a conspiracy of mothers and aunts and grandmothers and long-dead ancestresses, because it was supposed to be what he wanted" (p. 36). He thinks to himself: "What could he and she really know of each other, since it was his duty, as a 'decent' fellow, to conceal his past from her, and hers, as a marriageable girl, to have no past to conceal?" (p. 34). He chillingly predicts that his marriage, like most marriages he knows, will turn into "a dull association of material and social interests held together by ignorance on the one side and hypocrisy on the other" (p. 35). May's innocence, her "abysmal purity" that he valued so much a

few days ago seems to him now as an obstacle to carry out the ideal marriage in his mind. Archer considers Lefferts's and Beaufort's marriages, wishing his marriage will not turn out to be like theirs. Everybody, including their wives, knows they have affairs outside of their marriages but ignores and pretends not to know due to their positions in society provided by their wealth and connections. Thinking about all this, Archer recognizes that they live in a "hieroglyphic world where the real thing was never said or done or even thought, but only represented by a set of arbitrary signs" (p. 35).

All these reflections, as he also becomes aware, are prompted by the case of Countess Olenska: "[T]he inopportune arrival of Countess Olenska" he recognizes "stirred up old settled convictions and set them drifting dangerously through his mind" and "raised all the special problems he would have preferred to let lie" (p. 37). Countess Olenska's arrival unsettles him because the striking difference between Ellen and May, leading him to reconsider his views about May, makes him aware that he is about to take a path in life--marrying May--that he knows will not make him happy. Archer perceives that the arrival of Countess Olenska has some significance and implications for his life, but he is not yet consciously aware "why her fate should have the least bearing on his" (p. 37).

ii)Dialectic Between the Two Characters. The most powerful family in New York "the arbitrators of fashion, the court of last appeal "the Van der Luydens, gives a dinner in honor of their cousin's visit, the Duke. Ellen who knew the Duke before from her time in Europe comments to Archer that he is the dullest man she knows. Archer is pleasantly surprised by her answer because for him it is "undeniably exciting to meet a lady who found the Van der Luydens' Duke dull, and dared to utter the opinion" (p. 51). The surprise he feels arouses his

curiosity about her life so much so that he longs "to hear more about the life of which her careless words had given him so illuminating a glimpse" (p. 51).

The next day, Archer calls on Ellen upon her invitation. She lives in "des quartiers excentriques". In Ellen's house, while Archer waits for Ellen, his attention is drawn to certain aspects of the room: Italian-looking pictures, a little Greek bronze, the red-damask on the wall, the mixed smell of dried roses and Turkish coffee. He is so struck by all these things in the room that he perceives that Ellen's way of life is as far from his way of life as Semerkand is from New York (pp. 56-61). To Archer's comment on the location of her place that "It's not fashionable" to live in such an area, Ellen says: "Fashionable! Do you all think so much of that? Why not make one's own fashions?" (p. 59). We see that she is a woman who lays her own norms herself and, unlike Archer, does not really care about what is "the thing" or "not the thing". Ellen's way of seeing the world is quite different from that of Archer. Accordingly, her room is "unlike any room he had known" (p. 56). He is bewildered by the pictures on the wall and mesmerized by the atmosphere of the room. Ellen comments that her house is a poor little place, nevertheless "less gloomy than the Van der Luydens". Her comment gives him "an electric shock". He is surprised that someone has "dared to call the stately home of the Van der Luydens gloomy" for the members of their society who is privileged enough to be allowed to Van der Luydens' house "shivered there, and spoke of it as "handsome"." However, he is once again pleasantly surprised that "she had given voice to the general shiver" (p. 58). This shows how different they are. Ellen says what is on her mind, whether proper or not. Archer, on the other hand, observes propriety and does not say what he thinks is the case. When Ellen says straightforwardly what she thinks, he is surprised. Ellen does not care about propriety. For Archer, however, it is very important.

On Ellen's honest and penetrating remark regarding why the Van der Luydens might have that powerful influence on New York society--"that they make themselves so rare" (p. 60)– Archer delighted, proclaims that she is opening his eyes to things he had been so accustomed to for so long that he ceased to see (p. 61).

Ellen talks about her loneliness and weeps as she describes how her family, not wanting to hear anything that may be unpleasant, asks her only to pretend. Archer, now coming to see things from her perspective, feels sympathy for her and tells reassuring words to her. He even happens to call her with her first name "Ellen" twice and while this impropriety is "burnt into his consciousness", Ellen does not even notice it (p. 63).

Countess Olenska is welcomed by her family; however, her decision to divorce her husband becomes a source of distress for the family members not only because divorce is a disgrace in this society, but also for fear of a potential scandal that might be caused by her husband's accusations during divorce processions, i.e., her elopement with another man. On the one hand, Ellen's relatives shower her with affection and show their sympathy by calling her "poor Ellen", and on the other they ignore her desire to be free and happy, dismissing her pleas for divorce. Archer realizes that his society, just like the Pharisees in the Bible, adheres stubbornly to conventions and ostracizes defenseless others to preserve their status. Feeling a "great wave of compassion" for Ellen, Archer thinks she must be "saved at all costs from farther wounding herself in her mad plunges against fate" and takes on himself the mission of communicating this to her with the aim of protecting her "rather than let her secrets be bared to other eyes"(p. 77).

On his way to talk this matter with Ellen, he becomes "once more conscious of the curious way in which she reversed his values" (p. 84). He talks to Countess Olenska to dissuade

her from divorcing the count. Ellen resists first asking, “Is my freedom nothing?” (p. 90). Explaining to her that her divorce and a lot of “beastly talk” during the processions will hurt her family and friends, weaken their society and make it impossible for her to continue living here, he asks her to give up her decision to divorce. Ellen gives up the idea of divorce. Archer succeeds in his mission.

Over the course of their interactions, Archer falls in love with Ellen. Archer is enchanted by Ellen’s unconventionality, insightful honesty, free thoughts and manners, and forthright attitude. She has a liberating effect on Archer, enabling him to “look at his native city objectively"(p. 61). She is like a breath of fresh air in the stuffy atmosphere of the New York society. The idea of marriage with May starts to worry him as he becomes increasingly aware of May’s limitations.

Archer is torn between May Welland and Ellen Olenska; the values of conventional Old New York society and his desire to live a more artistic, free, cultured, European life style. Hamstrung by ambivalence, Archer vacillates between Ellen and May. He sends roses to Ellen and meets privately with her but then rushes to see May. He supports Ellen’s divorce saying “I'm sick of the hypocrisy that would bury alive a woman of her age if her husband prefers to live with harlots” (p. 33), but then as the spokesman of the clan, he persuades Ellen not to divorce.

Following the announcement of his engagement with May, the visits they have to pay to the important families of their society as part of engagement rituals start to feel like a burden and give him “the feeling that he had been shown off like a wild animal cunningly trapped” (p. 54). Although his feeling of being trapped signals him the need to break free from his engagement with May, he ignores it.

Archer's perspective slowly changes and he begins to view the society and its conventions in a different light. He sees the pettiness of the social taboos and the hypocrisy that pervades their society. He even sees the limitations of May and understands fully that he cannot be happy with her. He recognizes that May lacks "the experience, the versatility, the freedom of judgment" that are required for the comradeship that he dreams to have with his future wife (p. 35). Nevertheless, he suggests May that they marry in a few weeks. May, surprised at his unexpected suggestion, asks him frankly if the reason he wants to hasten the marriage is because he worries about being attached to another woman and wants to "settle the question" for once and all by marrying her as soon as possible. She even offers to break her engagement with him, if this is the case. Archer denies all this.

Archer is confronted now with a difficult choice: his passion for Ellen and his duty to May. Archer begins to struggle within himself. His struggle is not only between Ellen and May as these two women represent also respectively an exciting life style and a traditional one; the freedom to choose for oneself and the adherence to the limited teachings one receives from his culture.

While Archer is drawn to Ellen because of her unconventionality, free spirit, and straightforwardness, Ellen is drawn to Archer because of the values he holds which he also instills in her. What Archer teaches her, as she also tells him, was loyalty and devotion to one's family and the readiness to sacrifice one's own individual happiness to honor the family interest, the qualities which are embodied by him as well. These things which she was made aware by Archer were what made their society in New York different from the society in which she lived before, represented by her corrupt husband, Count Olenska.

Archer calling on Ellen reveals to Ellen that he has fallen in love with her. When she corresponds, he suggests leaving May for her. Ellen tells him that since she has decided not to divorce, she is not free to marry him now. Withdrawing herself from Archer she tries to make him see that they cannot have a relationship and be loyal to their friends and family at the same time. Through her conversations with Archer and her encounter with his perspective which is completely new to her, she becomes aware of the missing ingredients of her life, namely loyalty to one's family and friends and her perspective, too, shifts. Ellen says to Archer:

> [Y]ou had felt the world outside tugging at one with all its golden hands—and yet you hated the things it asks of one; you hated happiness bought by disloyalty and cruelty and indifference. That was what I'd never known before—and it's better than anything I've known. (p. 140)

Through his encounters with Ellen, Archer becomes aware of his blind adherence to the values of his society, sees the limitations of these values for the first time and desires to transcend these limitations. He reaches this self-knowledge by becoming acquainted with Ellen's perspective. His perspective on life, its limitations become more pronounced on the backdrop of Madame Olenska's perspective, her way of life. He becomes aware that members of their society are all as like each other as" dolls cut out of the same folded paper" (p. 67).

iii)Change in Their Worldviews. The world of upper-class New York is a world filled with hypocrisy. This is perhaps most evident in the society's attitude to Lawrence Lefferts whose marriage Archer thinks is a typical one in their circle. Lawrence Lefferts who conceals his extramarital affairs by preaching about "the sanctity of the home" and the holiness of the marriage bond. Lefferts's affairs are tolerated by their society because they are not out in the open. Similarly, because Julius Beaufort gives his friends a good time with the balls he holds, the

society is quite willing to accept Beaufort despite his illicit business methods, as long as his dishonesty is concealed and his business dealings appear to be in order. The Beauforts have a ballroom where they give balls, and "this undoubted superiority was felt to compensate for whatever was regrettable in the Beaufort past" (p. 14). As Archer reflects, he becomes aware of the hypocrisy of the society and asks himself: “Are we Pharisees, after all?” (p. 78). The upper-class New York society is plagued by hypocrisy collectively. They observe their conventions, even the most trivial ones, to the smallest detail. Nonetheless, as long as the appearances are kept things appear to be in order, they regard immoral acts as insignificant.

Ellen’s ways on the other hand, contrast with those of Archer, May and their society. Ellen is honest. She speaks her mind unlike the others who live “in an atmosphere of faint implications and pale delicacies” (p. 12) and use signs to communicate or allude “by the merest hint” rather than talking straightforwardly (p. 73). Ellen says what she means and means what she says. No wonder, then, the upper-class New York society rejects her. Ellen reminds them of their hypocrisy and dishonesty.

I have discussed before that encountering others’ paradigm scenarios that are different from our own and trying to see situations through the lens of these emotional paradigms might not only enable us to strip ourselves of our egotistic outlook, but also might provide us with a fresh perspective from which we can question our own understanding of these situations and interpretive frameworks. Encountering others’ paradigm scenarios and trying to understand situations from their point of view can make other factors in the situation salient, which might then cause a shift in our emotions and evaluations. This is indeed what happens to Archer and Ellen.

Newland Archer and Countess Olenska are opposites at the beginning particularly about the ways they see social norms and the value they give to their own individual freedom. As Archer gets acquainted with Ellen's perspective, he starts to see things that he could not see before: He becomes aware of the stubborn adherence in his society to social conventions which makes them no different from the Pharisees of the Bible. Similarly, her conversations with Archer make Ellen see things from his perspective enabling her to realize things that she could not see before; namely, caring for others and one's family, friends and society instead of acting according to one's selfish motives. In other words, by focusing on different aspects of the situation, each acquires a new perspective. Once they alter their focus, they both experience perspective shifts. The contempt Archer felt for Ellen at the beginning disappears and leaves its place to admiration and compassion for her. The pride he felt to be a New Yorker, on the other hand, turns to contempt for New York society and he no longer feels attracted to May who represents the ideal of a New York upper-class society woman.

Archer's and Ellen's experiences of perspective shifts are similar to the experience where one, unable to see the old woman in the old-woman/ young woman figure by reorganizing the lines and shades, becomes able to see the old woman or when one; unable to see the faces in the Rubin's vase image, becomes able to see the faces in the figure by altering his focus.[50]

Archer is ready to leave May for Ellen but Ellen has now other considerations and is not willing to take this any further. She says: "I can't go back now to that other way of thinking. I can't love you unless I give you up." Their conversation gets interrupted as Ellen receives a telegram from May. The telegram announces that upon Archer's insistence the date of her wedding with Archer has been advanced and they are soon going to marry. Book I ends here.

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[50] See pp. 126-27 in Chapter 4.

The first part of the novel demonstrates how Archer changes through a series of emotional experiences and his shifting emotions, shifting focus and shifting perspective that he experiences along the way. As the novel progresses, we witness his change from a complacent young man bound to his society with social conventions and the accompanying emotional frameworks that he has absorbed unreflectively to a more discerning individual who becomes aware of the failures and shortcomings of the ways of his society.

Book II begins with the wedding ceremony of Archer and May. Now that Ellen has other considerations and wants to avoid Archer in order not to hurt May's feelings, a relationship with Ellen is a distant possibility. Marriage with May offers him an immediately available solution to detach himself from his painful emotional experience. Maybe even if Ellen was open to revealing their love for each other to their families and friends, he would not at the end be courageous enough to do this supposing that he did not somehow manage to overcome his deeply entrenched feeling that on moral issues of all kinds "it would be troublesome—and also rather bad form—to strike out for himself" (p. 5).

After their honeymoon, Archer meets Ellen in Boston. She lives in Washington with her aunt Medora to keep an eye on her, to look after and to protect her. Ellen is adamant to keep her distance from Archer now that she cares about May's happiness rather than her own. She expresses her gratitude to Archer for making her aware of the importance of caring about others. She says: "it was you who made me understand that under the dullness there are things so fine and sensitive and delicate that even those I most cared for in my other life look cheap in comparison" (p. 197).

Book II is mainly a description of Archer's life after the wedding and it is pervaded by metaphors alluding to death, entrapment and suffocation. At the ceremony, Archer thinks how

he is alienated now from all the things he had respected once and how "things that had filled his days seemed now like a nursery parody of life". Archer tries unsuccessfully to forget Ellen who now lives in Washington. In his attempts to forget her, he even "train[s] himself" to regard his interactions with Ellen "as the last of his discarded experiments" (p. 169).

His marriage with May comes to represent entrapment to Archer. He envisages a "black abyss" before him and feels himself "sinking into it deeper and deeper." He sees himself as "the dwindling figure of a man to whom nothing was ever to happen." Archer feels dead and suffocated in his marriage to the point that he wishes May dies and leaves him free. When May says to Archer who, feeling stifled, rushes to open the window for fresh air: "Do shut the window. You'll catch your death." Archer thinks to himself: "But I've caught it already. I AM dead—I've been dead for months and months." As the reader reads how Archer feels in his marriage, he feels sympathy for him seeing his suffocation and misery, if he is responding in an emotionally appropriate way and wishes he never married May. What he says to Ellen, when they meet later, summarizes his feelings about his life after marriage very well: "You gave me my first glimpse of a real life, and at the same moment you asked me to go on with a sham one. It's beyond human enduring—that's all."

Here we find one of the many instances in the novel of what Carroll calls a criterially pre-focused" text which I discussed previously.[51] In a criterially pre-focused text, an object is described or depicted in such a way that it leads us to perceive the event under a certain category which corresponds criterially to certain emotional states. Once the reader recognizes that the object depicted in a particular way falls under that category the corresponding emotion is aroused

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[51] See pp. 144-145

(2001, p. 228).[52] We recognize his suffering and respond with sympathy and compassion since suffering of another elicits sympathy and compassion, if one is responding in an emotionally appropriate way.[53]

Newland, obsessed with Ellen, desperately tries to find a way to leave May and be with Ellen. Finding out that Ellen has decided to return to Europe, he makes up his mind to follow her there. May takes upon herself to throw a farewell party for Ellen. That night after the party Newland resolves to tell May that he is leaving her for Ellen. However, before he gets the chance to reveal his decision to May, she tells him that she is pregnant. She also tells him that she revealed her pregnancy to Ellen two weeks ago although she was not sure of it at the time. Newland on hearing this news gives up resignedly his decision to follow Ellen.

The last chapter takes place twenty-six years later. Newland with his son, Dallas, visits Paris. May is now dead. Dallas who has learnt that his mother's cousin Ellen lives in Paris has arranged a visit to her. Archer returns to his hotel room without seeing her. Reflecting on his life he feels shy, old-fashioned, inadequate: "a mere grey speck of a man compared with the ruthless magnificent fellow he had dreamed of being" and he realizes that he has missed "the flower of life" (p. 284).

As I have discussed before, since readers have different personalities, interests, and assumptions there can be a number of different possible interpretations of a text and they can be equally appropriate. For example, another reader interpreting *The Age of Innocence* might think that Archer's vacillation between May and Ellen is not due to self-deception as I have interpreted

[52] Nevertheless, it is important to point out that not all readers respond in the same way to a criterially pre-focused text and also that not all criterially pre-focused texts succeed in eliciting the emotion from the reader which it wishes to elicit.

it above, but just to confusion, his being unsure at that stage about what really matters to him. Another reader might think Archer's autonomy has been impaired due to the cultural oppression prevalent in his society. None of these interpretations I believe will be inappropriate. The text can give rise to these different interpretations.

6.4.2. Effects on Readers

Novels or other fictional narratives might give us a starting point to confront issues in our own lives that we may not have been able to explore. Readers may imaginatively explore various issues guided by novels that often revolve around themes of moral and human concern. Our relationship with social conventions, for example, is just one aspect of morality that we can reflect on in reading *The Age of Innocence*. Depending on the theme of the novel, the reader might reflect on different issues that concern morality. For example, in reading Sebastian Faulks' *Birdsong* or Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet On The Western Front*, we might have the opportunity to think about war and its implications. Similarly, reading Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* or Richard B. Wright's *October* might provide us the opportunity to think about euthanasia.

Karen Jones emphasizes the importance of well-tuned self-monitoring habits for our practical decisions which she calls 'regulative guidance' (Jones, 2003, p. 196). Jones defines 'regulative guidance' as "just one way of describing what happens when an agent's emotional responses are shaped, fine-tuned and sometimes even radically transformed through the process of character formation so that they become reliable at latching onto reasons that obtain for her" (p. 196). Regulative guidance entails "the on-going cultivation and exercise of habits of reflective self-monitoring of our practical and epistemic agency" (Jones, p. 194). One way we can cultivate and exercise this ability might be through critically reflecting on the novels we read. Indeed,

researchers suggest that reading narratives can enhance our understanding of moral and social situations (Hakemulder, 2000; Mar et al., 2011). Hakemulder proposes that the possible changes that could result from reading literary narratives include better grasp of moral situations (2000, p. 13). Mar and his collaborators, in their article exploring the emotions before, during and after the reading process suggest that emotions experienced in reading literary fictions are likely to refine our emotional understanding (2011, p. 829).

a. Reader's Emotional Engagement with Characters. Novels and other fictional narratives have the potential to place reader in a range of various situations, allowing them to have experiences by proxy (Oatley, 1999). In so doing, they can broaden the scope of readers' experiences that are beyond their reach in their real lives and shed light on emotions one can feel in such situations. So, for example in reading *1984,* we might have the chance to explore what it might feel like to live under an oppressive regime.

In novels we often read about characters who face various challenges or dilemmas that elicit emotions from readers. Emotionally engaged readers may learn vicariously from the experiences of characters and add these experiences into their own store of experiences, as I pointed out. Vicarious experiences offered to readers in their engagements with fictions do not pose a threat to readers' real-life goals or their self-images. Looking at human predicaments and concerns from a distance may enable individuals to see the complexity of moral situations with less defensiveness. Readers do not feel threatened by the possible consequences of their emotions or the possible negative consequences for others. For this reason, they might feel more open to experiences that they would normally avoid in real-life. Researchers also state that engagement with narratives may provide a safe space for readers to experience emotions strongly enough to explore their implications but not to the extent that they overwhelm the readers (Sheff, 1979;

Oatley, 2002). Sheff suggests that in real life we do not always experience our emotions fully. Sometimes we distance these emotions and try to keep them away and sometimes we might be overwhelmed by them. Either way, we may experience emotions without understanding their significance. He proposes that dramas, rituals or therapy can allow us opportunities of experiencing those emotions so that we are better able to understand their meanings (1979). Oatley, similarly, suggests that fiction has a laboratory quality; that is we experience it in a place of safety away and this gives fiction the possibility of allowing us to experience an emotion while at the same time reflecting on it (2002, p. 64).

In reading *The Age of Innocence*, we imaginatively enter Archer's world through Wharton's description and accompany him in his struggle as he goes through a series of experiences that shifts his perspective. Archer's struggle is not only between two women, but also between the two different life styles represented by these two women. Ellen represents individual freedom and possibilities outside his society; May represents a life bound by meaningless social conventions, customs and habits. As we read about Archer's ambivalence, his indecisiveness, his conflicting reactions, and contradictory behaviours we might be puzzled. Archer aspires to break through the barriers of conventions which surround him but he is unable to "strike out for himself". He cannot escape from these conventions. He is too much concerned with his social self-image. While we may respond with sympathy to Archer, we might also feel frustrated for his lack of courage.

At the end of Book I, Archer comes to see the triviality of the conventions that he valued so much previously but his improved understanding is not sufficient to make a change in his way of life. He does not identify maybe now with all those societal norms he once valued so much, but conforms to them all the same. He marries May, knowing that he is not going to be happy

with her and that his marriage with her is going to turn into “a dull association of material and social interests” (p. 35) asking Ellen: “do you see me marrying May after this?” (p. 139). Nevertheless, he pays the price: Life loses all its charm for him. We witness how he goes through the consequences of his actions.

It is clear that the change in his perspective did not translate to a change in his actual life. Hence, throughout the whole of Book 2, we read about Archer’s feelings of suffocation and entrapment and loss of vigor for life after the wedding. He suffers when he thinks about the years, he will have to live with May himself: “How young she is! For what endless years this will have to go on!” (p. 117).

The reader can imagine how it feels like to live a life that has “become unreal and irrelevant” to oneself (p. 178) and to share a whole life with someone that one wishes dies and sets them free. As a result, he can experience the dread and hopelessness of Archer’s situation. Once the reader reads about Archer’s lack of enthusiasm for life and engages emotionally with Archer’s suffering; that is, once he empathizes with Archer’s feelings of suffocation in his marriage, he might discover, the importance and the possible consequences of not changing one’s life in accordance with one’s changed perspective. The emotional engagement with Archer might enable the reader to experience what it feels like to be in Archer’s situation. That emotional engagement might teach the reader the consequences of self-deception, conformism or fear of change and not acting in line with one’s new perspective.

b. Consequences of these Emotions in the Mind of the Reader. Reading novels can be pivotal to the process of gaining self-knowledge since a very effective way to do this might be through encountering and engaging with different emotional scenarios. To know ourselves better we might need to be aware of and understand our own emotional scenarios. The perspectives

readers encounter presented in the novel may challenge their ways of construing the world and provide them with a way to acquire self-knowledge. Self-knowledge plays a crucial role in morality because it provides us with the necessary means for shaping our moral life more deliberately. Without the awareness of the frameworks we are operating from, we hold little chance, if any, to transform our perspective, and act accordingly.

Critical reflection is crucial for gaining self-knowledge and for transformation because without critical reflection, we cannot move beyond conditioning. When we think critically, we can eventually move from an unconscious participation in dominant discourses, stereotypical notions about genders and different races and social conventions that do not make sense any longer.

Critical reflection involves reflecting on different perspectives encountered, becoming aware of one's assumptions and beliefs and clarifying one's own point of view. By reflecting on our emotional responses to characters' experiences, examining what thoughts they give rise to, we may be able to identify our emotional schemas. Through such reflection we might, then, discover aspects of ourselves that we had not acknowledged previously.

Readers are exposed to a wide range of emotional schemas in novels. Fictional characters might serve as a medium by which readers can explore and reflect on the issues presented in the novels. Readers might see something of themselves in a character or they can compare their own point of view with those of characters. Characters' experiences force us to reconsider some of the attitudes we might have. Readers might also project themselves in a character's situation, in other words centrally imagine themselves in the character's situation, and consider how they would act if they were in that situation. In other words, they might make self-projections to explore and compare how they would act differently from a character.

Our emotional engagement with Archer and his experiences might prompt us to reflect on our own attitudes to personal liberty and social conventions. Having entered mentally into Archer's situation and thoughts, we might recognize something of ourselves in Archer. We might find that some of his thoughts, observances, ways of looking might be resonating, to a certain extent, with ours. We might also think about how our own perspective on social conventions differs from or are similar to Archer's. Likewise, we might compare our own point of view on individual freedom with that of Ellen.

By reflecting on the issues presented in the novel and examining his currently held beliefs pertaining to these issues, a reader can clarify his beliefs and what it is he wants to become or to avoid becoming, and reconfigure his normative commitments accordingly. Eventually they can emerge from this reading experience with a cultivated understanding. Some questions that we might ask ourselves prompted by Archer's dilemma might be: Do I value my personal freedom more than my need to comply with the social conventions? Am I inclined to sacrifice my personal freedom for the sake of social conventions? On what occasions do I feel obliged to follow social conventions at the expense of my wishes to the contrary? What is the impact of following the conventions at the expense of my personal liberty on my life? Do I sometimes deceive myself to cope with my repressed wishes?

Although realist novels often deal with the situations and problems of people like ourselves, they do not typically offer definitive solutions to these problems. They elaborate on characters' particular situations, their struggles, inner thoughts or reactions and make readers see them in their full complexity. However, they do not, most of the time, instruct on how to resolve these issues. The reader imaginatively recreates the protagonists' situation as described by the author and imagines what it would be like to go through these experiences. We explore the protagonist's

dilemma, the features of his situation, and the consequences of his actions as the events unfold. In reading the characters' thoughts we might recognize our own way of thinking or find that these thoughts resonate with ours. A novel lays before us a situation and invites us to re-evaluate our existing attitudes against this scenario and test them whether they still hold. If a reader is convinced that his or her existing beliefs still hold, the novel then might reinforce these attitudes. However, one might also come to see that her existing attitudes might fall short of responding to the complexity of the situation in a satisfactory way and take a critical stance on their own perspectives and assumptions. As a result, there might be a shift in her perspective. She might consider her moral commitments or modify or refine them in the light of the fictional situation. Doubtless, it is not only through reading fictions that we can acquire a new perspective or reconfigure our normative commitments. Experiences in the real world might also affect us in a similar way. However, fiction allows us to explore issues cost free both to ourselves and others. We acquire moral insights without actually going through the anxiety provoking situations and painful results.

Peter Goldie, in discussing about regret and learning about one's mistakes, suggests that one way an individual can develop his or her personality and character might be through a type of training what he dubs as "backward-looking in time" (2012, p. 89). He says in backward-looking training, the learner goes back over the narrative of a particular situation which can be done by the learner either alone in his mind, or in joint discussion with the teacher. Then, at the crucial moment in the recollected narrative the learner 'stops the clock', and considers what he might have done instead of what he actually did. He gives the example of a beginner level chess player:

> You have just lost a game, and your teacher then resets the board as it was at that crucial moment several moves earlier. She then turns to ask you to reconsider what you then did

> and what were the alternatives open to you that you excluded at the time of deliberation, or that you failed to notice as possibilities. She thus shows you both the point in time—the node—at which you went wrong in your deliberation and choice, and also what you could have done to avoid going wrong. A football or tennis coach might do the same sort of thing, getting the learner to think back and analyse where things went wrong at the crucial moment. This can be done with the aid of technology, using a video replay, or just by thinking through or envisaging the narrative sequence of events as they unfolded. (p. 90)

Goldie suggests that in addition to the idea of stopping the clock and going back over what happened, another way to learn from one's mistakes might be by constructing hypothetical forward-looking narratives which are thought through. To construct such hypothetical forward-looking narratives, the individual first identifies the way things are at the crucial moment and evaluates the facts of the situation, then considers the possible alternative ways in which he might act, starting at the crucial moment and thinks through the effects of these alternative courses of action. Goldie illustrates these two methods of learning from one's mistakes with an example:

> You once upset someone needlessly, and you now feel bad about having done what you did. Perhaps in conversation with a friend, or perhaps on your own, you think through the narrative of what happened, and you now recognize that it really was needlessly mean-spirited. You feel guilt or shame, which you did not feel at the time, and you now regret what you did. You then go on to think through the branching alternative possibilities of the other things that you might have done instead, and you have emotional responses appropriate to each envisaged action and its consequences. (pp. 91-2)

This idea of learning from one's mistakes can also be applied to realist novels or other narratives as Goldie also suggests. As I have discussed, novels provide vicarious experiences. A reader can, thus, learn through these vicarious experiences; that is, learn from the characters' mistakes. Through backward thinking readers can reflect on the reasons why the events resulted in a negative outcome. The reader for example, can go over the narrative and can identify the moments the character makes mistakes. He can deliberate about what he could he have done instead of what he actually had done. He can, then, think about how these alternative ways of acting could go about and what effects they could have on characters.

Indeed, in congruence with the idea of learning from one's mistakes it is found that negative story endings compared to positive story outcomes are found to be more likely to motivate an individual to engage in counterfactual thinking that prompt readers to consider alternative endings for a story (Roese, 1997). It is also found that stories with negative outcomes compared to those with happy endings, are more likely to activate empathy from readers (Oliver, 1993).

Richard Gerrig has a similar view (1993). He argues that readers may engage in a mental activity that he calls "anomalous replotting" after reading stories with negative endings, which can be defined as imagining a different set of events to replace the events told in a story that can bring about a more positive story ending. Gerrig indicates that readers who become transported into a narrative world may have strong emotional responses towards the fictional world and experience the emotions of the characters they like. In such a case, if the narrative ends in a negative ending for the characters they like they may feel sad. To avoid such negative emotions, they may replot a different course of action and a positive end by themselves. For example, if a character performs some actions that contribute to this negative outcome, readers can reflect how

these actions could be avoided and think about alternative courses of actions that could prevent this negative result.

The Age of Innocence has a sad ending. So, one other way we might learn from reading it, might be learning through Archer's mistakes which brought this sad ending. We might think about the reasons of Archer's ambivalence and his conflicting actions and try to find the answers to various questions that arise in our minds: What was Archer's mistake which ultimately prevented him from having a fulfilling life? What could he have done instead of going against all his emotions and marry May? Thinking about these questions might prompt us to develop strategies for navigating through Archer's situation. We can go back to the novel and construct a new narrative by correcting his mistakes. We might think that Archer could have acknowledged his emotions, reflected on them and expressed himself to May. After all, she had previously inquired into this very issue hinting at her awareness of the possibility of there being someone else between him and herself that he cared about, and said: "I've wanted to tell you that, when two people really love each other, I understand that there may be situations which make it right that they should—should go against public opinion" (pp. 121-22). It is important to remind here the "dialectical dance" de Sousa mentions in explaining how our emotions both determine and shape the way we see things. Our emotions, our ways of seeing might be determined by our social backgrounds, upbringing and past experiences and we initially respond to new contexts through their filter. However, in the new contexts when our established emotional frameworks fail to resolve a conflict in a satisfactory way, our "emotional reactions will generate new paradigm scenarios, from which fresh axiological judgments emerge" (1988b, p. 338). When May says "there may be situations which make it right that they should—should go against

public opinion" she is referring to the necessity of participating in this dialectical dance when there is a complex situation at hand that cannot be resolved by established norms.

Archer however, contrary to what he thinks, is not perhaps as perceptive as May. We might arrive at the conclusion that Archer's biggest mistake was his conformity to his tribe's moral code and his fear in participating in the 'dialectical dance'. Ignoring his emotions, deceiving himself and choosing conformity to established norms rather than actually taking part in producing new cultural norms, he eventually prisons himself into a loveless marriage.

By hiding his love for Ellen and not breaking the engagement, Archer does good neither to himself nor to May. It is unfair to May because May is now doomed to live with a man who loves another woman. Moreover, he now himself becomes a hypocrite, the very thing he criticizes in their society. Archer has just become aware of the hypocrisy that pervades the New York society and we would expect that his realization of this would lead him to act more honestly to himself, to May and to his family and society. Even if now Ellen refuses him, we might think, he did not have to stay with May who is one of the "pharisees" and we might indeed suspect that Archer is one of those pharisees himself although he thinks he is better than them.

The novel might also offer glimpses into our own psychology. For example, we may gain insight to our own flaws through the experiences of the character. Reflecting on why he did not follow his personal desires as opposed to the society's conventions, we see the pitfalls into which Archer has fallen and maybe recognize these mistakes in ourselves and in our lives. We have the opportunity to think about self-deception, self-ignorance and conformity and social conventions. Our reflections and judgements on Archer's situation, emotions and thoughts may eventually serve to clarify ourselves to ourselves about what we think about social conventions, conformity

or self-deception and their consequences. We now might have better understanding of how one might due to fear of change or fear of the unknown prison himself to an unfulfilled life**.**

The readers might understand Archer's mindset in light of what she already knows about self-deception or perhaps refines her understanding of it in light of Archer's experience. Reading about Archer's experiences might then heighten her awareness of the phenomena of self-deception. We might see how Archer uses self-deception to protect himself from pain and also how self-deception prevents him from solving one's problems in a constructive way.

c. The Reflective Moral Transformation of the Reader. At the beginning of this chapter, I defined 'reflective moral transformation' as a shift in our perspective that comes about by developing a critical awareness of the elements of our point of view and by reconsidering our normative commitments while taking into account the new perspectives and the various cases which we encounter. Through reflection on our own point of view, following the emotional engagement with Archer's dilemma and experiences, we might experience such a shift in our perspective.

Through our reflections on Archer's experiences, we might eventually become more cognizant of the ways we relate to social conventions. Realizing that there can be something wrong with strict adherence to social conventions might prompt us to reflect on our own relationship to customs and habits of our own society.

A reader might realize that he is more like Archer concerning the ways he relates to the social conventions. The reader's reflections on Archer's experiences, thoughts and observances, his interactions with Ellen might cause a shift on how he sees things. The reader might realize that adhering to social conventions might not always be desirable. He may now see that there are occasions when one needs to value personal freedom over the customs and habits of the society.

He may also realize that looking good in the eyes of other people might be at odds with one's happiness.

A reader might be able to perceive the importance of individual freedom through reflection on Archer's experiences and particularly how he suffers in his marriage into which he enters to fulfill a duty. The individual who has become aware of his unquestioningly acquired point of view comes to understand the respective importance of different commitments for him now. The reader upon clarifying his position on personal freedom and the way he relates to social conventions eventually can reach a deeper understanding of himself. Then he might discard some of his beliefs, acquire new ones, refine others.

The shift the reader experiences in his perspective as a result of his reflections might be explained by analogy of the shift we experience in our visual perceptions when we look at certain images such as Rubin's vase and the visual illusion of the young/old woman.[54] In Rubin's vase in which the contours of two faces in profile can also be seen as the contours of a vase. Just like our visual perception of the image shifts when we change our focus, our perception of a situation might shift once we focus our attention on the aspects that were in the background, i.e., not salient to us before. This gives us an opportunity to evaluate our beliefs and revise them if we recognize that they are inadequate to understand and deal with the situation at hand. Just like one is able to see both the vase and the faces in the Rubin's vase image, once one is cognizant of both concerns in the situation, that is the need to follow the social conventions and one's individual freedom and happiness, one can be discerning and can make well-balanced decisions.

[54] See pp. 126-27 in Chapter 4.

Similarly, engaging with Ellen's point of view on personal liberty and the change that occurs in her perspective, we might come to realize that there might be some occasions we need to sacrifice our own personal freedom for the well-being of our family and friends.

When we look at the image of the young/old woman, we perceive it as an old woman or a young woman depending on the way we make sense of the lines and shades before us. When a person is unable to see the figure as an old woman, he is not able to perceive one of the two possible organizations of these lines and shades. They cannot configure the organization of lines and shades rightly to perceive the old woman. In switching from our perception of the figure as an old woman to the perception of it as a young woman, the configuration of lines and shades change. For example, the old woman's mouth becomes the young woman's necklace or the old woman's eye becomes the young woman's ear. By perceiving the importance of loyalty to friends and family through our engagement with and our reflections on Ellen's experiences, we might be able to form a new gestalt concerning our individual freedom and loyalty to our friends and family. Just as we are able to see both the young and the old woman in the picture, we can now recognize the importance of both loyalty to friends and family and our own individual freedom which might then lead us to a more balanced way of seeing things.

In this chapter I have proposed a model regarding the reader's engagement with realist novels which comprises two different phases. The first phase which I called 'narrative immersion' involves emotional engagement with the characters. The second phase involves first making sense of what we have read and giving an interpretation of it. Secondly it involves reflecting on the elements of our point of view, i.e., our values, normative commitments, desires and action tendencies and refining them in the light of these reflections.

7. Conclusion

I have offered a two-step model for how readers can undergo a morally transformative process triggered by an attentive emotional engagement with characters and their situations in reading a realist novel. Reflective moral transformation, in the sense I use here, refers to a shift in our perspective that comes about by developing an awareness of our assumptions, beliefs, values, desires, and action tendencies and by critically reconsidering them, taking also into account the new perspectives and the various cases we encounter.

Starting from the earlier years of our lives, our emotional understanding begins to develop through paradigm scenarios that teach us particular emotions. In time, we acquire different experiences which refine and deepen our emotional understanding. Our emotional responses, therefore, reflect both our personal histories and the social and cultural norms of the society in which we live. We can say, then, that emotions provide us with information about the world as seen from a particular point of view. A very effective way to acquire self-knowledge might be through encountering and engaging with different emotional scenarios. Realist novels might serve us as sources of such emotional scenarios.

I distinguish two phases in a reader's engagement with a novel. The first phase which I call 'narrative immersion' involves emotional engagement with the characters and their situations and occurs during the reading process. The first phase acts as the trigger for the transformation of the reader. Realist novels and other fictional narratives have the potential to place reader in a range of various situations, allowing them to have experiences by proxy (Oatley, 1999).

Novels often by presenting 'triggering situations' to readers invite us to reflection. A 'triggering situation' refers to a conflict situation which creates perplexity or inner discomfort for

the individual that calls for reflection for its resolution. In realist novels we often read about characters who face various challenges or dilemmas that elicit emotions from readers. Emotionally engaged readers may learn vicariously from the experiences of characters and add these experiences into their own store of experiences. Vicarious experiences offered to readers in their engagements with fictions do not pose a threat to readers' real-life goals or their self-images. Looking at human predicaments and concerns from a distance may enable individuals to see the complexity of moral situations with less defensiveness. Readers do not feel threatened by the possible consequences of their emotions or the possible negative consequences for others. For this reason, they might feel more open to experiences that they would normally avoid in real-life. Novels by presenting their readers various 'triggering situations' might draw them into a reflection process which might eventually lead to a transformation of their perspective. Once the individual finds himself in a triggering situation, if the newly encountered perspective or the dilemma experienced leads him to a scrutiny of his existing moral beliefs, values, and assumptions, the potential for transformation exists. Evidently, one has to be willing to revise or even discard one's own beliefs and assumptions, as well as to be willing to entertain new ideas. If we are not willing to question our assumptions and beliefs critically, the transformative process will be stalled.

However, not all reading experiences result in emotional engagement with characters or narrative immersion. The extent of a reader's immersion with a novel will depend on various factors. The aspects of the reader, the text and the reader's situation can influence the success and the extent of the emotional engagement. For example, readers may not be able to engage emotionally with the characters and their situations, if they find the text boring. Some readers who might not enjoy reading fiction or others who enjoy reading fiction but have an adverse state

of mind at the time of reading, might not be able to immerse himself fully into the narrative. Reader's immersion into a narrative is also dependent on the readers' abilities and dispositions to easily leap into narrative worlds.

The second phase, which I call the 'transformation process' is triggered by the emotional engagement with characters in the novel. In this phase the reader investigates characters deeply, reflecting on their beliefs, actions, motives and responses to situations. The reader, based on this investigation can, then, try to arrive at a consistent interpretation of the novel. Our evaluations and judgements of the characters and their actions lay partly the foundation of our interpretation of the text. A text can be interpreted in different ways due to the gaps in the text but still the text limits our interpretations, as we have seen.

Furthermore, this phase involves critically reflecting on our own values, desires, normative commitments and action tendencies in relation to the issues the novel introduces. Readers are exposed to a wide range of emotional schemas in novels. Fictional characters might serve as a medium by which readers can explore and reflect on the issues presented in the novels. Our engagement with the novel might give us a starting point to confront issues in our own lives, which we may not have been able to explore, and to encourage us to reflect on the significance of what we have read. Depending on the theme of the novel, the reader might reflect on different issues that concern morality. Our relationship with social conventions, for example, is just one aspect of morality that we can reflect on in reading *The Age of Innocence*. Thus, through novels we may increase our self-knowledge.

Self-knowledge plays a crucial role in our practical lives, because it provides us with the necessary means for shaping our moral decisions more deliberately. Without the awareness of the frameworks from which we are operating, we hold little chance, if any, to transform our

perspective, and act accordingly. Reading novels can be pivotal to the process of gaining self-knowledge since a very effective way to acquire self-knowledge might be through encountering and engaging with different emotional scenarios. The perspectives readers encounter in the novel may challenge their ways of construing the world and provide them with a way to acquire self-knowledge.

Critical reflection involves reflecting on different perspectives encountered, becoming aware of one's assumptions and beliefs and clarifying one's own point of view. By reflecting on our emotional responses to characters' experiences, examining what thoughts they give rise to, we may be able to identify our emotional schemas. Through such reflection we might, then, discover aspects of ourselves that we had not acknowledged previously.

A novel lays before us a situation and invites us to re-evaluate our existing attitudes against this situation presented in the novel and test them whether they still hold. If a reader is convinced that his or her existing beliefs still hold, the novel then might reinforce these attitudes. However, one might also come to see that her existing attitudes might fall short of responding to the complexity of the situation in a satisfactory way and take a critical stance on their own perspectives and assumptions. He might reconsider his moral commitments, reassess their importance for him, and modify or refine them in the light of the fictional situation. A reader, after reading *The Age of Innocence,* for example, might by clarifying his position on personal freedom and the way he relates to social conventions eventually reach a deeper understanding of himself. As a result, there could be a shift in his perspective.

The shift the reader experiences in his perspective as a result of his reflections can be explained by analogy of the shift we experience in our visual perceptions when we look at certain images such as Rubin's vase and the visual illusion of the young/old woman. In looking

at the Rubin's vase the contours of two faces in profile can also be seen as the contours of a vase. Just like our visual perception of the image shifts when we change our focus, our perception of a situation might shift once we focus our attention on the aspects that were in the background, i.e., not salient to us before. This gives us an opportunity to evaluate our beliefs and revise them if we recognize that they are inadequate to understand and deal with the situation at hand. Just like one is able to see both the vase and the faces in the Rubin's vase image, once one is cognizant of both concerns in the situation, that is, the need to follow the social conventions and one's individual freedom and happiness, they can, taking into account both types of concerns, make well-balanced decisions.

The model proposed here also suggests new avenues for research: An area that researches might study empirically are the qualities of literary texts and other narratives that can lead readers to self-reflection. The interactions between text features and reader variables is another area that we need to be informed by empirical studies. Empirical research on these issues will in addition to substantiating the claims made by theoretical studies, add to our general psychological knowledge of the processes of empathy and reflection.

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