

KATHOLIEKE UNIVERSITEIT LEUVEN
FACULTY OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES



**THE ROLE OF EMOTIONS IN ETHICS: THE
PERSPECTIVES OF MARTHA C. NUSSBAUM AND
THOMAS AQUINAS**

A dissertation presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the
Doctor's Degree in Theology

Supervisor

Prof. Dr. Yves DE MAESENEER

by

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2015

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– Meister Eckhart

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The aim of this work is to offer a reflection on the significance of the role of emotions in theological ethics. There is growing concern in the area of philosophical and theological ethics over the role of emotions with serious consideration for the fact that human beings typically make ethical judgments combining both their rational and affective dimensions.¹ This resonates with psychological insights that human ethical decision-making is the fruit of two types of cognitive operations belonging to what we traditionally call ‘reason’ and ‘intuition.’² The so-called dual-process theories describe the first type of cognition as slower, more reflective and oftentimes, more calculative; in other words, a more sophisticated mode of assessing moral realities; the ‘intuitive’ system of judgment, on the other hand, is quicker, associative, and more primitive. The two systems are separate, but plastic and the judgments conducted by one can also be assessed by the other. The intuitive sphere has its foundations in emotions, beliefs, and response tendencies.³ While moral theologians traditionally focused on the rational side of the debate, our project’s objective is to make more transparent the affective dimension of ethical projects and the moral life.

Even if one acknowledges that emotions might indeed play a role in human judgments, defining their adequate place in ethics is not easy. In order to achieve this we need to confront several fundamental questions. First of all, we need to determine what emotion actually is. Secondly, we need to inquire into the relationship between the emotions and the ethical realm and establish what it means to say that the emotions have a role in that realm.

To approach these questions we decided to consult two key figures who offer accounts on the nature and ethical meaning of emotions, namely, Martha C. Nussbaum and Thomas Aquinas. In the field of philosophical ethics the question of emotions has become mainstream inquiry and Nussbaum represents one of the major voices in the discipline.⁴ Nussbaum claims that emotions are essential factors shaping our mental and social lives and that they are undoubtedly a constitutive part of our ethical reasoning. She advocates a

¹ In this instance we should note theologian Edward Collins Vacek, S.J. and his notable works in this area *Love, Human and Divine. The Heart of Christian Ethics* (Washington D.C: Georgetown University Press, 1994) and “Orthodoxy Requires Orthopathy: Emotions in Theology,” *Horizons* Vol. 40, No. 2 (2013): 218-241. We also note an earlier pioneer in this moral-theological field William C. Spohn, S.J. and his “The Reasoning Heart: An American Approach to Christian Discernment,” *Theological Studies* 44 (1983): 30-52. For now we indicate instances of advocating the importance of human affectivity in the area of Roman Catholic theology. We will discuss the sources of philosophical ethics in Chapter I, section 3. *Thinking of Nussbaum’s Account of Emotions: Some Critical Reflections* with all its subsections.

² Cf. Daniel Kahneman and Cass R. Sunstein, “Cognitive Psychology of Moral Intuitions,” *Neurobiology of Human Values*, eds. Jean-Pierre Changeux, Wolf Singer, Antonio R. Damasio, and Yves Christen (Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag, 2005), 92. Kahneman and Sunstein describe intuitive judgments as automatic, effortless, associative, rapid, skilled, coming about through an opaque process and the rational deliberation as controlled, effortful, deductive, slow, self-aware, and rule-following. Kahneman and Sunstein, “Cognitive Psychology of Moral Intuitions,” 93.

³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 103.

⁴ The current state and roots of philosophical inquiry into the nature of emotions is well presented in Ronald de Sousa’s article “Emotion,” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2014 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/emotion/>. A comprehensive overview of the philosophy of emotion is offered in Peter Goldie, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) and Robert C. Solomon, ed., *Thinking about Feeling: Contemporary Philosophers on Emotions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

cognitive theory of emotions in which she tries to articulate the complex intelligence of emotions as perceptions of value. More than that, Nussbaum provokes contemporary ethical discourse by suggesting that any ethical project that does not articulate an adequate account of the emotions is incomplete – a challenge that has to be considered seriously by the discipline of theological ethics.

Our second key partner in this conversation comes from within the discipline of theological ethics and represents one of the main sources of ethical wisdom. In recent years one has witnessed a positive retrieval of Aquinas's account on the passions found in the so-called *Treatise on the Passions* (Questions 22-48 of the *Prima secundae* of the *Summa theologiae*). Despite the traditional lack of attention paid to this section of the *Summa*, authors like Servais Pinckaers, O.P., G. Simon Harak, S.J., Nicholas Lombardo, O.P., Diana Fritz Cates and Robert Miner (the latter within the discipline of philosophy) among others argue for an integral role of the passions in the overall picture of Thomistic ethics.⁵ The passions understood as essential elements of human nature are seen as indispensable resources in the human pursuit of ultimate happiness. We will approach Aquinas's views on the passions with the assistance of the latter three thinkers, Lombardo, Cates, and Miner, because their accounts incorporate a detailed investigation of the *Treatise* itself.

Our own investigation will consist of careful reading of both authors on their own terms (in Aquinas's case with the aid of contemporary interpretations). First, we will analyze Nussbaum's thought on the emotions, examining her major work devoted to presentation of her moral psychology, namely, the *Upheavals of Thought*.⁶ We will also consult her other works as necessary. Nussbaum presents us with complex works written in a captivating literary manner. Owing to this fact, however, her arguments are not always easy to trace. Thus one of our own endeavors will be the construction of a systematic picture of Nussbaum's perspective on the emotions. Nussbaum's philosophy will also offer the point of departure to explore and discuss contemporary philosophical debates on the topic of emotion.⁷ In addition to this contemporary secular philosopher, we will present Aquinas's account on the passions as a candidate for an insightful and distinctively Christian perspective of the nature and meaning of emotions in one's life. Our method of presentation will consist of two major aspects: we will not only present a theoretical view of Nussbaum's and Aquinas's accounts on the emotion/passions⁸ in general, but we will

⁵ Servais Pinckaers, O.P., *Passions and Virtue*, transl. Benedict M. Guevin, O.S.B. (Washington: The Catholic of America University Press, 2015). Pinckaers' book was translated into English at the end of July, 2015. As a result, we did not get the chance to properly engage with it in the last phase of our work; G. Simon Harak, S.J., *Virtuous Passions. The Formation of Christian Character* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993); Nicholas E. Lombardo, O.P., *The Logic of Desire. Aquinas on Emotion* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2009); Diana Fritz Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions. A Religious-Ethical Inquiry* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2009); Robert Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions. A Study of Summa Theologiae Ia2ae 22-48* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

⁶ Martha C. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

⁷ As indicated before, the question of emotions is by now a large topic in philosophical discussions and there are important approaches which attempt to describe the nature and meaning of emotions. We will situate Nussbaum in the context of those debates in the last part of Chapter I, section 3. *Thinking of Nussbaum's Account of Emotions: Some Critical Reflections*.

⁸ The distinction between the contemporary term 'emotion' and the term 'passion' is a historical and philosophical inquiry in its own right. We address the terminological issue in Chapter III, footnote 1. It is

offer case studies of two particular emotions. We have chosen two emotions that are traditionally understood as standing in tension with each other; compassion and anger.⁹ Our synthetic account of Nussbaum's perspective on compassion will lead us to the foundation of her moral psychology. Anger, which appears through Aquinas's interpretative lenses in a thought-provoking way, will allow us to engage critically with Nussbaum's emphasis on compassion and situate it in the contemporary discussions related to social justice.

The structure of the work will be the following: Chapter I will inquire into the setting of Nussbaum's general ethical thought and synthesize her theory of emotions. This will be confronted with the views of those contemporary philosophers of emotion particularly interested in intersections between philosophy and natural sciences. Chapter II will present a synthesis of Nussbaum's multilayered account of the emotion of compassion, demonstrating its fundamental role in Nussbaum's ethical project. The chapter will end with the theological critique by Cates suggesting that compassion is better conceived in terms of virtue, and philosopher Amia Srinivasan's insight that compassion promoted on a political level might be a dangerous moral sentiment. The question is raised whether in certain cases anger would not serve as a more appropriate reaction. Chapter III will take us to Aquinas's thought where we will present, as in Nussbaum's case, the general setting of his ethics and attempt a positive retrieval of his views on the passions. This inquiry will lead us to Chapter IV which will start with the presentation of Aquinas's views on anger. Introducing this specific case will not only help us to recapitulate Aquinas's framework, it will also serve as the first bridge in bringing Aquinas and Nussbaum into conversation. The chapter will proceed by disclosing the similarities and distinctiveness of their general ethical frameworks and the elements we judge to be the most salient in their accounts of the emotions/passions. We will suggest that the accounts culminate into distinctive moral visions that include proposals for cultivating our affective dimension.

Before we start our journey into the landscape of Nussbaum's and Aquinas's thought, we should note that the purpose of our inquiry is not to develop a third account of the nature and ethical meaning of emotions merging the views of both thinkers. Rather, we wish to present their thought on their own terms enabling us to have an in-depth understanding of their visions of human affectivity and their connection to ethics. The detailed analysis of Nussbaum's and Aquinas's thought facilitates a comparison between the two, bringing them into conversation through discussion on a particular emotion – anger.¹⁰ Our aim is to illustrate how both Nussbaum and Aquinas advance persuasive arguments for inclusion of the emotions in the general agenda of theological ethics.

clear, however, that Aquinas, in his account of the passions, wanted to discuss the phenomena which we label 'emotions' today.

⁹ We will start fleshing out the relationship between compassion as a morally praiseworthy emotion and anger as a morally ambiguous and possibly destructive emotion in Chapter II, sections 4.1.1.4 *The Case of Anger*, 4.1.1.5 *Concluding Remarks* and section 5.4 *Is Compassion the Only Political Emotion We Owe to Others?* with all its subsections. We continue in Chapter IV, sections 2. *Continuing the Case of Anger* with all its subsections, 2.2 *Contemporary Thinkers on Anger: Anger as a Moral Response to an Imperfect World* and sections 2.3 *Nussbaum Against Anger* and 2.4 *Concluding Remarks*.

¹⁰ Theologian Carlo Leget offers an article on Nussbaum's and Aquinas's accounts on emotions which offers an introductory discussion on the topic, but not a detailed analysis. See Carlo Leget, "Martha Nussbaum and Thomas Aquinas on Emotions," *Theological Studies* 64 (2003): 558-581.

CHAPTER I. MARTHA C. NUSSBAUM'S CHALLENGE TO THEOLOGICAL ETHICS: THERE IS NO ADEQUATE THEORY OF ETHICS WITHOUT AN ADEQUATE THEORY OF THE EMOTIONS

1. INTRODUCTION TO MARTHA C. NUSSBAUM'S ETHICAL PROJECT

Martha C. Nussbaum,¹ a renowned name in academic circles and beyond, provokes promising philosophical discourse with her ethical views. More than that, she challenges the theological agora. Claiming that there can be no adequate theory of ethics that does not incorporate an adequate theory of the emotions, Nussbaum demands that theologians, especially those working in theological ethics, closely examine her arguments.

To inquire into Nussbaum's challenge this chapter will pursue the following structure: first, we will establish the context of her ethical project. In the following pages we will lay down the most prominent features of her ethical theory. Furthermore, we will allow Nussbaum to speak for herself; her own self-descriptions will be instrumental to our construction of her ethical vision. In this way we do justice to our author and her thought, listening carefully to what she brings to the ethical discourse. This analysis will help us to grasp the reasons behind Nussbaum's conviction that emotions are essential to ethics. As a second step, we will offer an analysis of Nussbaum's theory of emotions. The first stop in this inquiry will be examination of the Stoic roots of her account and the presentation of its most prominent elements. We will then present Nussbaum's analysis of the natural and cultural factors that shape human emotional lives. We will conclude our inquiry grounded in Nussbaum's own terms by synthesizing her psychological account on the emotional development in human infants. This is critical to the adequate understanding of her theory of emotions. The chapter will culminate in a critical evaluation of Nussbaum's theory of emotions by situating her views against accounts of her most prominent peers in philosophy, especially, those holding a keen interest in the intersections between philosophy and the natural sciences.

1.1 THE GOAL OF ETHICS

Under this broad heading we will discuss Nussbaum's understanding of the meaning of ethics. As mentioned above, the most overarching feature of Nussbaum's ethics is its Aristotelian character. But we should keep in mind that she also draws inspiration from the Greek poets of tragedy, specifically from the sense of life that one finds in their writings: "For I was finding in the Greek tragic poets a recognition of the ethical importance of

¹ Nussbaum is an American philosopher and professor at the University of Chicago, where she is the Ernst Freund Distinguished Professor of Law and Ethics. Her main research interests are in the fields of ancient philosophy, political philosophy, the philosophy of law, and ethics. Additionally, she specializes in questions of gender equality (she is especially interested in researching and writing on the situations of women in developing countries), developmental issues and animal rights. Speaking broadly, Nussbaum's thought can be considered universalist, including within itself the female perspective, and is deeply Aristotelian. We could tell that there are two major pillars (or influences) holding up Nussbaum's thinking. One is classical Greek thought, especially Aristotle and the poets of tragedy. The other is classical Roman thought, especially the Stoics. While her ethical thought is Aristotelian, Stoicism inspires the descriptive aspects of her theory of the emotions.

contingency, a deep sense of the problem of conflicting obligations, and a recognition of the ethical significance of the passions, that I found more rarely, if at all, in the thought of the admitted philosophers, whether ancient or modern.”² In Greek tragedy Nussbaum finds a sense of vulnerability, not only of the moral agent (or rather the human being), but of life itself. Life, for Nussbaum, is something that one can never fully categorize, precisely due to the contingency and surprise perpetually born inside it. Nussbaum, it can be said, combines this sense of life with the version of Aristotelian ethics which she finds most convincing. For her, as for Aristotle, ethics begin with the very broad question of how a human being should live. Thus, it is not a cost-benefit analysis or a dilemma-solving device, but rather a way of living. Nussbaum eagerly reminds us that for Aristotle there was no real distinction between the ethical and other realms. Furthermore, ethical inquiry is both an empirical and a practical quest: “Empirical, in that it is concerned with, takes its ‘evidence’ from, the experience of life; practical, in that its aim is to find a conception by which human beings can live, and live together.”³

For Nussbaum, as for Aristotle, ethics is both a personal and a communal endeavor. It begins with observation, with reflection concerning lived experience, and proceeds by comparing this experience with existing moral theories. Nussbaum’s starting point is the question of what we are actually doing when we deliberate regarding pressing ethical issues. She urges us to stop for a moment, imagining that we have forgotten everything that we previously knew about ethics: Kantianism, Utilitarianism, even Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, and to look at our own lives: at what we actually value, how we come to make moral decisions, what is at the core of the things we cherish, our deepest decision-making processes in which we are engaged when no one is watching and what they show us to be, and also at who we are as communal beings, members of families, neighbors, colleagues, citizens, and members of a global community. The following seems to be Nussbaum’s methodology: to find not a perfect, but an adequate fit between one’s own sense of life and external sources of wisdom. In her own words:

The participants look not for a view that is true by correspondence to some extra-human reality, but for the best overall fit between a view and what is deepest in human *lives*. They are asked to imagine, at each stage, what they can least live well without, what lies deepest in their lives; and, again, what seems more superficial, more dispensable. They seek for coherence and fit in the web of judgment, feeling, perception, and principle, taken as a whole.⁴

Hence, her ethics seeks a proper fit between experience and available moral theories. This means that her ethical proposal, in accordance with Aristotle, can be described as inclusive, flexible and open-ended.⁵

² Martha C. Nussbaum, “Introduction: Form and Content, Philosophy and Literature,” in *Love’s Knowledge. Essays on Philosophy and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 14.

³ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁵ This is manifest in various writings by Nussbaum spanning a long portion of her career time. It is illustrated in the following long quotation from *Upheavals of Thought*. This work will be discussed in detail when we present her theory of the emotions. For now, it is enough to mention that this work addresses three major themes. The first is her theory of the emotions. The second is compassion as the best personal and social-political moral guide. The third one is the diverse ascents of love proposed within various philosophical and literary traditions (since love is thought to be at the root of all the other emotions, and if one can show that

Nussbaum's ethical proposal is also faithful to another important aspect of Aristotelian ethics: the search for the middle ground. Here it should be borne in mind that she addresses many topics that are controversial or that quickly engender heated debate (examples include her accounts of social emotions like primitive shame and disgust and their import for gender issues and the morality of homosexuality). Furthermore, the label 'analytic feminist philosopher' usually presupposes of its referent fairly radical ethical positions. Nussbaum, however, adheres to a moderate ethical position. In her own words: "I have no interest in dismissive assaults of systematic ethical theory, or on 'Western rationality,' or even on Kantianism or Utilitarianism."⁶

1.2 NUSSBAUM'S UNIVERSALISM

As is proper for an Aristotelian, Nussbaum defends a full universalist ethical theory against all the objections of radical relativism. While universalism is present in all of her works, she is especially devoted to refuting objections to essentialism. Essentialism can be defined as follows: "The view that human life has certain defining features."⁷ Its opponents link it with "an ignorance of history, with lack of sensitivity to the voices of women and minorities. It is taken, usually without extended argument, to be in league with racism and sexism, with 'patriarchal' thinking generally, whereas extreme relativism is taken to be a recipe for social progress."⁸ Nussbaum is convinced that linking the view that human life does indeed have certain defining features with the aforementioned types of discrimination is all together wrong. Moreover, she argues that only a fully universalist ethical theory can provide us with an adequate account of the human being's good, which then can serve the cause of its protection and promotion. For her, a moral philosophy must ultimately lead to political action. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary that it contains an account of the human good. Universalist theory, she thinks, advances the protection of human beings and the betterment of their life circumstances. It also enables one to judge particular situations in terms according to the standards of an overall human condition.

Nussbaum strongly opposes the idea that a rejection of metaphysical realism leaves us without foundations for our evaluative choices. She argues that if we abandon hope in a

this highly ambiguous concept can be healed by a proper therapy of desire, then a door is opened for the entrance of the emotions into philosophical-ethical discourse). After 713 pages Nussbaum offers the following conclusion: "It seems logical that a series of discussions of the ascent of love would end with a total text, one that includes all the elements that I think a view of love should include. If I am correct, however, such a complete ending is false to the complexity of the problem, and perhaps itself an aspect of the problem. The longing for totality breeds intolerance of the individual. We are left not with a total text, but with insights from several idealistic pictures that we may try to incorporate into the greater chaos of our lives: with Dante's lucid love of the individual, piercing the fog of envy, anger, and sloth; with Mahler's triumphant compassion, rising above envy, including the whole world of mortal striving in its embrace; with Whitman's political call to a democratic equality grounded in the recognition of mortality, with 'the most excellent sun so calm and haughty,...the gentle soft-born measureless light.'" See Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 713.

⁶ Martha C. Nussbaum, "The Discernment of Perception: An Aristotelian Conception of Private and Public Rationality," in *Love's Knowledge. Essays on Philosophy and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 27.

⁷ Martha C. Nussbaum, "Social Justice and Universalism: In Defense of an Aristotelian Account of Human Functioning," *Modern Philology* 90 (1993): 49.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 49.

transcendent metaphysical grounding, we are not then left with a radically free play. This is because “we have everything we always really had all along: the exchange of reasons and arguments by human beings within history, in which, for reasons that are historical and human (but not the worse for that), we hold some things to be more valuable than others, some more important than others, as constituents of the life we call our own.”⁹ Nussbaum’s conception of the good aims to be universalist in the proper sense. It aspires to bridge religious and cultural gulfs. It is not metaphysical realism. It is not ahistorical and it does not advocate a single faith tradition or set of metaphysical doctrines. Rather, it simply advances the following claim: we recognize others as human across and in spite of the barriers of time and space. There exists a broadly shared, general consensus about the features the absence of which means the end of a human form of life.¹⁰

At this point the following question arises. Who gets the final say about the good? In other words, who judges regarding what should be included or excluded in our definition of it? The account’s author? Nussbaum claims that the best accounts emerge from (a) the self-understandings of persons in many times and places and (b) from the narratives that people tell about themselves.¹¹ As her ethics is open-ended, so also is her understanding of the human good.

We should at this point be aware that universal theories of the good usually originate in nations favored by history with track records of oppression toward other nations. Such accounts may thus be viewed as contributing to the ‘colonization’ and Westernization of other cultures. Critiques of universalist theories are usually constituted by a three-fold argument: 1) an argument from culture, 2) an argument from diversity, and 3) an argument from paternalism.¹² Nussbaum urges theorists advocating universal ethical systems to be attentive to these. The first argument, she claims, gives space for critiques of unjust cultural practices, while also leaving room for individuals who choose traditional hierarchical ways of being in society. The second urges universalist theorists to recognize that they “ought to provide spaces in which valuably different forms of human activity can flourish.”¹³ The argument from paternalism “nudges us strongly in the direction of what might be called political rather than comprehensive liberalism, in the sense that it urges us to respect the many different conceptions of the good citizens may have and to foster a political climate in which they will each be able to pursue the good.”¹⁴ But Nussbaum is at the same time acutely aware that these critiques understand persons to be dignified choosers, asking us to respect them as such. Such respect, however, already presupposes the acknowledgment of certain universal values, like respect for each person’s dignity and basic political rights/liberties.¹⁵ Hence, in her eyes an adequate universalist theory is

⁹ Nussbaum, “Social Justice and Universalism,” 53.

¹⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 54.

¹¹ We can identify as constancies within diverse narrative self-understandings of what it means to be human: (1) the teachings of the major world religions and (2) various historical and anthropological data. Also, the world’s major philosophical traditions all include attempts to answer the question of what it means to be human.

¹² Cf. Martha C. Nussbaum, “In Defense of Universal Values,” *The Fifth Annual Hesburgh Lectures on Ethics and Public Policy* (1999): 7.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 7.

facilitative, not imposing. It creates a space for action, rather than forcing distorted normative visions onto actual human functioning.¹⁶

1.3 NUSSBAUM'S FEMINISM

Another prominent feature of Nussbaum's ethical proposal is its feminist character. Yet here also should one remember the middle position that she advocates. While she is clearly interested in articulating an ethics reflective of the situations of females worldwide, her feminism is not 'radical'. In her own words: "I myself think (albeit controversially) that a good moral theory is fully universal, that there is no reason why we should expect women as such to have different roles or goals, and also no reason why we should expect them to have a distinctive set of positions."¹⁷ However, Nussbaum does agree that women's experiences are generally different from those of males; a fact owing itself to history's having created a certain amount of inequality between the genders. We mean here that original contributions on the part of women to moral philosophy are not what they are by virtue of their author's being a woman and thus having distinctive ways of knowing. Rather, history has exposed women more than men to certain situations. Women's continuously having to face ethical conflicts within their lives has prevented them from saying "some of the silly things about moral conflicts that the tradition has sometimes said."¹⁸ By 'silly things' she means the denial of moral conflict in general and/or the claim that when such conflicts are carefully examined, then it will be discovered that one of the conflicting obligations is not a real obligation after all. Women's daily lives, Nussbaum considers, have led them to investigate what might be characterized as a more holistic approach to ethics. They have integrated reason within life's moral totality, some troubling features of which are situations of real conflict occurring within the plurality of possibly realizable goods.¹⁹ This, however, should not cause female thinkers to diminish reason's importance or to be more prone to impulse. Finally, it should surprise no one that the half of the human race previously deprived from contributing to philosophy now brings to it some fairly original reflections.²⁰

¹⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, 24. Nussbaum's understanding of universalism is a framework where her capabilities approach is conceived. In these sections we discuss the main characteristics of her ethics generally speaking, we discuss the capability approach in particular in Chapter II, sections 4.1.1 *The Central Human Capabilities*; 4.1.1.1 *What Are the Capabilities?*; 4.1.1.2 *Functioning and Capability*; 4.1.1.3 *Capabilities Approach and the Relevance of Emotions*.

¹⁷ Martha C. Nussbaum, "Virtue Ethics: A Misleading Category?," *The Journal of Ethics* Vol. 3, No. 3 (1999): 176.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 177.

¹⁹ Cf. Nussbaum, "Virtue Ethics," 177.

²⁰ Women were at the forefront of the integration of moral psychology and the study of the emotions into moral philosophy. Yet Nussbaum claims that one reason for this is reactive: "Women have frequently been denigrated on account of their allegedly greater emotional nature, so one way of responding to that would be to understand these elements of the personality between and, for example, to argue that they are not brutish but highly discerning, not devoid of thought but infused with thought. Another reason for the emphasis is that on balance women have more often been encouraged by society to attend and label their emotions. This means that they are often better places to undertake such an inquiry. Finally, women have often spent more time than men caring for young children, an occupation that both confronts one every day with a tremendous range of emotions, both in the child and in oneself, and requires one to deal with these responsibly and perceptively." See Nussbaum, "Virtue Ethics," 176. As we will see later in our exploration of Nussbaum's theory of the emotions, she does not ascribe different emotional responses to males and females *per se*, but

1.4 NUSSBAUM'S FOCUS ON THE MORAL AGENT AND THE SENSE OF LIFE

Nussbaum is also rather outspoken about yet another prominent feature of her ethics: its focus on the moral agent. She claims that moral philosophy should be primarily concerned with agents, not just choices and actions. If we see the discipline in these terms, then we will analyze the agent's inner moral life (patterns of motivation, emotions, reasoning, etc.), rather than just his or her isolated actions.²¹

Nussbaum indicates that she bases her ethics upon five essential dimensions of Aristotelian thought. But we have to be cautious here, for she identifies these dimensions herself. These features are: 1) the non-commensurability of valuable things, 2) the priority of perceptions, 3) the ethical value of emotions, 4) the ethical relevance of uncontrolled happenings, and 5) possibility as constitutive of our lives.²² These features, in a more proximate or a more distant form can be found in the classical novels too, Nussbaum considers.²³ They presuppose as does Aristotelian ethics, the same 'sense of life' that we intend to present in this section.

Nussbaum is convinced that we cannot truly grasp ethical performance without adequately understanding the agent's moral life. The latter phrase designates both the performance's immediate context, which is constituted by the agent's motives and intentions, the quality of deliberation, his or her reactive emotions, etc., and its remote context, central to which is an estimation of the choice's compatibility with the patterns of choosing that person has (or has not) cultivated. The 'sense of life' present in Aristotelian ethics thus provides the best tools for answering these questions, intrinsic as they are to the endeavor of moral philosophy. As Nussbaum sees it, the moral agent has to make his or her ethical decisions within what she describes as the messiness of life.²⁴ Inspired by Aristotle and the Greek poets of tragedy, she explores the ethical realms (remember that for her, as for Aristotle, there is no demarcation between ethical and non-ethical realms) with which we are confronted on a daily basis. Her moral agent lives in a world marked by contingency and a plurality of goods. This world inevitably provides for her agent moral conflicts and difficult choices between values that really do conflict with each other. Thus, he or she witnesses the non-commensurability of good things. Nussbaum claims that the choices made by moral agents in a world pervaded by conflicting attachments and obligations often carry with them a tragic character.²⁵ In her words: "The choice between

acknowledges that these may differ due to historical circumstances and learnt emotive behaviors. Moreover, the distinction between male and female emotive patterns is not central in Nussbaum's works, as she seems not terribly intrigued by it. She rather speaks of human emotive patterns, not dividing them into male and female. See Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*.

²¹ Cf. Nussbaum, "Virtue Ethics," 170.

²² Cf. Nussbaum, "The Discernment of Perception," 36-46.

²³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 36.

²⁴ 'Messy' is not a common word in philosophical ethics, which generally aims at categorizing and ordering our moral lives. Nussbaum does not dismiss the possibility of moral growth. In fact, promoting this is a goal of her work. But she does emphasize that the ethical choices that we make in our daily lives generally refuse to fit neatly into categories. Taking daily experience as a source of ethical reflection is very Aristotelian. Yet she goes a step further than Aristotle by presenting the emotions as essential to ethics, not only as regards habit-formation, but also as a genuine indicator of value. She admits that including the emotions in ethics may make this enterprise even messier. See Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, I.

²⁵ Cf. Nussbaum, "The Discernment of Perception," 37.

two qualitatively different actions or commitments, when on account of circumstances one cannot pursue both, is or can be tragic – in part because the item forgone is not the same as an item attained.”²⁶ Moreover, the moral agent confronted with difficult choices bares responsibility for his/her actions. Nussbaum calls this the priority of perception or the priority of the particular, meaning essentially “the ability to discern, acutely and responsively, the salient features of one’s particular situation”²⁷ or one’s “becoming finely aware and richly responsible.”²⁸

Nussbaum’s moral agent lives within what is best described as the surprise of life. What do we mean by this? In short, that the ‘richly responsible’ agent wrestles with a world marked by particular perception and a certain generality of moral knowledge. Here we commence discussion of the relationship between concrete perception and general rules. Nussbaum claims that morality can be described by utilizing the metaphor of improvisation often employed by Aristotle himself.²⁹ Concrete perception demands that we be attentive to phenomena not previously noticed and therefore not yet incorporated within already existing systems of rules. But make no mistake, rules and general categories still have major significance in the endeavor of morality. They are sources of accumulated wisdom usually worth consulting. Yet they are also essentially limited in their being fixed in advance of particular situations. They tend to omit the following: first, the new and unanticipated features of moral situations (if an agent is taught to see morality as merely the application of rules designed to cover a large range of situations to his/her particular circumstances, then he or she is poorly prepared to face life’s actual flow, lacking the resources to confront its unexpected occurrences); second, the context embeddedness of relevant features, meaning that all of the aspects of a concrete situation are complexly interrelated (one aspect cannot be judged fairly if we neglect this mutual connectedness); and third, the ethical relevance of particular persons and relationships. When these omitted aspects are incorporated together in ethical reflection, they force us to view life as it is. A single life has a single trajectory, containing within itself important relationships.³⁰ To think life otherwise is to imagine it differently than it actually is. And here no qualitative replacements will do. For it is essential to the human situation that things do not repeat themselves. Certain relationships can never be replaced. For example, one has only one mother who lives once only. Nussbaum concludes, “so the universalizable does not, it would seem, determine every dimension of choice and there are silences of the heart within which its demands cannot, and should not, be heard.”³¹

Nussbaum’s moral agent also makes ethical choices fully, i.e., through rational deliberation accompanied by appropriate emotions. Thus, “practical reasoning unaccompanied by emotion is not sufficient for practical wisdom.”³² Here she elaborates on the cognitive role of the emotions, viewing them as intelligent parts of our ethical agency. For her, they are involved in deliberation processes and are hence intrinsic to ethics. But these arguments will be presented in full in a moment. In addition, her moral

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 37.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 37.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 37.

²⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 43.

³⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 38-39.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 40.

³² *Ibid.*, 40.

agent can appreciate the ethical relevance of uncontrolled happenings, because these enable him or her to grasp the novel and to master particular situations by improvising accordingly.³³ Moreover, for Nussbaum's agent possibility is a mark of life, defined here in terms of the becoming or pursuit of something better than that which already exists.³⁴

1.5 NUSSBAUM'S JUDAISM

Nussbaum to be sure does not work in the field of religious ethics, but as we have seen attempts to construct a secular universalist ethics. Yet in accessing the account written from particular religious commitment, she does not hesitate 'to put her cards on the table:'

To put my cards on the table, then, what I say henceforth is said from the point of view of someone who has converted from Christianity to Judaism, and whose understanding of Judaism gives the moral sphere considerable autonomy and centrality, seeing the concern of God for man as essentially moral and political, focused on this-worldly concerns and actions, and intelligible from the point of view of a this-worldly use of intelligence.³⁵

Nussbaum, then, generally speaking will find any religious ethics that does not provide the moral sphere with sufficient amount of autonomy and offers other-worldly solutions to the ethical problems of the here and now inadequate, if not dangerous. She especially finds Christian ethical accounts troublesome.³⁶ In the third and final part of the *Upheavals of Thought, Ascents of Love* Nussbaum leads us to consider the accounts of erotic love and its purification. She is convinced that any account of the emotions must confront the ambivalence of erotic love – especially if we consider that love is at the root of every emotion.³⁷ If we want to find a conceptual space for compassion in our ethical

³³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 43.

³⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, 46.

³⁵ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 549. In this passage Nussbaum gives away her own conviction and states that it will color her judgment of Augustine's account of love.

³⁶ Nussbaum in some of her works and the magazine interviews she gives, explains that she was raised Episcopalian in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania by a southern racist father who did not attend her wedding to Alan Nussbaum, a Jew, and could not accept her following conversion to Judaism in 1969. Nussbaum explains that she, as a convert, already has concepts of "rationalist, *chosen* Judaism" (Martha C. Nussbaum, "Judaism and the Love of Reason," in *Philosophy, Feminism, and Faith*, eds. Ruth E. Groenhout and Marya Bower (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 10), which she can contrast with a life in a WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) family and gives her the knowledge of anti-Semitism that comes from personal experience. Journalist Giles Fraser after concluding an interview for *The Guardian* with Nussbaum cannot, but conclude: "The more she talks, the more I begin to think that a great deal of her work is a wrestling with the Christian religion of her father – not least with Christianity's nervousness about the body in general and sexuality in particular. A more this-worldly religion such as Judaism is perfectly suited to a philosopher who made her name in *The Fragility of Goodness* by defending the practical ethics of Aristotle over the metaphysical supernaturalism of Plato." Giles Fraser, "Martha Nussbaum and new religious intolerance: 'Is it right to allow nuns to teach in full habit but to ban Muslim teachers wearing headscarves?,'" *The Guardian*, Friday June 29, 2012 [accessed February 13, 2015].

³⁷ Cf. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 459. Nussbaum construes erotic love as "an intense form of object-love that underlies all the adult emotions and colors them." Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 460. We will discuss the root of it in section 2.4 *Roots of Emotional Experience in Infancy* of this chapter. Erotic love, furthermore, "involves an opening of the self toward an object, a conception of the self that pictures the self as incomplete and reaching out for something valued. The object is seen as valuable and radiant, the self as extending itself toward that radiance." Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 460-461. To put it in yet another form we could say that "love is a particular kind of awareness of an object, as tremendously wonderful and

projects, we will also have to investigate and find a proper place for the initial attachment – erotic love. Nussbaum inquires whether it is possible to say that erotic love can be part of a good ethical life and her method could be best summarized in the following way:

What we find emerging, therefore, in consequence of this perceived tension between love's energy for good and its subversive power, is a recurrent attempt to reform or educate erotic love, so as to keep its creative force while purifying it of ambivalences and excess, and making it more friendly to general social aims. This tradition centrally uses the metaphor of an 'ascent,' in which the aspiring lover climbs a ladder from the quotidian love from which she began, with all its difficulties, to an allegedly higher and more truly fulfilling love. In each case, moving the lover up the ladder involves both addition and subtraction; and we must ask whether what is left at the end still contains what was originally valuable and wonderful in love, whether it is still erotic at all, still love at all.³⁸

We will not dwell upon all the suggested ascents, but we will look into Nussbaum's suggested accounts of Christian love and the accounts associated with Judaism, since her own Jewish conviction is a center of our interest.³⁹ To access the account of love normatively Nussbaum sets it against three normative criteria: compassion, reciprocity, and

salient, and as deeply needed by the self." Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 477. Erotic love, then, is a partial force, threatening by its intensity the equal concern. Erotic love also allows another person deep into oneself and, by this, passivity and lack of control becomes features of it. This, Nussbaum argues, opens our worlds for 'unbearably deep need' and "a need this deep is rarely free of retributive wishes." Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 462. She also urges that we should be aware of erotic love's close connection to anger and aggression, shame and disgust.

We should also keep in mind that love is a complex emotion to define and discuss, thus Nussbaum reminds us that the emotion love is also a *relationship*. And so she argues that: "there are types of love that do have requirements beyond the emotional, and these are among the most important types of love for the purposes of normative ethics... In other words, the term 'love' is used equivocally, to name both an emotion and a more complex form of life. Our object-relations account may be adequate to describe the emotions, without giving a complete account of the fuller form of life of which emotions of love are a central part." Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 474. Nussbaum thus urges that any investigation of the emotions should not forget to concern itself 'with the whole fabric of love.'

Lastly, Nussbaum urges readers to be open in thinking about the sexual aspect of erotic love and the role of sexual elements in it. We will discover her views on the relationship between the emotions and physiological aspects in the upcoming sections 2.2.5 *The Non-Cognitive Elements of Emotions*; 2.2.6 *Feeling and Kinetic Properties of the Emotion*; and 2.2.7 *Emotions as Upheavals of Thought*.

For now we should keep in mind that Nussbaum argues that it is indeed plausible to think of erotic love as intimately linked to some type of sexual desire, yet "'upheavals of thought' are often linked to other upheavals – but love itself is in the upheaval of mind" and so "the intercourse and its physical manifestations are not themselves the love." Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 474.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 469.

³⁹ To put it concisely, Nussbaum focuses on three types of ascent found in a long Western philosophical and literature tradition: "Instead, I shall focus on three distinct types of ascent story that form their own continuous traditions within that larger tradition: an account of the ascent that focuses on contemplation of the good and beautiful; a Christian account of the ascent that investigates the role of humility, longing, and grace; and a Romantic account that rejects a static telos for ascent, holding that striving itself is love's transcendence. Finally, I shall consider an account of a reverse ascent or 'descent' of love in which human desire sets itself the task of embracing the imperfect human world with love." Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 469. In the first group she puts Plato, Spinoza and Proust; the second group is represented by Augustine and Dante, the Romantic ascent is represented by Emily Brönte and Gustav Mahler (Nussbaum greatly values Mahler's account, which according to her is formulated in universal terms and the following 'descent' accounts offer a particular expression of its values), and the last and her preferred group of 'descent' is represented by Walt Whitman and James Joyce.

individuality.⁴⁰ The first criterion indicates that the view of love has to make space and support general social compassion; the reciprocity criterion stands for a claim that love should make space and support “reciprocal relationships of concern in which people treat one another not just as things, but as agents and ends;”⁴¹ the individuality criterion argues that an adequate account of love will recognize human beings as separate and qualitatively distinctive individuals (this criterion essentially refers to a one chance to live this life as a unique individual).

Nussbaum takes Augustine’s and Dante’s accounts as representatives of Christian accounts of love and finds both of them insufficient to meet her criteria. She tries not to be entirely dismissive and in Augustine’s case we can find her claiming that she regards his account “as a major philosophical achievement and a decisive progress beyond the Platonic accounts: because it situates ascent within humanity and renounces the wish to depart from our human condition.”⁴² But Nussbaum is hesitant whether Augustine’s account of love respects the criterion of individuality – she acknowledges that “in loving God, Augustine emphasizes, one loves each and every human being – not only the good parts but also the flaws and faults, and not only as stepping stones to one’s own artwork but in themselves.”⁴³ Yet she questions what role is left for loving real life particular people in *The Confessions*. For her, what one loves the most in them is the presence of God and thus she questions to what degree the lover loves the individual in its separate and qualitatively distinct life. When it comes to reciprocity Nussbaum argues that “Augustine portrays the ascending Christian as radically isolated in her confessional zeal, retreating from the world to be alone with God. There is some question as to how this confessing lover can be said to have a neighbor at all.”⁴⁴ Furthermore, she argues that there is a recognition of equality in Augustine’s thought, yet it is based on our common sinfulness as foundation of the community. And Nussbaum conceives this as a mistake: “There is, I think, too much of abjectness in this, too much unwillingness to grant that a human being may in fact become

⁴⁰ Nussbaum argues that these positive criteria are needed because when we talk normatively about love “we are talking, clearly, about matters both personal and social.” Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 478. The account of love she is searching for should support the vision of the best political arrangement to her judgment: “[W]e want to know whether we can find an account of love that really does make it reasonable to expect that the emotional life of citizens will support pluralistic liberal-democratic institutions. Although the arguments that follow do not strenuously observe this distinction between political values and comprehensive values, and although it thus remains an open question how many of this part’s conclusions could be made part of a political ‘overlapping consensus,’ my tentative judgment is that the normative criteria set out here are reasonable ones for all citizens to share. Loves that do not have these features should certainly be tolerated, but we can see that they are less likely to be supportive of the goals of a liberal-democratic society.” Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 479. We will discover Nussbaum’s political vision and its connection with the emotions more in depth in Chapter II, section 4.1.1 *The Central Human Capabilities* and all the subsections. What we should bear in mind now is that Nussbaum is a universalist thinker who offers an account of good, thus, she takes a stance in defining good and bad things. Yet her approach attempts to be open and respectful, even in its self definition – persons are pointed to the direction of good, but never forced into functioning according to it. However, the issue remains open to discussion, as it is a sensitive topic in itself, the thinkers who do not adhere to universalist thought might accuse her of paternalism by defining the good and universalist thinkers starting from a different premise would see her as using coercive arguments and pushing everyone to agree with her conception of the good.

⁴¹ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 480.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 547.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 549.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 550.

and be, good, and that there is all the world of difference between the evil and the good. This entails a related failure to acknowledge individuality: each is treated as sinful, even before each has had a chance to live.”⁴⁵

When it comes to the criterion of compassion, Nussbaum argues again that Augustinian conception of it is directed at our common sinfulness and the need for God’s grace.⁴⁶ This for her means that all human suffering and virtues are made provisional. “This means,” Nussbaum argues, “that Augustinian love is committed to denying the importance of the worldly losses and injustices to which my neighbor may attach importance, in order to assert the primacy of the need for God and the potential for grace.”⁴⁷ Then “[d]eath is irrelevant, real suffering in this world is irrelevant, all that is relevant is coming into God’s presence”⁴⁸ and in addition “the aim of slipping off into beatitude distracts moral attention from the goal of making this world a good world, and encourages a focus on one’s own moral safety that does not bode well for earthly justice.”⁴⁹

Dante represents an Aristotelian-Thomistic version of Christian account of love for Nussbaum and he seems to do way better than Augustine in her eyes. And with some tensions, he still seems to pass the criteria of reciprocity and particularity.⁵⁰ When it comes to Dante’s portrayal of compassion, Nussbaum merits him for making an advancement from Augustine and making compassion for human suffering a fundamental element of his ascent story. His picture of compassion is also both “more insistently worldly and social.”⁵¹ But Nussbaum still finds a tension between Dante’s compassion and his portrayal of redeemed souls as lacking in nothing and complete. And so she goes on to argue that “[o]ne cannot help feeling that this doctrine is in some tension with the desire to represent

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 550-551.

⁴⁶ While Nussbaum is critical of Augustine’s conception of compassion (or her own interpretation of Augustine’s views), she is not dismissive of Christian accounts of compassion in general. We can find her stating that “I argued that the good social agent should care when people are hungry, when they mourn, when they are persecuted – and should, in her compassion, see the remediation of those bad states of affairs as an urgent task of earthly politics. This is of course exactly how compassion functions in many parts of the Christian tradition, not least in the social doctrine of the contemporary Roman Catholic Church, with its scathing attacks on inequality and its admirable concern for the eradication of hunger, persecution, and other ills of earthly life.” Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 552. Nussbaum’s argument is then simply that Augustine’s version of Christian compassion is not truly attentive to this-worldly ills.

⁴⁷ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 552.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 552.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 553.

⁵⁰ Nussbaum hence argues that: “In short, Dante’s Aristotelianism points in two directions. On the one hand, it points toward a view that was unknown in his day, but which has become familiar as a type of Catholic liberalism (instantiated in the views of thinkers such as Jacques Maritain, John Courtney Murray, and, more recently David Tracy). On this view, respect for agency takes a central position, preventing church authority from using coercive means to its goals, and enjoining public respect for divergent religions, even when one is convinced that they are in error. I have said that Dante’s conception of the person as both free and needy promises a particularly attractive version of such a position. On the other hand, his view points toward Augustinian abjectness and shame, seeing in church authority the only remedy for disobedience. In this view, citizens are children, and the church is the only parent. On such a view, reciprocity should never be the basis for politics in this world.” Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 583. When it comes to the individuality criterion, Nussbaum continues that “Dante’s achievement centers around individuality, both separateness and particularity. He stresses that the cured Christian lover can embrace many elements of the particular person that Platonic love could not, or could not fully, embrace: the idiosyncrasies, the flaws and faults, the history, the particular talents and affinities that chart our course of life.” Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 583.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 587-588.

the world as a place whose events matter greatly, even from the point of view of salvation”⁵² and that “[t]he image of Heaven as a place of self-sufficiency, and a place of beatitude in the sense of an end to mourning, cannot ultimately be reconciled with the idea of ongoing compassion for human life. Compassion is incomprehensible without mourning; if these things are important, they are important.”⁵³ Thus for the dichotomy of choice between regarding the world and its struggles as provisional or regarding it as a history of important struggles seeking justice remains unresolved in Dante’s account.

Thus Nussbaum’s judgment of the Christian accounts, she admits, comes from her views as a Reformation Jew – in which the moral has a significant amount of autonomy and religious and this-world discussions are guided by the same enlightened reason of the here and now. We can find her claiming further:

I am an Enlightenment Jew. My Judaism is marked by a commitment to the primacy of the moral, to the authority of truth and reason, and to the equal worth of all human beings. That this Judaism is both feminist and cosmopolitan follows from its commitment to these great organizing values. Like the intellectual leaders who gave rise to Reform Judaism in Germany, I conceive of God’s kingdom as the kingdom of ends, a virtual polity, containing both true autonomy and true community, that organizes our moral hopes and efforts in this world of confusion, herdlike obedience, and unenlightened self-interest.⁵⁴

Nussbaum argues that the early German Reform Jews’ works could be seen as an extended conversation with Immanuel Kant, with whose argumentation about religion in terms of reason alone they agreed (but disagreed with his critical views about Judaism itself). The early Reformers regarded Judaism as a religion that more than other belief systems “put regard for humanity and imperatives of moral conduct at its very core.”⁵⁵ Furthermore, Nussbaum claims that Judaism’s stress on justice in the here and now made it an ideal mediator of Kant’s vision of ideal religion: “the this-worldly character of the religion, combined with the priority it attaches to practice in contrast to belief and metaphysics, makes it ideally suited to be the vehicle of a Kantian program of rational religious reform.”⁵⁶ And this, Nussbaum argues, does not mean that the early reformers

⁵² *Ibid.*, 589.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 590.

⁵⁴ Nussbaum, “Judaism and the Love of Reason,” 9. According to Nussbaum the sources of the Jewish Enlightenment thinking are the following (she is also well aware that they are the subjects of interpretation and not a case of complete agreement): “I shall be referring to several distinct strands of Jewish Enlightenment thinking: the Haskalah, or Jewish Enlightenment, of which Moses Mendelssohn (1729-86) was the most famous and influential exemplar; the early German Jewish Reformers, especially Abraham Geiger (1810-74) and Samuel Holdheim (1806-60); the early leaders of Reform in the United States, most influential among whom were Isaac Mayer Wise (1819-1900) and David Einhorn (1809-79); and ‘Classical’ Reform Judaism, among whose many leaders two Chicago rabbis Kaufmann Kohler (1843-1926) and Emil Hirsch (1851-1923) are particularly important for my discussion. In addition, I shall refer to several official documents of American Reform Judaism: the Pittsburgh Platform (1885), the Columbus Platform (1937), and the San Francisco Platform, ‘Reform Judaism – a Centenary Perspective’ (1976). Obviously many of the ideas I derive from these sources are controversial; many Reform Jews do not accept all of them, and some may deny them all – especially at present, when, in the aftermath of the Holocaust, many Reform Jews have lost the rational optimism that once characterized the religion as a whole.” Nussbaum, “Judaism and the Love of Reason,” 17.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 18.

suggested the innovation of Judaism. Instead, it was a return to the Biblical and thus the prophetic core of their faith.⁵⁷ But what is the content of this core? “Mendelssohn (following Hillel),” Nussbaum states, “understood the core of the core to be love of the neighbor; in this he was followed by all the great Reformers, who stressed the urgency of the fight for social justice in the here and now.”⁵⁸ In addition, Nussbaum argues that Reform Judaism is a cosmopolitan and universal endeavor. “Thus Samson Hirsch,” she continues, “coined a term that well expressed the conception of the Reformers: the Jew should understand himself as a ‘Mensch-Jiss-roëil,’ a human being pursuing the universal within a particular tradition.”⁵⁹

So far we have witnessed Nussbaum theorizing about the ethical core of Judaism, but we did not discern her views on existence of God as a part of what Jewish faith is. Nussbaum prepares her reader to encounter her views on God by stating that Reform Judaism by its nature houses many conceptions of the divine: “The moral core of Reform Judaism has coexisted with many different ideas of God, running the gamut from traditional belief in a personal anthropomorphic God to Deism and even agnosticism.”⁶⁰ She confirms that there are many disagreements and discussions in this area, but plurality of belief was always a hallmark of Reform Judaism, nonetheless.⁶¹ What is Nussbaum’s own position on the matter? We can find her again ‘putting the cards openly on the table’ and stating that her own views fall on the Kantian/Deist side of the spectrum:

I don’t believe in a personal God, and the idea of an eternal infinite substance means nothing to me. Nor do I think that humanity is precious only if there is something more than human about it. My beliefs are thus closest to those of the religious humanists, who think that what is worthy of respect and awe is humanity itself, struggling with its problems within history. I also find attractive the conceptions of prayer articulated by Hirsch and the humanists: prayer is (for me) essentially emotional and moral, a sharpening and focusing of one’s moral energies, which are usually blunted by the distractions of daily life. But I am not taken with Hirsch’s Matthew Arnold view of divinity: I think that if we are ever to do right, the power to do it has to come from us. Otherwise our actions would be by rote, and would not be virtuous actions. Beyond this, I have great uncertainty. I do think that there is mystery and sublimity in our lives; but I think it would be a cop-out to say that we need to derive that sublimity from an external source. Nor do I agree with Kant about the need for a specific hope for life after death to sustain our moral efforts. But I do think that humanity is not just a machine pushed around by the natural

⁵⁷ In this regard Nussbaum refers us to Moses Mendelssohn’s work *Jerusalem, or on Religious Power and Judaism* (first published 1783).

⁵⁸ Nussbaum, “Judaism and the Love of Reason,” 21.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 24. Nussbaum continues that these views are also reaffirmed in the Reform Jewish documents: “As the Columbus Platform put it, ‘Judaism is the historical religious experience of the Jewish people. Though growing out of Jewish life, its message is universal, aiming at the union and perfection of mankind...We regard it as our historic task to cooperate with all men in the establishment of the kingdom of God, of universal brotherhood, justice, truth, and peace on earth. This is our Messianic goal.’ The San Francisco Platform keeps that part of the tradition intact, stating ‘that the ethics of universalism implicit in traditional Judaism must be an explicit part of our Jewish duty.’” Nussbaum, “Judaism and the Love of Reason,” 24.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 31-32.

⁶¹ In this regard she quotes the San Francisco Platform that while committing itself to one God still states: “Reform Jews respond to change in various ways according to the Reform principle of the autonomy of the individual. However, Reform Judaism does more than tolerate diversity; it engenders it...We stand open to any position thoughtfully and conscientiously advocated in the spirit of Reform Jewish beliefs...[W]e accept such differences as precious and see in them Judaism’s best hope for confronting whatever the future holds for us.” Nussbaum, “Judaism and the Love of Reason,” 33.

world: that, as both Seneca and Kant said in their different ways, there is something in humanity that is deeply awe-inspiring, that goes beyond mechanical causality.⁶²

Thus we discern that Nussbaum's Jewish affiliation is her rational decision and she seems to cherish its rational parts the most. The core of it is fostering her moral commitments that consist of equal respect for all humanity, passion for justice here and now, and lastly the recognition for mysterious and admirable elements in humanity, just because they are human.

Nussbaum stated that her identity as a Reform Jew influenced her assessment of Augustine's and Dante's Christian ascent of love. And thus it should not surprise us that the accounts of love she prefers in one way or another have Jewish characteristics. We will focus on the last one, the one she chooses to conclude the *Upheavals of Thought* with. The closing pages of the book are dedicated to James Joyce's *Ulysses*⁶³ and the values it promotes – we should also keep in mind that its main character Leopold Bloom is a Jewish figure. Nussbaum is eager to embrace the account of love found in *Ulysses* because unlike the others (even with their noted admirable parts), *Ulysses* offers a full embrace of our daily lives, thus something that Nussbaum calls a 'descent' of love.⁶⁴ All the previous stories on love, for her, leaves a gap between their constructed reader and the real life reader reading them. "This is a deliberate stratagem to drive attention upward," Nussbaum argues, "but it runs the risk of compounding anger and disgust when we discover that we are still ourselves."⁶⁵ But we may ask how the descent changes love? Part of Nussbaum's answer would be that our view on ourselves and our love is changed by relaxing our need for perfection and portraying our life as it is. "In these ways the text says," Nussbaum argues, "here, here in this confusion is the really whole cosmos (or noncosmos), here and not in those ordered clarified probabilified well-plotted texts in which we are accustomed to look for our lives."⁶⁶

Nussbaum further argues that a double movement of contrasting the grandeur of a

⁶² *Ibid.*, 33.

⁶³ Nussbaum utilizes and quotes the following edition of the book – James Joyce, *Ulysses* (New York: Modern Library, 1961). She offers an original philosophical assessment of the book, but additionally bases it on the insights of a prominent American literary critic and a biographer of Joyce, Richard Ellmann. See Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983).

⁶⁴ 'Descent' of love for Nussbaum means embracing and loving our daily lives with all its imperfections and by this, freeing love from hatred and anger from what is 'merely human.' "And this means that – despite a general agreement in Christian and post-Christian accounts that a truly adequate love will embrace the flaws and imperfections of a human being as well as the goodness – all of these ascents in a real sense repudiate us. Nobody has a menstrual period in Plato. Nobody excretes in Spinoza. Nobody masturbates in Proust (though in a certain sense also, nobody does anything else). Augustine and Dante records such moments, but leave them behind in Hell. Cathy and Heathcliff demonstrate their superiority to the Linton world by a demonic intensity that seems to lift them straight out of the daily world. In Mahler, the daily social round is dead and deadening; the ascending artist, bitten by his own cry of disgust against this world, ascends to a creative realm in which love exists purified of the lapses of attention that make up much of our daily lives. In Whitman, the body and erotic desire are rehabilitated, but also transfigured, made part of the great march of justice in the world, rather than just being by themselves. As Lawrence said of the poetry, even if you reach eternity, you can't sit down there. In none of these texts, then, does love wear a real life body with its hungers and thirsts and fantasies, its all-too-human combination of generosity with forgetfulness." Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 681-682.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 682.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 688-689.

legend and the instances of daily urban lives is characteristic to the book. And we can find her arguing:

But since the text draws the reader's attention and heart to these elements of daily life, and does so with tenderness, the first 'take,' which laughs at the absurd juxtaposition, soon leads on to a second set of thoughts, in which one wonders whether Bloom's simple kindness to Dignam's family, his small speech against racial intolerance, his silly poem to Molly, his kiss on her bottom, are not the material of whatever is real in heroism, and of whatever is generous and genuine in the spiritual life.⁶⁷

Nussbaum continues that above all we should remember that *Ulysses* is a book about love and it makes several claims on the nature of it:

It appears to argue that it is only through love, and bodily love at that, that human beings can find an exit from solipsism and loneliness to the reality of another life. It appears to argue that the creative imagination is itself erotic, a receptive form of forms, passive, masochistic, akin to the 'surety of sense of touch in' Bloom's 'firm full masculine feminine passive active hand' (674). It appears to argue that love is the great hope for public life as well, the great opposite to the 'insult and hatred' that are themselves 'the opposite of that that is really life.'⁶⁸

But what about the three criteria and the possibility to induce the political vision from Joyce's account of love? Nussbaum answers readily that it would be too much to search for a political vision in the novel, yet it offers some views on a good community by its fundamental 'yes' to humanity:

Here Joyce partly agrees with Whitman, but goes beyond him in the mercy of his attention to the flawed particular. Whitman is prepared to accept desiring so long as the relevant minds are filled with the Great Idea of Democracy. Joyce is prepared to allow people to be their whole selves, both idealistic and flawed, both committed and straying. And this yes to humanity, Joyce, suggests, is the essential basis for a sane political life, a life democratic, universalist, and also liberal[.]⁶⁹

Nussbaum using the example of *Ulysses* wants to convince her reader that the best account of love is the one that strives for ideal, but never abandons the real. And in fact, due to the gentle acceptance of what is real in love can get its full force and can be less threatened by anger and hatred when it fails, when it is 'merely human.' Nussbaum does not argue against searching and trying to suggest adequate accounts on the nature of love, she argues that while doing so we would not forget to look at our daily lives because those are the soil of our ideals: "What seems required, then, is an idealism that also shows mercy and love to the real, a dedication to justice that embraces the fact that the individuals we love do have a daily life, with potted meat and the chamber pot, and the same time grand romantic yearnings and a serious faith in the soul."⁷⁰

Only after insisting that a tender spirit of gently mocking the grandiose projects of the ascent of love, Nussbaum suggests a final image of love's ascent:

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 691.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 692.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 709.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 712.

When, lo, there came about them all a great brightness and they beheld the chariot, wherein he stood ascend to heaven. And they beheld Him in the chariot, clothed upon the glory of the brightness, having raiment as of the sun...And there came a voice out of heaven, calling *Elijah! Elijah!* And he answered with a main cry: *Abba! Adonai!* And they beheld Him even Him, ben Bloom Elijah, amid clouds of angels ascend to the glory of the brightness at an angle of forty-five degrees over Donohoe's in Little Green Street like a shot off a shovel.⁷¹

We will come back to the question of the influence of Judaism on Nussbaum's thought in Chapter II. *Martha C. Nussbaum on Compassion*, section 5.1.4 *Compassion and Religion* and section 5.3 *Judaism in Nussbaum's Ethics* and all its subsections, where Diana Fritz Cates and professor of philosophy and Judaism Martin Kavka question Nussbaum's religious affiliation to Judaism and its possible influences on her view on ethics, construction of the theory of emotions, and her views on compassion in particular. Our own conclusion in this regard sides much more with Kavka and sees Judaism as forming the landscape of Nussbaum's ethics with its passion for this-world justice and carnality, and less with Cates who sees Nussbaum's Judaism directly influencing her concepts. In theorizing about emotions in general and compassion in particular, Nussbaum never employs religious or metaphysical arguments to ground it, thus we would much more see Judaism as sculpting the imagination of her ethics in a way that literature works do, but not as a set of metaphysical beliefs – the rationality guiding religion and philosophy for her ultimately has to be the same, meaning, never utilizing the other-worldly arguments. Thus we could conclude that Nussbaum's Judaism and the rationale of her ethics do not stand at odds with each other – it is rather that Reform Judaism matched her intellectual convictions and not that she induces her ethical concepts from it.

1.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

We attempted to take a closer look at Nussbaum's ethical vision. Nussbaum, as we mentioned in the first pages of the work, shows interest in many topics, but essentially it can be grouped into two major groups: political thought and questions on the nature of emotions. We have discovered that these questions are conceived in an Aristotelian, feminist, and universalist ethical framework. As a defender of Aristotelian ethics Nussbaum is a firm believer in the good. Here, we can say, the enterprise of theological ethics can find its ally⁷² – Nussbaum draws a positive anthropological picture of the human being - her moral agent is capable of seeking good, he/she has a complex emotional life, but emotions are, indeed, governable and educable. This moral agent also holds a rich responsibility for his/her inner moral life as much as for his/her political actions.

Furthermore, Nussbaum with her philosophical endeavor seeks to contribute to the

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 714. Nussbaum quoting Joyce, *Ulysses*, 345. Here she uses a quote that puts together a biblical image of the ascent of the prophet Elijah in the chariot of fire and Leopold Bloom (far from a saintly Jewish figure), to culminate in a paradox of love – that even the highest of ideals have not to lose the connection and appreciation of the real and tangible.

⁷² Theological ethics constructed from the traditional Catholic perspective also rests on the positive understanding of human nature. From this perspective the goodness of human nature is injured by the reality of sin, but not entirely destroyed by it.

betterment of society by seeking a positive practical outcome. We can see a deep conviction throughout Nussbaum's works that philosophy can serve this purpose and in fact serve the public good (to be more precise, the ethical and political part of philosophy). Nussbaum is convinced that the goal of philosophy is not to produce more philosophy. At the higher political level philosophical endeavor can sink into political agenda, as we will see from her capabilities approach.⁷³

Next to presenting the large and ambitious framework of her universalist political thought something we may call a high stakes morality, Nussbaum as we saw in the previous pages, tries to keep her eye on individuals that form the institutions and societies she wants to advance. Her ethical system tries to keep an actual human being in mind. Philosophy that truly attempts to speak about life to people has to capture the sense of it. Life is a messy enterprise, Nussbaum claims. Life is marked by contingency, the element of surprise, plurality of goods, difficult choices, and competing emotional attachments. Nussbaum seems to be convinced that if we speak of life in these terms we will do justice to its reality. Furthermore, if we will speak of an agent living in these circumstances we will not also lose the notion of the real-life person.

Having in mind Nussbaum's high aspirations to contribute to the betterment of society and her fierce belief in the good, but at the same time attention to the messiness of our daily life felt throughout her works, we could tell that the following quotation captures the core of her ethical vision:

The upside-down ladder of *Ulysses* reminded us that imperfection is just what we ought to expect of our human ideals, and people. It asked us to climb the ladder and yet, at times, to turn it over, looking at a real person in bed or on the chamber pot. Only in that way do we get the best from our ideals; only in that way do we overcome the temptation, inherent in all ideals, to despise what is merely human and everyday.⁷⁴

Precisely in this tension between the ideal and real Nussbaum's ethics is conceived. If we have that in mind, we can say that we have an adequate grasp of her ethical thought. The familiarity with her ethical vision enables us to move to the presentation of her theory of emotions.

2. NUSSBAUM'S THEORY OF EMOTIONS

The work *Upheavals of Thought* is a work presenting the moral psychology guiding Nussbaum's political philosophy and offers an exposé of her account of the nature of emotions. Here we can encounter a conviction that emotional experience is essential to ethics and we will try to discern why Nussbaum holds this claim. We will try to accomplish our task by first of all representing the Stoic core of her views on the nature of emotions. We will move, then, to her appropriation of that core, something she calls a Neo-Stoic theory of emotions. We will conclude our inquiry with the last two segments; the first one trying to situate emotions between the natural and socially constructed spectrum and the last presenting Nussbaum's views on the roots of emotional experience in infancy. This

⁷³ See Chapter II, section 4.1.1 *The Central Human Capabilities* with all its subsections.

⁷⁴ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 713.

structure, we hope, will shed light on the question of why emotions should be considered a moral phenomenon.

2.1 THE STOIC ROOTS

Now let us take a look at Nussbaum's conception of the Stoic views of emotions and in this way try to discern why she is attracted to it. Firstly, we should mention that the Stoics rather frequently used a medical analogy to present philosophy as a doctor of the soul.⁷⁵ The usage of this analogy seems to signal the practical goal of the Stoic philosophy, something that Nussbaum appreciates herself. But this practical goal of philosophy can be achieved focusing on what exactly the Stoics wanted to heal – and this leads Nussbaum to investigate their conception of the emotions.⁷⁶

Nussbaum turns to investigate a famous Stoic Chrysippus'⁷⁷ thesis, that emotions are forms of false judgments or beliefs (that emotions are indeed forms of judgment/beliefs is a backbone of her theory of emotions, thus she uses a great deal of Chrysippus' descriptive theory, but wishes to dismiss his normative conclusions). This thesis rests on the Stoic conception of the good which is understood as sufficiency of the life of virtue:

According to Stoicism, only virtue is worth choosing for its own sake; and virtue all by itself suffices for a completely good human life, that is, for *ευδαιμονία* [*eudaimonia*]. Virtue is something unaffected by external contingency – both (apparently) as to its acquisition and as to its maintenance once acquired. Items that are not fully under the control of the agent – such as health, wealth, freedom from pain, the good functioning of the bodily faculties – have no

⁷⁵ Nussbaum presents us with three examples of this analogy, in the first instance Cicero claims “There is, I assure you, a medical art for the soul. It is philosophy, whose aid need not be sought, as in bodily diseases, from outside ourselves. We must endeavor with all our resources and all our strength to become capable of doctoring ourselves (Cic *TD* III.6);” Seneca adds: “There are certain healthful practical arguments that may be compared to the prescription of the useful drugs, these I am writing down, having found them effective in healing my own sores, which, even if not thoroughly cured have at least ceased to spread (Sen *Ep* 8.2);” and Chrysippus continues: “It is not true that there exists an art called medicine, concerned with the diseased body, but no corresponding art concerned with the diseased soul. Nor it is true that the latter is inferior to the former, in its theoretical grasp and therapeutic treatment of individual cases (*PHP* V.2.22, 298D = *SVF* III.471).” Martha C. Nussbaum, “The Stoics on the Extirpation of the Passions,” *Apeiron: A Journal for Ancient Philosophy and Science* Vol. 20, No. 2 (1987): 129. The article marks an early writing on the material which is the basis and in many regards very similar to her thoughts found in the later works and the focus of our attention – the *Upheavals of Thought*. This article offers a concise exegesis and analysis of the Stoic view of the emotions, also present in the work preceding the *Upheavals*, namely, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994). The *Upheavals* while presenting a theory that is inspired by the Stoic views on the emotions does not offer a lengthy presentation of the original views and focuses on Nussbaum's appropriation of the theory.

⁷⁶ In the earlier works Nussbaum uses the terms passions and emotions interchangeably. We can find her stating: “In what follows, I shall use these two words more or less interchangeably, making no salient distinction between them. ‘Emotions’ is the more common modern generic term, while ‘passions’ is both etymologically closer to the most common Greek and Latin terms and more firmly entrenched in the Western philosophical tradition. In any case, what I mean to designate by these terms is a genus of which phenomena such as fear, love, grief, anger, envy, jealousy, and other relatives – but not bodily appetites such as hunger and thirst – are the species.” Nussbaum, “The Stoics on the Extirpation of the Passions,” 130; footnote 2. In her later works Nussbaum almost exclusively utilizes the term ‘emotions.’

⁷⁷ Chrysippus of Soli (279-206 BC) is one of the most famous and prolific Stoic thinkers; he is attributed to have given Stoicism its definite form by taking the works of his predecessors Zeno and Cleanthes and crystalizing their main doctrines.

intrinsic worth, nor is their causal relationship to εὐδαιμονία even that of an instrumental necessary condition. In short, if we take all these things away, if we imagine the wise man living in the worst possible natural circumstances, so long as he is good – and once good he cannot be corrupted – his εὐδαιμονία will still be complete. He will be living as valuable and choice worthy and enviable a life as a human being possibly could.⁷⁸

This is in short the core of the Stoic conception of the good and Nussbaum argues that precisely due to it the Stoics hold that emotions are false judgments. Yet Nussbaum wishes to look deeper at this thesis. Usually, she claims, we experience emotions as “a condition of tumult, violent movement, and vulnerability,”⁷⁹ thus how could we possibly conceive of emotions as equivalent to judgments? The answer is two-fold, firstly – this thesis helps the Stoics to establish philosophy as an art of the soul:

For it helps them in no small measure to establish the necessity and efficacy of philosophy as the art of life. If passions are not sub-rational stirrings coming from our animal nature, but modifications of the rational faculty, then, to be moderated and eventually cured they must be approached by a therapeutic technique that uses arts of reason.⁸⁰

This claim at the same instance establishes the sovereign worth of philosophy and conceives of emotions as phenomena that can be not only moderated, but entirely cured – in the Stoic view that means extirpated. Yet Nussbaum is convinced that next to the pragmatic usefulness this thesis holds some truth and she thus argues it is not merely just a philosophical construct forced by the real experience of life. Here we encounter the second element of the argument of why emotions were conceived as judgments in the Stoic view – it also holds some intuitive truth. For her, in fact, the claim that emotions are value judgments is “one of the most powerful candidates for truth in this area; and it is also far less counterintuitive than we might at first think.”⁸¹ Moreover, Nussbaum argues that one can find a close link between intuitive acceptability and truth in the thought of Chrysippus.⁸²

If Chrysippus was attentive to common beliefs/experiences of the people that means that his theorizing about the emotions should have been close to it too. Why was Chrysippus convinced that emotions embody the ways of interpreting the world? Basing this on already existing Greek philosophical insights and common daily practices he understood them to be beliefs of a particular kind, namely, the ones that ascribe value to external goods. Thus, “they embody conception of the agent’s good according to which the good is not simply ‘at home’ inside of him, but consists, instead, in a complex web of connections between the agent and unstable worldly items such as loved friends, city, possessions, the conditions of action.”⁸³

The Stoic emotion is, then, a judgment about the good and bad concerning the things

⁷⁸ Nussbaum, “The Stoics on the Extirpation of the Passions,” 132. We will come back to the discussion of the Stoic conception of the good and their views on external goods in Chapter II, section 2.3 *Does Compassion Contain False Thoughts? Classic Stoic Objections* and all its subsections.

⁷⁹ Nussbaum, “The Stoics on the Extirpation of the Passions,” 137.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 137.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 139.

⁸² Cf. *Ibid.*, 139.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 141.

outside of one's control.⁸⁴ How does Chrysippus explain the tumultuous element in it and the fact that we sometimes feel passive in the face of our emotional experiences? Nussbaum reminds us that the Stoics conceived the soul as consisting of one rational element (as opposed to the three-part Aristotelian conception of the soul). This, from first glance, makes their conception of the emotions even more troublesome. But what Nussbaum really wants to demonstrate is that the single faculty conception of the soul is conceived so precisely due to Chrysippus' insights on the nature of moral psychology. She thus argues that "it was not an item of unargued dogma for the Stoics that the soul has just one part; it was a conclusion, and a conclusion of arguments in moral psychology, prominently including arguments about the passions."⁸⁵ Now we should look at the arguments of why Chrysippus judged that the passions and reason can be housed by one faculty.

First of all, we should note that the Stoic judgment is assent to appearance, to put it simply.⁸⁶ That means that the world around me looks to me in a particular way and I can accept or reject these appearances based on the previous beliefs I have. Appearance of an object presents itself to one's cognitive faculties and '[e]mbracing or acknowledging an appearance, committing to it oneself as true, seems to be a task that *requires* the discriminating power of cognition."⁸⁷ The act of recognition of the truth of the appearance always goes together with a profound upheaval. The upheaval is caused by the nature of the proposition – it contains evaluative elements. These have three features, to be more precise: first of all, "they must make a claim about what, from the point of view of that agent, is valuable and fine, or the contrary."⁸⁸ Yet the 'valuable and fine' expresses not mere preferences and desires, but the values of the agent, his/her scheme of goals (thus, we are talking not about mere caprice in this instance). Secondly, "the propositions ascribe to the item in question not only some value, but a serious or very high value (or disvalue)."⁸⁹ And this is the source of the mistake and the passion, according to Chrysippus – we judge things to be way more important than they really are. And finally the belief has a certain content: "it must be concerned with vulnerable external things, things that can fail to be

⁸⁴ Nussbaum suggests a good example to help us to grasp the distinction between the emotion and a mere bodily movement: "Seneca adds a useful distinction. Sometimes, he says, the presence of an appearance might evoke a reaction even when the appearance itself is not accepted or taken in, but, so to speak, just strikes against you suffice. Sudden pallor, a leap of the heart, sexual excitation – all of these bodily movements may be caused by the appearance alone, without assent or judgment. (In saying this he is following a tradition that goes straight back to Aristotle's *De Motu Animalium*, which uses the very same examples). But these are not passions: these are mere bodily movements. It is only when the appearance has been allowed in, that we get – in the very act of recognition – the tumult of the mind that is the passion (*Ir* II.3)." Nussbaum, "The Stoics on the Extirpation of the Passions," 153.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 145.

⁸⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, 146. We will come back to the question about the Stoic conception of judgment in the upcoming section 2.2.1 *Emotions Are Cognitive Judgments*.

⁸⁷ Nussbaum, "The Stoics on the Extirpation of the Passions," 146. Nussbaum also points out that this was a classical argument from Aristotle on distinguishing between humans and animals – the animals are said to move about the way things strike them, without commitment. Nussbaum claims that we can find this argument in Aristotle's *EN* 1147b3-5 and *Metaph* 980b25-8.

⁸⁸ Nussbaum, "The Stoics on the Extirpation of the Passions," 149. Here Nussbaum points to the writings of Chrysippus – *SVF* III. 385, 386, 387, 391, 393, 394.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 149. Here Nussbaum suggests that we would compare it with Chrysippus – *PHP* IV.5.20-22, 262D = *SVF* III.480.

present, that can arrive by surprise, that are not fully under our control.”⁹⁰

We can put this all in a concrete example to make it more tangible – in this instance Chrysippus uses a case study of grief:⁹¹

A person I love very much has died. It strikes me, it appears to me, that an item of enormous and irreplaceable value that was there a short time ago is there in my life no longer. If we want to display the appearance pictorially – a conception of appearing that some Stoic texts occasionally suggest – we might think of a stretch of daily life with a big empty space in it, the space that a loved person used to fill by his presence. In fact, the representation of this evaluative proposition, properly done, might require a whole series of picturings, as I would notice the person’s absence in every corner of my existence, notice the breaking of a thousand delicate and barely perceptible threads. Another sort of picturing would also be possible: I could see that wonderful beloved face, and see it both *as* enormously beloved and as irretrievably cut off from me. What we must insist, however, is that the appearance is propositional: its content is *that* such and such is the case; and it is evaluative.⁹²

The emotion, then, is a judgment that embraces the appearance. But Nussbaum wants to enquire further and discover why Chrysippus made it a function of reason. Nussbaum asks – what do we think gets a terrible shock of grief? Where are we so shaken that our whole existence acknowledges that the beloved person is gone? If we conceive of emotions as “complex and evaluatively discriminating responses,”⁹³ there is no purpose to create an irrational part of the soul, we already have a faculty that is busy with very similar functions – and due to this Chrysippus thought that reason was just a suitable faculty to house the emotions.

Emotions apart from their discriminating power also have an affective side, but Chrysippus was convinced that reason can house these kinds of disorderly movements simply because of its own nature. Stoic reason is dynamic, not static: “It moves, embraces, refuses. It can move rapidly or slowly; it can move directly or with hesitation. We have imagined it entertaining the appearance of the loved person’s death and then, so to speak, rushing towards it opening itself to take it in.”⁹⁴

Thus what we have encountered so far in the Stoic thought is a dynamic conception of knowing. Here “an acknowledgment is not a cool inner act of intellect set over against the proposition, but an acknowledgment, with the core of my being, that such and such is the case. To acknowledge a proposition is to realize in one’s being its full significance, to take it in and be changed by it.”⁹⁵

⁹⁰ Nussbaum, “The Stoics on the Extirpation of the Passions,” 150. The third element, contrary to the first and the second, is not explicit in the works of the Stoics and is thus Nussbaum’s reading of their works. On the same page we can find her stating: “The Stoics do not explicitly include this in their definitions, though they repeatedly underline the connection between passion and a concern with external goods, and emphasize that a person who ceases to be concerned with externals will be free of passion.”

⁹¹ In the footsteps of Chrysippus, Nussbaum also utilizes grief as a central example. In the paper we are discussing and the later works (for example, *The Therapy of Desire*) it has no definite object, but in the *Upheavals of Thought* grief is defined as she tells her own story about grieving the death of her mother Betty Craven.

⁹² Nussbaum, “The Stoics on the Extirpation of the Passions,” 147. Nussbaum suggests we compare her interpretation with Chrysippus’ given example of grief, see *PHP* IV.7.

⁹³ Nussbaum, “The Stoics on the Extirpation of the Passions,” 151.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 152.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 153.

This is the core of the Stoic conception of the passions and Nussbaum holds it to be one of the most truthful interpretations of the nature of the emotions. She thus highly appreciates the descriptive part of the Stoic theory, yet she altogether dismisses the normative part. After presenting the nature of emotions, the Stoics turn to their suggested therapy – and their answer is not the moderation of the passions (the answer that is suggested by Aristotle and the Peripatetic school), but a total extirpation of them. Passions should be extirpated because the judgment they rest upon is false, they are not stable motivations for virtuous action (the peaceful mind and duty is), they cause pain – all the claims Nussbaum wishes to repudiate in her Neo-Stoic theory of emotions. We now turn to the presentation of her appropriation and interpretation of the Stoic moral psychology.

2.2 THE NEO-STOIC THEORY OF EMOTIONS

The starting point of Nussbaum is the agreement with the Stoics that emotions are cognitive value judgments.⁹⁶ Thus in the *Upheavals of Thought* she offers the following definition of emotions: “[t]his view holds that emotions are appraisals or value judgments, which ascribe to things and persons outside the person’s own control great importance for that person’s own flourishing. It thus contains three salient ideas: the idea of a cognitive appraisal or evaluation; the idea of one’s own flourishing or one’s important goals and projects; and the idea of the salience of external objects as elements in one’s own scheme of goals.”⁹⁷ This statement prompts an explanation of each of these three concepts.

2.2.1 Emotions Are Cognitive Judgments

First, what does Nussbaum mean by the concept of cognition in the context of emotional experience? In her own words: “By the word ‘cognitive’ I mean nothing more than ‘concerned with receiving and processing information.’ I do not mean to imply the presence of elaborate calculation, of computation, or even reflexive self-awareness.”⁹⁸ So cognition within emotions might be seen as a certain awareness, a possibility of accessing and being able to process incoming signals from the surrounding world. In addition, as the aforementioned definition makes evident, Nussbaum does not require that emotions would contain elaborate, complex cognitive processes, but they are means of awareness of the world around us.

At this point it is important to clarify the notion of judgment that Nussbaum is working with. If she accepts the Stoic view that emotions are judgments, then what did

⁹⁶ Note that when Nussbaum speaks of values she does not want to attach herself to a particular position. She wishes to merely point to the valuational character of emotional experiences. She argues that: “My approach does not take a stand one way or another on the nature of value, but tries to present the valuational nature of our appraisals from the internal viewpoint of the person having the emotional experience.” Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 22-24, footnote 2. Thus though she appreciates the works of professor of philosophy Robert C. Solomon, a pioneer in connecting emotion and value, Nussbaum distances herself from his perspective influenced by existentialism. For the link between emotion and existential value see his *The Passions* (New York: Doubleday, 1976) and *The Passions: Emotions and the Meaning of Life*, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993).

⁹⁷ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 4.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 23.

these ancient thinkers really mean by this proposition? For the Stoics, judgment is assent to appearances, occurring in a two-stage process.⁹⁹ The first stage is rather simple: I am struck that things are such and such. The second stage involves a choice between the three following possibilities:¹⁰⁰

I can accept or embrace the way things look, take it into me as the way things are: in this case the appearance has become my judgment, and that act of acceptance is what judging is. I can repudiate the appearance as not being the way things are: in that case I am judging the contradictory. Or I can let the appearance hang there without committing myself one way or another. In that case I have no belief or judgment about the matter one way or the other.

Thus, judgment requires cognitive ability. Nussbaum claims that here reason seems to reach out and take the appearance into itself.¹⁰¹ She thinks that this is generally a useful way to consider reasoning itself. Reasoning can be seen as the capacity to commit oneself to views concerning the way things really are.

Here we must ask an important question concerning not only the nature of emotions, but also the nature of judgment and belief. Are emotions acts of assenting to appearances or states resulting in such assent? Nussbaum answers that they are both: “[w]e initially assent to or acknowledge a proposition, and then there it is, part of our cognitive make up.”¹⁰² Hence, emotions assent to propositions continually. In this sense they have the same structure as any judgment: first, agreement that things are such and such; and later, the continuous acceptance of that agreement.¹⁰³ But why is this important? Because of the aforementioned claim’s consequences. If we understand emotions in this way, then, they, like all the other beliefs, can be true or false, reasonable or unreasonable.¹⁰⁴ In Nussbaum’s words: “The fact of having emotion depends on what the person’s beliefs are, not on whether they are true or false.”¹⁰⁵ More precisely, it is the emotion’s propositional content that is true or false, not the affective experience itself. Emotions are in this sense appropriate or inappropriate. They are thus both judgments and beliefs about the way the

⁹⁹ Nussbaum finds this position intuitively appealing and a good basis on which to critique the Humean desire framework as an explanation of action. However, she also acknowledges that this Stoic view needs reformulation, since it strongly focuses on linguistic propositions and thus denies the possibility of emotional experience within human infants and non-human animals. Moreover, the Stoics developed an extremely voluntarist view of judgment: ascent or non-ascent to an appearance is thought to be always a voluntary act, a position supporting their emphasis on extreme self-monitoring. Nussbaum rejects this aspect of Stoic psychology, since it necessarily excludes the aforementioned groups from the having of emotions. She takes assent in a broader sense – for Nussbaum assent is less voluntaristic. Circumstances, such as habit, attachment or simply the weight of present events in one’s life, can influence whether we will assent to certain appearances. This allows for emotionality in young children and non-human animals, both of which lack the ability to withhold assent to appearances confronting them. See Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 37.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 37.

¹⁰¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 38.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁰³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, 46. Nussbaum argues that “[e]motions are part of my view of the world, and responsive to changes in belief in much the same way that other judgments are. But they are still beliefs about the world, not just about my conception of the world, and so they can be false.” Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 46, footnote 42. Nussbaum thus wants to conceive of emotions as judgments/evaluations that can be indeed evaluated themselves.

¹⁰⁵ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 46.

world is and responses on our part to how we perceive it to be.

2.2.2 Emotions Are Eudaimonistic

Also requiring further explanation is Nussbaum's claim that emotions are judgments concerned with one's own flourishing, i.e., that they are *eudaimonistic* judgments regarding one's important goals and projects. Nussbaum warns readers not to buy into a common misconception concerning *eudaimonistic* theories, namely, that human happiness cashes itself out in egoistic terms, the end goal being pleasure or a sense of contentment.¹⁰⁶ Rather, their central concern, Nussbaum says, is the question "how should a human being live?"¹⁰⁷ Its answer is that which in ethical discourse is called human flourishing, a complete human life. The actions, relations, and persons necessary for this complete life are not to be valued instrumentally and/or according to standards of satisfaction. Nussbaum further claims that "[n]ot only virtuous actions but also mutual relations of civic or personal love and friendship, in which the object is loved and benefited for his or her own sake, can qualify as constituent parts of a person's *eudaimonia*."¹⁰⁸

These things, we should not forget, are valued as constituents of my life: any virtuous action that I perform is mine, the people that I value stand in some relation to me. Emotions, Nussbaum claims, seem to have an identical structure: "They insist on the real importance of their object, but they also embody the person's own commitment to the object as a part of her scheme of ends. This is why, in the negative cases, they are felt as tearing the self apart: because they have to do with me and my own, my plans and goals, what is important in my own conception (or more inchoate sense) of what it is for me to live well."¹⁰⁹ Hence, emotions always refer to the self.

Now if one is using an ancient *eudaimonistic* framework within a contemporary context, then, one should be aware of certain inadequacies inherent in the former. In the Aristotelian conception the schema of goals is organized systematically. The agent creates a system of things that he/she values and seeks, and these goals can be commended to others. Real people, Nussbaum points out, are usually not that systematic. They value things that do not perfectly fit together. In some cases their goals even conflict. In this respect Nussbaum departs from ancient *eudaimonistic* thinking. Emotions, she says, "have to do with whatever I do value, however well or badly those things fit together."¹¹⁰

Regarding whether humans always have goals commendable to others, Nussbaum makes two important points. The first, which is possibly located within, but not fully developed by, the ancient theory, concerns the specification of general ends. Put simply, this is the issue of the general good becoming specific in a person's concrete

¹⁰⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, 32. Nussbaum is convinced that happiness is a misleading term if it is understood in the aforementioned terms. She guides us to consult the correction of the view on the *eudaimonistic* theories by English philosopher Harold Arthur Prichard, "The Meaning of *Agathon* in the Ethics of Aristotle," *Philosophy* 10 (1935): 27-39 and another British philosopher of language John Langshaw Austin, "*Agathon* and *Eudaimonia* in the Ethics of Aristotle," in *Philosophical Papers*, 2nd ed. 1-31 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).

¹⁰⁷ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 32.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

context/situation. Nussbaum gives the example of the general goal of artistic cultivation.¹¹¹ An agent who cultivates this goal by playing the clarinet does not necessarily commend this instrument to others, since achieving the former does not require this specific expression (one can achieve it through other art forms). This point, however, though not fully developed within the ancient system, nevertheless fits its general spirit.

However, we must discuss a much more pressing difficulty facing the ancient project: that people do indeed cherish and value things that they do not think are good and/or would not commend to others.¹¹² Ancient *eudaimonism* does not speak about this reality. Certain emotions, Nussbaum argues, do not engender systematic reflection regarding the goodness of the valued object. Human lives are more complex than the ancient system is comfortable with. Employing the examples of habit, attachment, and unconditional love, Nussbaum develops her argument.¹¹³ Take the example of one's native country. One may deeply disapprove of some of its political actions, but generally one will in some way or another value and cherish it as one's own. Moreover, Nussbaum reminds us that thoughts about the good may not be as powerful as habit and time in the forming of value concepts. And in many cases these thoughts are intertwined in complex and almost inseparable ways. Also worth mentioning here are experiences of unconditional love. In her use of the phrase 'unconditional love' Nussbaum has in mind the parent-child relation.¹¹⁴ Here the search for a person's good aspects should take a back seat, for a parent should love their child despite the bad characteristics that he/she has. The failure to recognize this aspect of love is a notorious limitation on the part of ancient theory, and Nussbaum wants us to be aware of it.

Only when we are cognizant of the aforementioned limitations of ancient *eudaimonistic* thinking will it seem appropriate to discuss emotional life therein. In other words, "only when we acknowledge that people's sense of what is important and valuable is often messy, disorderly, and not in line with their reflective ethical beliefs"¹¹⁵ can we probably pursue a *eudaimonistic* ethics.¹¹⁶ This leads us to the third part of Nussbaum's definition.

2.2.3 Emotions Are Eudaimonistic Value Judgments

Emotions contain judgments indicating the salience of external objects as elements in one's own scheme of goals. This means that emotions have something to do with the value of external objects, these being parts of our *eudaimonia*. As we saw in Chrysippus' account, emotions are beliefs regarding external value. Nussbaum's position is that they are beliefs

¹¹¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 51.

¹¹² Cf. *Ibid.*, 51.

¹¹³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 51

¹¹⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, 51.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 52.

¹¹⁶ Nussbaum discusses in detour the closely linked emotions of wonder, awe and reverence, all of which seem to lack a *eudaimonistic* nature. Wonder appears the response of a subject to the pull of an object of maximal value, where his or her awareness of his or her own plans is minimal. Wonder seems to culminate in contemplation rather than action. Moreover, the question of the all-surpassing value of the object of wonder here arises. This 'beyond *eudaimonism*' experience is well articulated by religious imagery. Indeed, Nussbaum claims that it is most greatly manifested in religious contexts. See Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 54.

of a particular sort, namely, of *eudaimonia*. We have attempted to explain what *eudaimonia* means for Nussbaum. As previously mentioned, it is not egoistic satisfaction, but rather the entirety of one's life. While not about egoism, it is certainly conceived of in personal terms. For the things that I value constitute my life and no one else's. Emotions mark both the object's importance and the person's commitment to that object. Now, if emotions intend *eudaimonistic* value, then, they signal something very important to us, namely, that we need others for our well-being. They indicate a needy, not a self-sufficient, person, one whose happiness depends on things outside his/her control.

All judgments associated with the emotions, Nussbaum says, have a common subject matter: vulnerable things, things that can be affected by happenings in the world.¹¹⁷ In this context 'external goods' do not necessarily mean things outside the human body, but rather things outside a person's complete control. An emotion "records that sense of vulnerability and imperfect control."¹¹⁸ This has important implications for how we think about moral agency. Nussbaum's moral agent manifests a certain passivity before the world's happenings. An emotion indicates that its object has significance in a person's life. "I do not go about fearing any and every catastrophe anywhere in the world, nor (so it seems) do I fear any and every catastrophe that I know to be bad in important ways,"¹¹⁹ says Nussbaum. Emotions should thus be seen as localized. They stand for something in a particular person's life, rather than for what we may call universal concern. They have a revelatory character, pointing to what is really important in my life. We can now see that Nussbaum's definition of emotion has two further implications. The first is a specific outlook on the human person. The second is that emotions should be seen as intentional phenomena, as always about something.

2.2.4 The Intentionality of Emotions

As the aforementioned definition indicates, emotions are always about something or someone. Intentionality, Nussbaum says, is a key element of all emoting.¹²⁰ While intentionality is certainly key to understanding Nussbaum's theory of the emotions, it may also be a major obstacle to its acceptance. Both philosophy and common sense are still very much under the sway of what we shall call the mechanistic view of emotions "that emotions are 'non-reasoning movements,' unthinking energies that simply push the person around, without being hooked up to the ways in which she perceives or thinks about the world. Like gusts of wind or the currents of the sea, they move, and move the person, but obtusely, without vision of an object or beliefs about it."¹²¹ Nussbaum disagrees entirely

¹¹⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 42.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 43.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹²⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 19.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 24-25. In this regard Nussbaum directs us to the works of professor of philosophy and law, who also extensively writes on the topic of emotion John Deigh. He argues that removing intentionality of emotions seems more characteristic to modern scientific approaches and that this was not the case in medieval philosophy; see his "Cognitivism in the Theory of Emotions," *Ethics* Vol. 104, No. 4 (1994): 824-854. She also points out the work of English philosopher Anthony Kenny who stresses that there is a strong link between Humean philosophy and behaviorist psychology. See his *Action, Emotion and Will* (London: Routledge, 1994). Nussbaum suggests looking at George Pitcher's take on a 'traditional view on the emotions'

with this view. For her, intentionality, specifically an appraisal of some external stimulus or situation, is key to understanding emotional experience. Emotions are not thoughtless natural energies. They are always about something. They always have an object. This ‘aboutness,’ or her, is clearly a part of what emotions are.

As mentioned before, an emotion is not merely about some object. The objects that emotions appraise are intentional objects. An intentional object, according to Nussbaum, appears in the emotion as it is perceived and interpreted by the person experiencing it. In her own words: “Emotions are not about their objects merely in the sense of being pointed at them and let go, the way an arrow is released toward its target. Their aboutness is more internal, and embodies a way of seeing.”¹²² It is a way of viewing an object through one’s own window, Nussbaum says. The following example illustrates this: “What distinguishes fear from hope, fear from grief, love from hate – has not to do much with the identity of the object, which might not change, but the way in which the object is seen.”¹²³ The way of seeing the object is part of the emotion’s identity, according to Nussbaum. It implies beliefs, often very complex ones, about the object.¹²⁴ From an experiential point of view, emotions do not appear as objectless feelings. What are emotions if they are not about anything, she asks. Using the examples of pleasure and pain, she points out that our very language indicates the intentionality of emotions: we take pleasure in, or are pained by, something.¹²⁵

2.2.5 The Non-Cognitive Elements of Emotions

Here we shall discuss one of the more controversial parts of Nussbaum’s theory of the emotions. While one can question whether it is really correct to absolutely equate emotion and thought, the general connection between cognition and emotion has been well established within the field of cognitive psychology. The following sentences (or ones like them) are commonly found in the discipline’s handbooks: “As there are almost constant interactions between cognition and emotion in everyday life, any attempt to provide an adequate theory of cognition that ignores emotion is likely to prove inadequate.”¹²⁶ Researchers in cognitive psychology have conducted numerous studies showing that emotional experience is influenced by and influences cognitive appraisal.¹²⁷

In this regard, Nussbaum’s eagerness to conflate emotion and thought challenges her readers less than her claims about the relationship between feeling and emotion.

in his “Emotion,” *Mind* 74 (1965): 326-346.; we can find a discussion about the ‘hydraulic’ and ‘feeling’ models in William Lyon’s, *Emotion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

¹²² Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 27.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹²⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, 28.

¹²⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 35.

¹²⁶ See for instance, Michael W. Eysenck and Mark T. Keane, *Cognitive Psychology: A Student’s Handbook*, 6th ed. (Hove and New York: Psychology Press, 2010), 572.

¹²⁷ As an example, we can point to studies by Richard Lazarus, a prominent researcher in psychology and pioneer in the study of emotion and its relation to cognition (Lazarus’ works are widely utilized by Nussbaum). Consider an early experiment conducted by Speisman, Lazarus, Mordkoff, and Davison (1964). Herein participants were shown various anxiety-evoking films. The aim of this experiment was to confirm the hypothesis that emotion does not take place without cognitive appraisal. See Eysenck and Keane, *Cognitive Psychology: A Student’s Handbook*, 572-577.

Nussbaum's philosophical theory of the emotions, as we have seen, holds that they are evaluative beliefs indicating the importance of certain objects to our systems of goals. Here it seems appropriate to ask whether this is everything that an adequate definition of an emotion should contain. For from an experiential point of view an emotion also feels like something. Do emotions necessarily contain non-cognitive elements?

Nussbaum states very clearly that it is not necessary to include non-cognitive elements in defining an emotion. In explaining this she uses the example of grief.¹²⁸ While we know that grief is a complex emotion with multiple expressions and felt dimensions, our author inquires how we are to discern those things occurring during an experience of grief that are actually a part of it? She claims that it is characteristic of a waking sentient being to have feelings of some sort. Such feelings are necessary conditions of waking mental life. Hence, feeling of one sort or another is a necessary condition for the experience of emotions like grief. Yet Nussbaum refuses to see feeling as partially constitutive of emotion itself.

Seeking a better grasp of the phenomena of emotions, Nussbaum continues her argument. If the bodily sensations and changes associated with grief take place very slowly, she asks, then can we conclude that a person undergoing grief isn't really grieving? In other words, if elements allegedly central to the concrete experience of an emotion are not present in a given person, then can we still say that that person is experiencing that emotion? Nussbaum's answers would be a firm no to the first question and yes to the second. As she sees it, even under these circumstances the emotion still happens. In her words: "If my hands and feet were cold or warm, sweaty or dry, again this would be of no necessary criterial value, given the great variability of the relevant physiological connections."¹²⁹ Nussbaum certainly agrees that all human experiences are embodied.¹³⁰ This means that they are realized in certain material processes. In this sense emotions are intrinsically bodily processes. For our author, this does not pose an extra challenge. She is already clearly challenged by the question of whether there are certain bodily experiences that we can correlate with certain kinds of emotional experience.

Nussbaum repeatedly provides negative answers to these questions. Surprisingly, one of her motives in doing so is that emotions have often been ascribed by philosophical/religious traditions to God or the gods, these deities being commonly imagined as bodiless substances.¹³¹ For Nussbaum, accepting any theory wherein particular physiological processes are necessary conditions for the occurrence of certain emotions means dismissing these traditions as false. Whether or not one believes that these kinds of substances exist, "the reason it makes sense to imagine a bodiless substance having genuine emotions is that it makes sense to imagine that a thinking being, whether realized in matter or not, could care deeply about something in the world, and have the thoughts and intentions associated with such attachments."¹³² Thus, Nussbaum, from a philosophical point of view, endeavors to keep her theory of the emotions open to, and logically applicable for, even divine beings. She claims that she employs a Jewish approach in

¹²⁸ Cf. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 57.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 58.

¹³⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 58.

¹³¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 59.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 60.

speaking of religious matters. For her, religious and secular discourses have to be based on the same logic. We cannot speak of religious matters in terms that do not make sense in philosophical/scientific discourse.¹³³ Hence, she leaves open the possibility that divine substances have emotions in the same way that human beings do.

2.2.6 Feeling and Kinetic Properties of the Emotion

Let us return to the question of feeling within emotions. We know for a fact that certain feelings are characteristically associated with certain emotions. Here, Nussbaum insists, we should be careful about how we use the word ‘feeling’. We should, she advises, distinguish two types of feelings, those with rich intentional content and those lacking it.¹³⁴ The latter sort, which includes experiences of fatigue, of boiling, of trembling, of extra energy, etc., may or may not accompany emotions of a given type. But they are not necessary for emotion in the strict sense. Feelings rich in intentional content, some examples of which are “feelings of the emptiness of one’s life without a certain person, feelings of unhappy love for that person, and so forth,”¹³⁵ are entirely different. Here what we are calling a ‘feeling’ is not something opposed to cognitive words like ‘perception’ and ‘judgment,’ as the latter are used by Nussbaum. Some feelings of this sort are identity conditions for some emotions.¹³⁶ Here the word ‘feeling’ does not have a different meaning *per se*, but rather is used in a way illustrative of the nuances of its general meaning.

Also important to discuss is the kinetic properties of emotions. These are what the word ‘feeling’ is generally used to capture when it is spoken/written in a discussion of the emotions. However, for Nussbaum the concept of judgment is sufficient to exhaust the kinetic content of some emotions. Here it can plausibly be asked: “Do we imagine the thought causing a fluttering in my hands, or a trembling in my stomach?”¹³⁷ Moreover, taking up again the example of grief, can we think that this trembling is itself grief? Nussbaum is convinced that we cannot, due precisely to its lack of aboutness. For her, the emotion of grief, like any other, is the recognition of its object’s importance. And this capacity of recognition is necessarily part of the emotion’s identity.

Even if we accept the existence of cognitive elements within emotions, can we still hold that these cognitive judgments are merely their beginnings, while the previously discussed kinetic movements are their essences? Nussbaum answers this question by restating her bold claim that judgment is a constituent part of emotion and a sufficient cause for its other elements. Yet she insists that those other elements (feelings, movements, etc.) are parts of the judgment itself.¹³⁸ This statement is deeply connected with how she construes judgment. As we have already seen, Stoic reason is dynamic. Hence, judging is also a dynamic process. Nussbaum says: “Reason here moves, embraces, refuses; it can move rapidly or slowly, it can move directly or with hesitation.”¹³⁹ Using once again the

¹³³ This is not necessarily an issue for the Christian tradition, where the language and ideas of analogy, mystery, and God’s logic surpassing that of human beings are often employed.

¹³⁴ Cf. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 60.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 60.

¹³⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, 60.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹³⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 44-45.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 45.

example of grief, she continues, “I have imagined it [reason] entertaining the appearance of my mother’s death and then, so to speak, rushing toward it, opening itself to take it in.”¹⁴⁰ It thus seems reasonable to claim that such a dynamic faculty can store the disorderly motions of grief. But by these motions, we must be clear. Nussbaum does not mean kinetic properties belonging to bodily processes. Rather, the movement within grief (for example, a movement toward the appropriating of the death of one’s mother) is the movement of thought toward something incredibly important.¹⁴¹ It will be helpful to keep the following lines in mind: “I think that if we say anything else we lose the close connection between the recognition and the being shaken that experience gives us. The recognizing and the upheaval, we want to say, belong to one and the same part of me, the part with which I make sense of the world.”¹⁴²

This idea of emotions as upheaval of thought is essential to Nussbaum’s theory of the emotions. Emotion, for her, is precisely a very acute way of knowing. This knowledge’s weight, as explained previously, comes from its reference to the self. In grief the griever does not coolly accept the proposition “someone dear to me is dead” and then commence their sorrow. Instead, “the real, full recognition of that terrible event (as many times as I recognize it) is the upheaval.”¹⁴³ Upheaval is experience that tears open a person’s self-sufficiency. “If I go up to embrace the death image, if I take it into myself as the way things are, it is at that very moment, in that cognitive act itself, that I am putting the world’s knife nail into my own insides.”¹⁴⁴ We can see that for Nussbaum movements in emotions can be explained by the nature of reason itself. Reason is a dynamic, all-encompassing human capacity. And in this way one does not need the terminology of feelings to explain the kinetic movements associated with emotions. The processes of knowing are not static in her system. There are some things the coming to knowledge of which can shake a person’s whole essence. “Knowing can be violent, given the truths that there are to be known.”¹⁴⁵

2.2.7 Emotions as Upheavals of Thought

Now let’s revisit Nussbaum’s definition of the emotion: “Emotions are appraisals or value judgments, which ascribe to things and persons outside the person’s own control great importance for that person’s own flourishing.”¹⁴⁶ One could rightly point out that it does not contain the claim that emotions are upheavals of thought, but only that they are appraisals or value judgments. This observation would be correct, for Nussbaum does not include the concept of ‘upheaval’ into the definition of emotion that she offers. She indeed agrees that it feels like something to experience an emotion. “Much of the time, that feeling might be described as involving something that psychologists typically call ‘arousal’ and that Proust calls ‘upheaval’ – experiences of being shaken up or in

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹⁴¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 45.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 45.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, 45.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

ferment.”¹⁴⁷ Yet she thinks that this is not universally the case. In many instances emotions simply do not feel that way. Think, for example, of calm joy or love. Even grief or anger may not manifest themselves as upheavals. Nussbaum uses the term ‘upheaval’ to explain our experiences of emotions, but this rather loose concept should not enter our definition itself. “There is just too much variation among persons, and across times in the same person, for that to be right[.]”¹⁴⁸ Emotions, in Nussbaum’s theory, can be defined as evaluative judgments solely; upheaval and other feelings characteristic of them being just very general stipulations of this definition.

2.2.8 *Emotions and Imagination*

We have established that for Nussbaum emotions are value recognitions only. She has assured us that her definition is exhaustive. However, she admits that the human experience of emotions usually contains more than just cognitive content. It seems that emotions are closely connected with imagination. “It [emotion] contains rich and dense perceptions of the object, which are highly concrete and replete with detail[.]”¹⁴⁹ Emotions, then, are generally not just abstract forms of judgment. They also involve dense perceptions. This imaging element of emotion is highly particular. “The experience of emotion is, then, cognitively laden, or dense, in a way that a propositional-attitude view would not capture; and it is probably correct to think that this denseness is usually, if not always, a necessary feature of the experience of an emotion such as grief.”¹⁵⁰

The above statement implies that emotions are different from more abstract judgment states. Nussbaum claims that human emotions are shaped by our perceiving natures getting their rich texture from our sophisticated sensory abilities.¹⁵¹ However, she does not want to easily admit imagination into her definition. For imaginative acts are more characteristic of some emotions than others. And even in these they are not universally present. When elaborating on the connection between emotions and imagination, again taking grief as an example, which generally has a strong connection to particular perception, Nussbaum argues “that grief is the acceptance of a certain content, accompanied (usually) by relevant acts of the imagination.”¹⁵² Drawing our attention to imaginative acts, Nussbaum emphasizes that these focus on their object very intensively, much more than mere propositional content does. Imaginative acts seem to make very general apprehensions of the object mine. They seem to give their objects concrete faces, so to speak. It seems to be a bridge whereby numerous distant appearances become concrete objects of our emotions. However, Nussbaum decidedly does not add imagination into her definition *per se*.

Here we will not go much further with this discussion of the relation between imagination and the emotions. Rather, we will resume it in this work’s later pages, where we will address specifically the emotion of compassion.¹⁵³ It is sufficient to now mention

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 64.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹⁵¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 65.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁵³ See Chapter II, especially, subsections 4.3 *Education of the Eudaimonistic Judgment*; 4.3.1 *Humanities at the Aid of the Eudaimonistic Judgment: Tragedy and Comedy as Didactical Tools*; 4.3.2 *Tragedy*; 4.3.2.1

that imagination contributes significantly to morality through its opening to persons of ways to include distant individuals in their schemes of goals, and through its creating for them of chances to broaden their circle of concern and form meaningful attachments. This statement also highlights certain problems regarding the relation of emotions to morality; for they are morally ambiguous. They can be both positive forces, broadening our circles of concern, and negative ones, tending toward the creation of closed spaces of attachment, inclusive of only very proximate individuals and entities (take, for example, uneducated, strongly biased emotions). But we will continue this discussion later on.

2.2.9 Types of Emotions: Background and Situational, General and Concrete

Nussbaum takes these two categories as independent distinctions. We will explain them by utilizing once again the example of grief. Let us first address the distinction between general and concrete emotions. The distinction, which Nussbaum does not discuss in great length, refers to evaluative judgments of the following sorts. Grief's concrete judgment concerns a very particular person and his/her importance to my own flourishing. Here it is all about a concrete person with concrete characteristics whose story was intertwined with mine in so many ways.¹⁵⁴ The general aspect of this judgment is the grieving for a lost mother (Nussbaum throughout her book speaks not about grief in the general sense, but rather tells of her own grief when she lost her mother), the fact that now one does not have a parent.¹⁵⁵

Nussbaum then discusses the distinction between background and situational emotional judgments.¹⁵⁶ As one might guess, this distinction is between those evaluative judgments that are continuous through different situations and those that arise with new situations. But we should not see these as radically dichotomous. Yes, background emotions persist through various situations, but situational emotions can also be enduring, because situations themselves often are.¹⁵⁷ Hence, they can be seen as continuous with

Tragedy and Education of the Eudaimonistic Judgment; 4.3.2.2 Tragedy and Education of the Judgment of Seriousness; 4.3.2.3 Tragedy and Value Conflict; 4.3.3 Comedy; 4.3.4 Concluding Remarks.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 68.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 68.

¹⁵⁶ Nussbaum's ideas on background and situational emotions are inspired to some extent by English philosopher Richard Wollheim, who is noted for original work on the topics of mind and emotion and his views on distinction between states and dispositions. See his *On the Emotions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999). Nussbaum agrees with him that "it is important to recognize the existence of enduring structures in the personality that have psychological reality whether or not they are conscious; emotions are among such structures." Yet, Nussbaum claims that she utilizes less dichotomous distinctions between background and situational emotions: "It really suggests a continuum, since 'situations' may be more or less enduring, and thus an emotion might be situational and yet relatively enduring; a background emotion is one that persists through situations of different types, and thus is more enduring than that. Another difference is that on my account, the background situational distinction does not perfectly map on to the conscious/nonconscious distinction. One may, I believe, have a situational emotion of which one is not aware: as when someone has grief at a particular death without being aware of it (or not yet), or when one is angry at someone for some specific reason without being aware of it. (This nonconscious operation of a situational emotion is analogous to the nonconscious operation of a whole host of concrete beliefs in one's ordinary movements. Thus, when I move across my office, I have and use various concrete situation-focused beliefs about the locations of objects, of which I have no conscious awareness.)" Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 69-70, footnote 69.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 69.

each other. Background emotions remain unnoticed until circumstances shed light on them.¹⁵⁸ One's judgments about the badness of death, the importance of health, the vulnerability of the human body, etc. may persist over one's adult life, but it takes something like the concrete loss of one's beloved to bring them to the fore.¹⁵⁹ Another example of a background emotion is the persistence of one's love for one's children, one's parents, one's partner, etc. even without any concrete situation bringing to mind an awareness of it. "They [background emotions] are not simply dispositional; they have psychological reality, and often explain patterns of action[.]"¹⁶⁰ These emotions are entangled with the fabric of life and are essential in understanding and explaining one's actions. Once one has formed attachments to things that one cannot control, once these things have become part of one's own *eudaimonia*, one has also formed background emotions toward them, emotions that now are deeply rooted in the soil of one's daily life.¹⁶¹ These are sometimes more salient and sometimes less, yet always motivating of one's actions in numerous ways. The phenomena of background emotion can be illustrated by the calm joy experienced when the important pillars of one's life are strong, i.e., when one's work is going well and one's important relationships are flourishing, and that calm joy lingers in everything that one does.¹⁶² These emotions might be called to awareness by specific happenings, or they might not.¹⁶³ "Background emotions need not be nonconscious, just as episodic or situational emotions need not to be conscious; but frequently they will be, since they are persisting conditions that are often unnoticed partly on the account of their pervasiveness[.]"¹⁶⁴

Situational emotions, however, are judgments elicited by concrete situations. They should be viewed as existing in a certain continuum with background emotions. For one to become aware of one's background judgments, at least in most cases, their objects must be made present in concrete situations (for example, one's background fear of death comes to mind only in a concrete situation where one is confronted with his/her vulnerability).¹⁶⁵ The distinction between background and situational emotions shows the complex geography of emotional life. It indicates how our general conceptions of value enable us to be responsive to concrete situations. In Nussbaum's words: "To use a very Stoic image, the background emotion is the wound, the situational emotion the world's knife entering the

¹⁵⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 70.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 70.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 70.

¹⁶¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 71.

¹⁶² Cf. *Ibid.*, 70.

¹⁶³ Talking about the phenomenon of nonconscious emotions might be rather difficult, because of the lack of phenomenological and imaginative elements within them. But when Nussbaum speaks of nonconscious emotions she uses the term in a very ordinary sense, one in accordance with common beliefs. "They are nonconscious, although they guide our actions in many ways: beliefs about cause and effect, beliefs about where things are, beliefs about what is healthy and harmful, and so forth. We don't focus on such familiar and general beliefs every time we use them or are motivated by them. And yet, if we were asked, 'Do you believe that one dollar is worth more than fifty cents?' we would of course say yes. We are repositories of an indefinite number of such beliefs, and rely on them in our actions. Indeed, if we weren't like this, if we used only those beliefs on which we were consciously focusing, we couldn't possibly survive." This, we believe, sheds light on the distinction between conscious and nonconscious as it is used by Nussbaum. See Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 71-72.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 71.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 73.

wound.”¹⁶⁶

2.2.10 Emotional Conflict

We have presented the argumentative pillars supporting the core of Nussbaum’s theory. It remains for us to explain Nussbaum’s conception of emotional conflict, understood here in terms of both clashes between the emotions and other judgments, and between the former themselves. In the first case, the force of reason battles an unthinking, rebellious energy. In the second, the emotions assault each other.¹⁶⁷ Nussbaum is convinced that the Stoics had a good grasp on emotional conflict. We have already seen that in their thinking emotions are cognitive. Hence, we can dismiss the unthinking force image. Regarding the image of reason restricting the emotions, Nussbaum questions how this scenario could possibly occur. How could reason restrict a force with which it hypothetically does not communicate?¹⁶⁸ But if we see emotions as cognitive, then we can rather easily account for these conflicts as debate about what is really the case in the world. “In this rhythm of embrace and denial, this uneven intermittence of visions, we have a story of reason’s urgent struggles with itself concerning nothing less than how to imagine life[.]”¹⁶⁹

Regarding conflicts between the emotions themselves, these are usually issued on the exact same basis, that of judgments. For instance, a conflict between different emotions directed toward the same person (for example, between anger and gratitude) usually involves the assessment of the harms and benefits for which that person is responsible, their impact, etc.¹⁷⁰

Here we may be able to get a better idea of why all the various emotions are typically grouped together as one class. It is not just that they have common characteristics (which we have attempted to explicate), but also that they are in dynamic relationship with each other.¹⁷¹ The following sentence by Nussbaum will help us understand this better: “Given a deep attachment to something outside one’s own control, the very accidents of life, combined with that attachment now into intense joy, when the beloved object is at hand, now into fear, when it is threatened, now into grief, when catastrophe befalls it.”¹⁷² The relationship between the emotions stems precisely from their aboutness, their intentionality. And the passage from one emotion to another has everything to do with our relation to the object that we are emoting about. Our emotional life indicates that we have hostages to our fortune. It points to the vulnerable aspects of our good. Emotions, while ultimately referring to the self (it is I who undergoes experiences having to do with what I deem most important), also remind us that this self is always in the world, exposed to uncontrolled happenings. This exposer is both enriching and depriving. “So far as the passage from one emotion to the other goes, one is in the hands of the world[.]”¹⁷³

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 75.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 86.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 86.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 86.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 87.

¹⁷¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 87.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 87.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 87.

2.3 ON ORIGINS OF THE EMOTIONS: BETWEEN NATURE AND NURTURE

Nussbaum has presented us with a cognitive/evaluative view of the emotions, yet we are still to discern her views concerning the origins of them – thus we have to look into a discussion on how much our emotional experiences and reactions are part of our biological nature and how far (and if) they are formed by culture.¹⁷⁴ Nussbaum acknowledges the fact that frequently the theorists of emotions adhere to the extreme views: on one side we have an argument, especially common to evolutionary psychologists and psychoanalytical thinkers, that society plays no role in our emotional life; and on the other hand some anthropologists argue that emotional repertory of societies were solely constructed socially.¹⁷⁵

Nussbaum wishes to position herself somewhere in the middle between the extreme positions and she argues that she has stressed the universality of certain emotions in a way that she conceives them as attachments to the things of limited control that human beings can hardly fail to have.¹⁷⁶ They are additionally the elements of our common animal heritage and so have adaptive significance, thus biological basis for emotions is likely to be common to all. But this stipulation does not discard another – that emotions can be shaped

¹⁷⁴ While the previous sections mark Nussbaum's attempt to provide us with the original theory of emotions that is inspired and built upon some core insight found in the Stoic moral psychology, the upcoming sections mark her attempt to put that theory in dialogue with the status questions and thus tensions concerning the questions on how one should interpret the phenomenon of emotions. Here she wrestles with different interpretations of emotion given by evolutionary psychologists – emotions in this discipline are conceived as absolutely universal, natural species; on the other side of the spectrum we have anthropologists who see emotions as socially constructed and practically unable to escape the chains of a particular culture. Nussbaum, we will see, finds both of these perspectives reductionist and attempts to argue for the ideas of freedom even in our conceptions of emotions.

¹⁷⁵ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 143. When it comes to evolutionary psychology Nussbaum points to the works of Paul Ekman. This American psychologist working with Darwinian approach is one of the most renowned scholars in emotion research and a pioneer in the research connecting emotions to facial expressions (the research is conducted by showing the photographs of a subject expressing a particular emotion). This thus attempts to prove universality of emotional experiences and expressions. While acknowledging that his work suggests that some of the facial expressions can be cross-culturally recognized as signs of certain emotions, Nussbaum seems less convinced about the other conclusion of the research – that it also shows a cross-cultural tendency to display such reaction at particular circumstances. And so we can find her saying: "I have to admit to a brain deficiency here, because I don't always find it easy to recognize the emotions of the subjects in these photographs; insofar as I do recognize some of them, they tend to look like the contortions of children making faces, not like expressions that a real person would have. And I have a tendency to wonder whether what I'm seeing is the habitual pattern of frown lines in the face of an older person who might be perfectly happy at that moment, or an expression of an actual sadness... Moreover, as Paul Griffiths points out, Ekman's research claims something far out of line with the data when it claims to show that emotions are universally experienced. For the research deals exclusively with the behavioral manifestations of (some) emotions (what Griffiths calls the 'output' side), and with only a part of that behavioral manifestation. It does not deal at all with the emotions' content, or with the ways people interpret situations as calling for particular emotion. It thus has nothing to say about universality in the occasions for anger, or grief, or fear. Those are matters of interpretation and belief, and the studies confine themselves to behavior and recognition behavior." Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 158-159. For Griffiths' argument see Paul E. Griffiths, *What Emotions Really Are* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997). Ekman has published numerous scientific articles on emotions and their connection to facial expressions, but you can consult Paul Ekman and Richard J. Davidson, eds., *The Nature of Emotions. Fundamental Questions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994) as a representative work.

¹⁷⁶ Cf. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 141.

differently by different societies and these differences can affect the experience of emotion itself.

2.3.1 *The Logic of the Emotions: Human-Animal Differences*

Nussbaum argues for including animals in her theory of emotions,¹⁷⁷ yet she also wants to highlight certain features in which human beings and non-human animals are dissimilar. She presents a cognitive/evaluative theory of emotions and includes animals in it as capable of certain cognitive operations, some being way more complex in nature than we sometimes see at a first sight.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ Nussbaum builds a strong case for including animals (and human infants) in a cognitive/evaluative view of emotions. Animals, rather evidently, have emotions, but the original Stoic view claims that ‘appearances’ that evoke emotions have propositional content that must be formable linguistically. For Nussbaum this analysis seems too narrow and she wants to argue that animals are capable of intentionality, selective attention, and appraisal. She attempts to illustrate her case by attending to the current experimental work in cognitive psychology. She highlights the question of intentionality by using the works of an influential American psychologist Martin Seligman, see, for example, his *Helplessness: On Depression, Development, and Death* (New York: W.H. Freeman, 1975); a prominent American psychologist Richard Lazarus see, for example, Richard L. Lazarus and Bernice N. Lazarus, *Passions and Reason Making Sense of Our Emotions* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1994); a professor emeritus of cognitive psychology and a novelist Keith Oatley, see, for instance, his *Best Laid Schemes: The Psychology of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); a professor emeritus of cognitive psychology Anthony Ortony, see his Anthony Ortony et al., *The Cognitive Structure of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). Additionally, she also utilizes account of professor of neuroscience Joseph E. LeDoux, see, for instance, his *The Emotional Brain: The Mysterious Underpinnings of Emotional Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996); and neuroscientist/neurobiologist Antonio R. Damasio, see, for instance, his *Descartes’ Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: Putnam, 1994). In addition, Nussbaum in constructing her views on animal emotions is trying to be attentive to the narratives of experience. This is a bit more troublesome due to the lack of the first person story, but Nussbaum utilizes the biography of emeritus professor of philosophy George Pitcher where a close relationship with his dogs Lupa and Remus is depicted, see his *The Dogs Who Came to Stay* (New York: Dutton, 1995).

By basing her views on the interpretation of the aforementioned literature, Nussbaum wants to stipulate that 1) the animal evidence, indeed, confirms that emotions are evaluative appraisals of the world; 2) the cognitive appraisal does not have to be a matter of reflexive self-consciousness: “Many if not most animals have something that we may call conscious awareness: that is, there is something the world is like to them, and that intentional viewing of the world is significant in explaining their actions, but this need not imply that they study their own awareness... We have self-consciousness, but do not always exercise it; and we can ourselves discriminate threat from nonthreat, the loved from the nonloved, without explicitly formulating this to ourselves in every case, or reflexively scrutinizing our own ascriptions.” Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 126; 3) The role of language in the Stoic theory of emotions should be re-thought: in the cases of animals, human infants, and even adult humans the subjects’ emotional content will not always be able to be translated into a good (if any) verbal translation. “There are many kinds of cognitive activity or seeing-as,” Nussbaum argues, “in which ideas of salience and importance figure: there are pictorial imaginings, musical imaginings, the kinetic forms of imagining involved in the dance, and others. These are not all reducible to or straightforwardly translatable into linguistic symbolism, nor should we suppose that linguistic representing has pride of place as either the most sophisticated or the most basic mode... [E]ven in the human case language is far from being the only medium in which an emotion’s content can register.” Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 127-128.

¹⁷⁸ In the *Political Emotions*, for instance, Nussbaum utilizes the example of elephants to illustrate that non-human animals are capable of some form of grief and altruism. She is giving an example that occurred in West Bengal, India, in 2010 September – two baby elephants became trapped on the train track while the herd was attempting to cross the railroad. As a train was approaching the infants, five adult females tried to protect them by surrounding them. All seven animals died, the remaining members of the herd did not leave; they stayed to watch the perished ones. Thus Nussbaum claims that “[n]onhuman animals care and grieve;

But at this point Nussbaum attempts to illustrate how the distinctiveness of human beings can alter the way they conceive of the world and thus emote. She introduces categories of time, language, and social norms to show how these alter human existence.

2.3.2 *The Ways Temporal Thinking Affects Our Emotions*

One of the pillars of the existence of a human being is temporal thinking, meaning, that we do understand our lives “as a temporal process with a beginning, a development, and an end.”¹⁷⁹ Humans normally orient their lives around this structure and it gives the self a grasp of continuity of the self.¹⁸⁰ Temporal category also enables something so essential to ethics – a sense of habit and routine, which has a great consequence to the sense of the self and our emotional lives. The sense of time gives human beings a grasp of history and this allows them to generalize in more sophisticated ways than other non-human animals. Furthermore, the ability to conceive itself in time and thus history, allows one to make complex causal concepts.

Due to the lack of this line of thinking animals seem to lack certain emotions: “hope, for example, with its robust sense of the future possibility; guilt, with its keen identification of a past wrongdoer with the agent’s own present self, romantic love, to the extent that it involves a temporal sense of aim and aspiration, and a fine sense of particularity; compassion, to the extent that it calls upon a sense of general possibility and fellow feeling; types of shame that involve thought of a norm against which one has measured oneself and found oneself wanting; and even some forms of anger, fear, and grief, to the extent to which they require causal and temporal judgments.”¹⁸¹

Furthermore, only humans seem to develop explicit theories of the world, thus we have such objects of thought as religion, metaphysics, philosophy, science. “But this, too,” Nussbaum argues, “makes a great difference to the emotional life, not only by giving the human being new emotional objects (Nature, God), but also by providing a framework of understanding with which causal and temporal thinking will operate.”¹⁸² Nussbaum wants to show to her reader that human beings distinctively develop a sophisticated sense of the self and the context in which the self operates (presence with a complex history where one construes his/her values based on distinct conscious or pre-conscious philosophical concepts) gives them unique objects of emotions. Some human emotions can be conceived as universal in a sense that they have same biological roots and are attachments to the things of a great matter, but Nussbaum seems to argue that we cannot conceive this universality in similar ways as we would conceive it in non-human animals, precisely due to the complex self-consciousness human beings develop and by consequence distinct objects of emotions. Human beings and their emotions, thus, are unique phenomena that should not be approached in a reductionist way.

they experience compassion and loss. They perform acts of altruism that appear to be motivated by powerful emotions.” Martha C. Nussbaum, *Political Emotions. Why Love Matters for Justice?* (Cambridge, London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013), 138. Nussbaum uses the example she found in the newspaper *The Telegraph* (2010).

¹⁷⁹ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 144.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 144.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 146-146.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 147.

We should also remember that Nussbaum conceives of emotions as *eudaimonistic*; that means that they really rest on the sense of the self – on its goals and projects.¹⁸³ Human beings are much more likely to perceive their goals as having some kind of network and their goals also manifest a great amount of flexibility. And so Nussbaum argues:

From this follow a number of implications for the logic of the emotions. First, that in the human case there *is* logic in them, to an extent unknown in the rest of the animal world. Humans may form inconsistent goals and have emotions accordingly; but the awareness of an inconsistency is likely to be a reason for deliberation, self-criticism or at least anxiety in a way that it will not be in the other species.¹⁸⁴

From this argument we can see that Nussbaum argues that emotions, together with the rest of the person's goals and projects, are subject to deliberation and scrutiny. The deliberative activity normally appears in a context of social interactions – and this feature for Nussbaum also alters the content of distinctively human emotions. It allows the object of emotions to be a group: “the city or the country or nation itself, and possibly even the whole of humanity – abstractions of which no other animal is capable.”¹⁸⁵ In a sense that human beings are more fully social they are also more able to be alone, Nussbaum argues. And this ability to be alone for her is an essential aspect of emotional development as we will see further on.¹⁸⁶ The ability to be alone enables humans to imagine and so to wonder and consequently makes them capable “of the exhilaration of solitary contemplation, of awe before the silence of nature, of peaceful solitary joy at the air and light that surround them, also of loneliness, of the gloomy horror that can seize one in the middle of a forest, in whose shadows one finds images of one's own death.”¹⁸⁷ And we could conclude that in a nutshell Nussbaum argues that “in an ethical and social/political creature, emotions themselves are ethical and social/political, parts of an answer to the question, ‘What is worth caring about?’ ‘How should I live?’”¹⁸⁸

2.3.3 Language and Its Influence on Human Emotions

By including human infants and non-human animals in her theory of emotions – thus arguing that they are capable of genuine emotions, Nussbaum also proclaims that language is not a prime actor in the emotions and that they can be based on other forms of symbolic representation. Yet the fact that language exists – changes emotions.¹⁸⁹ Nussbaum argues that the fact that we label our emotions can affect the experience of the emotion itself:

¹⁸³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 147.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 148.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 148.

¹⁸⁶ The ability to be alone in the presence of others takes up a prominent role in a successful emotional development of the human infant. This ability can aid in conquering the narcissistic tendency to employ others for our needs. This will be discussed in the upcoming section 2.4 *Roots of Emotional Experience in Infancy* all of its subsections.

¹⁸⁷ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 149.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 149.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 149.

In the process of labeling, we are also frequently organizing, bounding some things off from others, sharpening distinctions that may have been experienced in an inchoate way. From then on, we experience our emotions in ways guided by these descriptions. A person who does not know emotional ‘grammar’ of his or her society cannot be assumed to have the same emotional life as one who does know this ‘grammar.’ To be able to articulate one’s emotions is *eo ipso* to have a different emotional life.¹⁹⁰

2.3.4 Social Norms and Human Emotions

If we take in Nussbaum’s view that emotions are evaluative appraisals, then, we will see that social norms concerning the value of certain phenomena can affect emotions rather directly. Nussbaum argues that criteria for social manifestation of behaviors appropriate to certain emotions are socially taught.¹⁹¹ In many cases, we may expect that the experience of emotions within different societies is the same and only the external manifestation is different, but Nussbaum argues that in some instances behavior rules can alter the experience itself.

Nussbaum wants to show that due to different physical conditions, metaphysical, religious, and cosmological beliefs and various practices and routines different cultures approach and construe emotions differently. Cultures also judge differently the entire emotion category, the appropriate object of emotions, and they develop a different taxonomy of emotions.

One of the examples she utilizes is the example of anthropologist Jean L. Briggs’ study of Canadian Inuit. This culture judges that anger is always inappropriate. Though, they experience anger, they find it to be a sign of immaturity, infantilizing the person who experiences this emotion. Thus anger in Inuit culture is highly linked with the experience of shame. On the contrary, Ancient Greco-Roman culture saw anger as a pleasant emotion, directed at the future and taking pleasure in contemplating revenge. Thus anger was seen there as a delightful experience “dripping ‘sweeter than honey before the heart.’”¹⁹² Nussbaum claims that contemporary Americans have rather ambivalent views on anger as her experience in classroom discussions has proven.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 149. At this point Nussbaum also briefly discusses the differences between genders. Research seems to show that in American society males are less able to label emotions. Males tend to be able to name emotions that express themselves in a strong physiological change only. These findings are found in the study of James W. Pennebaker and Tomi-Ann Roberts, “Toward a His and Hers Theory of Emotion: Gender Differences in Visceral Perception,” *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* Vol. 11, No. 3 (1992): 199-212. Nussbaum argues, however, that this would not appear to be true to societies where males are taught to be aware of evaluative/situational criteria to label emotions, so she does not think there are some biologically based differences in this regard in genders. She bases this conclusion on anthropological studies of Jean L. Briggs, *Never in Anger: Portrait of an Eskimo Family* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970) and Catherine A. Lutz, *Unnatural Emotions: Everyday Sentiments on a Micronesian Atoll and Their Challenge to Western Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988) – observational studies that highly impressed and she uses them frequently as case studies. The conclusion that Nussbaum would draw on male-female emotional differences in this regard would suggest that the American males who had difficulties in attending particular situations and naming their emotions, indeed, do have different inner lives and the experience of their emotions may vary in significant ways from the females capable of accessing their emotional lives (thus the prospect for mutual understanding is less rosy from this perspective).

¹⁹¹ Cf. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 157.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 160. Quoting Aristotle, *Rhetoric* II.2 who cites Homer.

Nussbaum also points out that appropriate objects for an emotion that are also fixated in the Anglo-American legal system move according to cultural shifts.¹⁹³ The doctrine of ‘reasonable provocation,’ for example, used to permit that one could get violently angry at a wife’s adultery. Nowadays, the doctrine is still there, yet the objects are different – a wife is no longer conceived of as a man’s property, thus the adultery clause is gone. But new objects that resemble changes in social norms have been added to a norm of proper anger – for example the anger of a battered woman against her abuser.

Also emotion taxonomies are not the same across various cultures and so Nussbaum claims: “I have said that all known societies have some variety of the major emotion-types: love, fear, anger, jealousy, envy, compassion, and some other. But even at the level of the big generic categories we do not find a perfect one-to-one correspondence across the cultures, since cultures organize in different ways the elements that individuate emotions from one another.”¹⁹⁴ Here she comes back to the example of the anthropological study of Jean L. Briggs and the Ifaluk people – this culture has an emotion called *fago* which contains elements of both personal love and compassion – a juxtaposition which is not available for cultures that have a high focus on erotic love. Ifaluk is a tight bond community focused on survival and mutual aid, thus their *fago* highlights the vulnerability of the object and not its particularity/specialness as the emotion of love in many Western cultures does.

For Nussbaum, then, culture is an adequate key to access emotions, but she does not want this key to become an all-encompassing narrative. “But social constructionists,” Nussbaum argues, “frequently suggest several more ambitious theses: that cultural forces leave no room for individual variety and freedom; that they make the details of a personal history aetiologically unimportant; that they create mutually inaccessible worlds.”¹⁹⁵ Nussbaum is not willing to accept a concept of social construction conceived in this way. And so she argues “that culture only exists in the histories of individuals, that individuals vary greatly, and that the existence of diverse personal patterns creates spaces for diversity in the culture itself. People usually see this where their own culture is concerned.”¹⁹⁶ We should remember that Nussbaum is greatly concerned with moral education – thus a conceptual space, a well argued acknowledgment that culture can alter our emotions without being the sole shaping power is rather essential to her theory of emotions. Nussbaum wishes that the concept of social construction would lead to recognition of space and freedom. And, indeed, on a daily basis people manifest behavior and beliefs that emotions are not only irrational impulses, but they have a cognitive content – they speak of shaping their own emotional content, this is especially evident when adults attempt to shape the emerging emotions of their children.¹⁹⁷ Thus Nussbaum continues: “Indeed, a great advantage of a cognitive/evaluative view of emotion is that it shows us where societies and individuals have freedom to make improvements. If we recognize the element of evaluation *in the emotions*, we also see that they can themselves be *evaluated* – and in

¹⁹³ Cf. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 163.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 163-164.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 169.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 171.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 172.

some ways altered, if they fail to survive criticism.”¹⁹⁸ Thus if emotions are shaped in some ways by intelligent human activity (as social construction theory implies in itself), it can also be further altered by it.

Thus a plausible constructionist theory should make space for human freedom. Nussbaum argues further that it should respect the narrative history of an individual. And so she claims that “a fundamental aspect of treating a person as a person is the recognition that an infant has a separate history of great depth and intensity. Only from such a history does an infant come to be a member of a larger social group.”¹⁹⁹ We now turn to the presentation of that developmental history as Nussbaum construes it.

2.4. ROOTS OF EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE IN INFANCY

In this section we intend to present yet another characteristic of emotions, namely, its embeddedness in personal history.²⁰⁰ Nussbaum perceives emotions not as momentary occurrences (this was also evident from her account on the background emotions), which have no connection with a person’s past experiences, but as experiences that have, indeed, a complex relationship with one’s history. Emotions, then, can best be understood in light of that history. We can understand our grief most adequately, Nussbaum says, if we look at it as one strand in a history of the love relationship with the person we grieve for.²⁰¹ To put it in her own words: “For new objects of love and anger and fear bear the traces of earlier objects; one’s emotions toward them are frequently therefore also, in both intensity and configuration, emotions towards one’s own past.”²⁰²

By introducing the past temporal category into the account of emotions Nussbaum alters the original Stoic view on emotions. The Stoic taxonomy omits emotions that are directed to the past events, furthermore, it does not allow us to see how past events influence present emotions.²⁰³ The original Stoic theory of emotions does not admit emotional experience for young human children partially due to the lack of capacity to formulate linguistic propositions. Nussbaum, however, does not agree with this claim of the Stoic theory. First of all, she advocates broader concepts of ascending to the appearance and forming of a proposition that does not have to be that dependent on linguistic formulations. Rather than strictly linguistically formulable propositions, emotions in this account are conceived in terms of “urgent transactions with a changing

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 172-173.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 173.

²⁰⁰ Nussbaum’s story of childhood emotional development marks yet another step in her attempt to appropriate the Stoic views on emotions. Stoics, we are reminded again, do not see emotions as having personal history, thus they are omitted from a young child’s possible experiences. Nussbaum however takes the core Stoic interpretation of emotion as a cognitive phenomenon and connects it to a philosophical image of a birth of a child by Lucretius and then plugs this image with a non-reductionist (in her interpretation) psychoanalytical account of early childhood development. The psychoanalysts she chooses mainly belong to the object-relation theorists who argue, to put it simply, that the *psyche* (the totality of the human mind) is developed during a process in relation to the others in the environment, pointing to childhood as a pivotal stage in it.

²⁰¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 175.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 175.

²⁰³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 177.

environment.”²⁰⁴ Seen in this light emotional experience, then, is legitimate in human infants and non-human animals. Emotions in infancy do not constitute a trivial part of Nussbaum’s theory of emotions. On the contrary, this is a rather essential correction of the Stoic views of emotions. Nussbaum is convinced that if we see emotions from the temporal perspective we can understand them most adequately, as we have mentioned above. Only in light of the past event can we make proper sense of present emotions. Nussbaum thus argues “that in a deep sense all human emotions are in part about the past, and bear the traces of a history that is at once commonly human, socially constructed, and idiosyncratic.”²⁰⁵

Understanding emotions developmentally, Nussbaum says, helps her to complete the descriptive part of her neo-Stoic theory.²⁰⁶ To present a narrative structure of emotions (or the cognitive content of emotions being rooted in the narrative history of the person) Nussbaum provides her reader with a story of the development of human emotional life. We have to mention several important aspects of that story. First of all, it is a philosophical story. Hence, it is a philosophical take on describing the development of emotions. Our author is neither a developmental psychologist nor empirical scientist, thus, here we will be presented with a philosophical account on emotional development. And though emotional development was treated limitedly in philosophical tradition, Nussbaum utilizes insightful passages from Lucretius and Spinoza, in addition to the works of prominent psychoanalysts (such as Daniel Stern, Donald Winnicott, Melanie Klein, John Bowlby, and Christopher Bollas among others)²⁰⁷ to construct her story of emotional development. We will now introduce Nussbaum’s interpretation of the main stages of a human infant’s emotional development.

2.4.1 Emotional Development of the Human Infant

Nussbaum entitles the first stage of infants’ emotional development *The Golden Age: Helplessness, Omnipotence, Basic Needs* and in this segment of her work she wants to illustrate the ambivalent relationship between the infant and the world he/she is born into as a main incentive of his/her emotional life.

The image guiding her developmental story is taken from Lucretius’ writings:

like a sailor cast forth from the fierce waves, lies naked on the ground, without speech, in need of every sort of life-sustaining help, when first nature casts it forth with birth contractions from its mother’s womb into the shores of light. And it fills the whole place with mournful weeping, as is right for someone to whom such troubles remain in life.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 178.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 177.

²⁰⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, 178.

²⁰⁷ Nussbaum is well aware that the method of psychoanalysis is greatly questioned. Thus she treats the authors that employ psychoanalysis “as humanistic interpretative thinkers, very closely related to Proust and Plato, whose work gains texture and depth through having a clinical dimension – and in the case of Daniel Stern and Bowlby, also an experimental dimensions.” Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 181.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 182. Here Nussbaum uses the quotation from Lucretius 5.222-7

“A ‘gentle nurse,’” Nussbaum continues, “now calms the child with calm talk and caresses – as well as nourishment.”²⁰⁹ Nussbaum is aware that Lucretius presents an image, not an account – but her aim is to extrapolate it to an account.²¹⁰ Nussbaum attempts to portray an account of early childhood emotional development where the ambivalence of infants’ existence has little to do with sexuality and pleasure *per se*. She wants to convince her reader that the ambivalence is rooted in the infants’ relationship with external goods, or in other words, with objects of high importance. The account of the Lucretian infant will have three distinct aspects stemming from the above quoted picture.²¹¹ The first external item of great importance is the need of ‘every sort of life-sustaining help.’ Nussbaum treats this facet as a self-evident need confirmed by Lucretius and the modern psychologists – this need, to put it simply, consists of basic bodily needs that are channeled through sensations of hunger and thirst. In this context the infant will start to recognize the definite objects around him/her and start to perceive his/her own boundaries. In this regard Nussbaum uses the works of psychoanalyst Nicholas Bollas and his concept ‘transformational object’ – which refers to a caregiver as an agent who restores the infant’s world.²¹² This means that infants will perceive caregiver not as a particular object, but as an agent restoring his/her own states (thus, inducing a transformational process). This process puts an imprint on the subsequent life of the infant where he/she continues to long for the object that might bring him/her to a state of bliss.²¹³ The fact that infants cannot control the subject’s presence already gives a character of unpredictability to his/her world. This intuition is very prominent in Nussbaum’s writings.²¹⁴ It can be called an essential characteristic of life in itself and is registered by our emotions.

Nussbaum asserts that the infant’s needs cannot be reduced just to physical-bodily needs and thus she points to the second element she deduces from Lucretius’ picture of the infant – a nurse offering not only nourishment, but also gentle caresses.²¹⁵ At this point she turns to the works of Winnicott in order to argue that infants’ needs cannot be reduced to bodily gratification only.²¹⁶ She draws our attention to his concept of ‘holding’ that includes feeding, sensitive care and creation of a ‘facilitating environment.’ Facilitating environment is a space where the omnipotence (which actually stems from a complete helplessness) of the infant is acknowledged and aided (and this aid included nutrition and comfort). Nussbaum thus argues that the basic need to be held and comforted is a part of our common primate heritage – which seen from evolutionary perspective is an adaptive trait that helps one to be protected from danger.²¹⁷ The need for comfort is a very powerful

²⁰⁹ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 182.

²¹⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 183.

²¹¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 183-184.

²¹² In this regard Nussbaum utilizes Christopher Bollas, *The Shadow of the Object: Psychoanalysis of the Unthought Known* (London: Free Association Books, 1987).

²¹³ Cf. Nussbaum uses the argument found in Bollas, *The Shadow of the Object*, 13-29.

²¹⁴ As a telling instance of this, see section 1.4 *Nussbaum’s Focus on the Moral Agent and the Sense of Life* of this chapter.

²¹⁵ Cf. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 185-187.

²¹⁶ Cf. Donald W. Winnicott, *The Maturation Process and the Facilitating Environment* (New York: International Universities Press, 1965).

²¹⁷ In this instance Nussbaum turns to the study of psychologist, psychiatrist and psychoanalyst John Bowlby who claimed that the need for nourishment and security are two distinct features of an infant’s attachment to caregivers. His experiments with the primates suggest that animals that are fed with a hard mechanical device

need, Nussbaum argues. In this instance she quotes biologist Sarah Hrdy asserting that “human infants have a nearly insatiable desire to be held and to bask in the sense that they are loved.”²¹⁸

Nussbaum brings us to the third characteristic of Lucretian infant’s experience described as casting a newborn into ‘the shores of light.’²¹⁹ Nussbaum is convinced that this description about the world in which a newborn arrives is essential – it indicates that the world around the infant is full of wonder and is an object of interest and pleasure in itself. This element distances Nussbaum’s analysis of child development from the classical psychoanalytic interpretations of basic needs that usually is concerned with tendencies to remove pain and disturbance. “But Aristotle got it right,” Nussbaum argues, “the interest in cognitive mastery is a part of human infants from the start of life.”²²⁰ She turns to the works of psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Daniel Stern and his research on infants’ fascination with light and the brightest objects as an expression of their interest in cognitive stimulation.²²¹

Thus we can see that in the three tendencies Nussbaum distils from the Lucretius picture of the infants’ experience, she wants to emphasize that from the very beginning human beings have three sorts of needs – nutrition, comfort, and a sensitivity for wonder as a starting point of our imaginative activity. These needs are interrelated and quite essential to who we are as human beings. Nussbaum, thus, seems to argue that not only are our obvious needs for bodily gratification there from the moment we are born, but also that our need to be comforted and feel loved and the world which presents itself as interesting and full of mysterious wonder, are all elements that can be traced to the very beginning of our life.

2.4.2 Love, Anger, and Primitive Shame

Nussbaum has set the context of early child development – but where do we explicitly find emotions in it? Nussbaum explains:

We have roots of emotions already, in the inchoate sense that some processes of profound importance to one’s being are arriving and departing in a way that eludes control. Emotions are recognitions of that importance coupled with that lack of full control. This means that they develop gradually, as the infant becomes more and more cognizant of the importance of the transformations to its being, and of the fact that they arrive, so to speak, from outside. When

still need the comfort of a soft object. When provided an alternative between the sources of nourishment and comfort, monkeys would spend a very short amount of time getting the necessary food and the rest of the time they would cling firmly to the soft and cuddly non-nourishment object. See John Bowlby, *Attachment and Loss* Vol. I: *Attachment*, 2nd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1982).

²¹⁸ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 187. Here Nussbaum quotes Sarah Blaffer Hrdy, *Mother Nature: A History of Mothers, Infants, and Natural Selection* (New York: Pantheon, 1999).

²¹⁹ Cf. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 189.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 189.

²²¹ Nussbaum directs us to Daniel Stern, *Diary of the Baby* (New York: Basic Book, 1990) to read more about infants interested in light. We will also come back to this topic in Chapter II, section 3.2.2 *Animal Heritage: Positive Contributions to Morality*.

they are traced to a definite agency, and when that agency is to some extent distinguished from the self, the emotions will be provided with an object.²²²

Nussbaum argues, then, that in the ambivalent context of the infant's situation – his/her omnipotence and helplessness appear at the same time the rudimentary set of emotions get their start. At the very early stage of his/her life the infant is not able to grasp a caregiver as a distinct person, but it is aware of the changes in its states. Thus Nussbaum claims: "But a kind of rudimentary love and gratitude are involved in the awareness that others aid it and its attempts to live (Spinoza's definition of love)."²²³

If gratitude and love is present in a rudimentary form, then, logically some negative emotions should be rudimentarily present too. The child's state is helpless after all, and he/she can do very little to alter its states of discomfort. Furthermore, a caregiver will not always be able to elevate the negative stimuli immediately or in a form desired by an infant. In this case, Nussbaum claims that anger is also present in a rudimentary form as an expression that "others sometimes fail in its [infant's] efforts to live."²²⁴ Thus the infant will experience both, love and anger, towards the agency he/she is depending on. Anger for Nussbaum is an outcome of the ambivalent situation of an infant's existence.

At this point Nussbaum wants to introduce us to Winnicott's concept of 'holding.'²²⁵ This concept refers to the caregivers' ability or inability to meet the infant's omnipotence and helplessness. If parents provide stable care in this manner a context of trust and interdependence is set up and can develop further and if not, the child will cling on to his/her omnipotence. Nussbaum believes that this delicate stage of human life sets up the framework for our future as adult people and can explain further adult crises. And thus she argues:

On the other hand, to the extent that a child does not receive sufficiently stable holding, or receives holding that is excessively controlling or intrusive, without space for it to relax into a relationship of trust, it will cling, in later life, to its own omnipotence, demanding perfection in the self and refusing to tolerate imperfection either in object relations or in the inner world.²²⁶

The character of parental care, thus, influences how an infant starts to conceive his/her neediness – it can be experienced as a normal trait of being human or it can be

²²² Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 190.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 190.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 191. This is Nussbaum's way to explain a rather prominent concept in psychoanalysis, namely, the innate instinct of destruction. Furthermore, she attempts to make the concept redundant. Nussbaum refers us to psychoanalyst Melanie Klein's work on the death instinct in Melanie Klein *Envy and Gratitude and Other Works 1946-1963* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1984) and Melanie Klein *Love, Guilt, and Reparation and Other Works 1921-1945* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1985). This concept is derived from the thought of Sigmund Freud. See Sigmund Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," in *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, 24 vols. transl. James Strachey 18 vol. (London: The Hogarth Press, 1953-1974).

²²⁵ Cf. Posthumously published Donald W. Winnicott, *Holding and Interpretation: Fragment of an Analysis* (Grove Press: New York, 1994). In addition, Nussbaum argues that similar points can be found and confirmed in the works of research psychologists Frederick G. Lopez and Kelly A. Brennan, "Dynamic Processes Underlying Adult Attachment Organization: Toward an Attachment-Theoretical Perspective on the Healthy and Effective Self," *Journal of Counseling Psychology* Vol. 47, No. 3 (2000): 283-300; and Hrdy's, *Mother Nature*.

²²⁶ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 193.

rejected in the name of a perfect omnipotent state and as the only tolerable state of human condition.

At the early stage of human life, yet another complex emotion gets its start – primitive shame. For Nussbaum primitive shame, one of the species of shame, is “connected to the very fact of [our] own humanness.”²²⁷ Nussbaum argues that all infants enjoy the sense of omnipotence, and they feel a rudimentary shame due to the fact of their helplessness which makes them depend on the caregiver. Shame in its more developed form is an outcome of the recognition that one is not adequate in some ways he or she hoped – it can appear only if one already expects himself/herself to have worth or perfection.²²⁸ Adequate parental care which provides a chance for healthy development is once again a key to relaxing our claims of perfection in favor of trust in a relationship where imperfect things might happen because any relationship is a delicate interchange between two imperfect beings. Once an adult person is able to acknowledge this, he/she can take delight and joy in his/her imperfection and imperfect relationships.

Nussbaum’s aim is to suggest an analysis of emotions which starts as rudimentary cognitive appraisals from the infant’s arising awareness of uncertainty of the good and his/her own inability to control it. Thus, Nussbaum concludes: “Now I shall argue that emotions, so construed, are essential to the development of practical reason and the sense of self; that they bring problems to the moral life, but also substantial resources without which that life would be drastically incomplete.”²²⁹

2.4.3 The Body and Disgust

Nussbaum chooses to introduce another difficult emotion into the story of infant development, namely, disgust. Disgust, Nussbaum points out, arrives later than primitive shame and is connected with the time of toilet training (Nussbaum tries to introduce an infant’s development story of the first two years). Thus disgust does not fit an early account, yet it is extremely important for later development of our moral outlook. Disgust seems to also emerge from our own relation with the vulnerability of our body and can be relaxed or severed by the parental care and so Nussbaum chooses to discuss it in the context of the infant’s emotional development.

Nussbaum construes her views based on the work of a professor of psychology Paul Rozin, the world’s leading expert in research on disgust. The interpretation of disgust and its role in how we construct the picture of ourselves and also our relationship with others in a social and legal sense is of great importance to Nussbaum.²³⁰ Here we will present the mechanism of disgust, its place in child development and the possible dangers it can cast to morality.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 196.

²²⁸ Nussbaum refers us to the works of Andrew Morrison, *Shame: The Underside of Narcissism* (Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press, 1989); Gerhart Piers and Milton B. Singer, *Shame and Guilt: A Psychoanalytic and a Cultural Study* (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1953) for the analysis of shame as having its source in narcissistic tendencies.

²²⁹ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 200.

²³⁰ For an extended analysis of shame and disgust in the context of law see Martha C. Nussbaum, *Hiding from Humanity. Disgust, Shame, and the Law* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004).

Based on Rozin's research, Nussbaum claims that disgust has a complex cognitive content which has the idea of incorporation of a contaminant at the center of its focus.²³¹ She thus utilizes Rozin's definition of disgust: "Revulsion at the prospect (oral) contamination of and offensive object. The offensive objects are contaminants; that is, if they even briefly contact an acceptable food, they tend to render that food unacceptable."²³² Rozin claims further that "it is the subject's conception of the object, rather than the sensory properties of the object, that primarily determines the hedonic value."²³³ Disgust, thus, seems to be different in important ways from distaste and danger.²³⁴ Distaste refers to a negative reaction due to sensory factors of the object and danger is rejection motivated by perceived harmful consequences.

Disgust is very strongly linked to borders of the human body and in this sense the human mouth seems to be a heavily-laden border. Once again building on Rozin, Nussbaum claims that a disgusting object has to be perceived as alien – the bodily products are not seen as disgusting as far as they are in our bodies.²³⁵ And the fact that most people are disgusted to drink from the glass in which they have spit, but they are not disgusted with saliva in their mouths, can well illustrate her claim.

As a rule humans are more disgusted by the objects that are animals or animal products (unlike plants).²³⁶ Bodily fluids and feces are found to be the prime objects of disgust in many societies (with exception of tears, the only bodily secretion that is uniquely human). Thus Nussbaum argues "Rozin tentatively concludes that the core idea in disgust is a belief that if we take in the animalness of animal secretion we will ourselves be reduced to the status of animals."²³⁷ Nussbaum, however, wants to extend this argument (but along the lines of Rozin's research) that we also have reactions of disgust to spoiled or decaying objects and this indicates that if digested they would make us decaying and mortal. Thus in Nussbaum's thought disgust gets a connection with loathing our animality and mortality. This addition allows her to explain why we loathe some elements of our animal heritage (like secretions), but we admire others like (strength, agility). Humans, hence, find the objects that they can connect with their vulnerability and possibility of decay disgusting.

The other two prominent features of disgust are 'psychological contamination' and similarity.²³⁸ The former means that once an unharmed substance is in contact with a contaminated substance they will continue to act upon each other. Rozin claims that this conviction is mediated by the laws of 'sympathetic magic.' He suggests an example from his study that shows that once a cockroach was dropped into a particular kind of juice, people would refuse to drink that kind of juice later on. When it comes to similarity it seems that when two things look alike, it is perceived that actions that contaminate one will have an effect also on the other. Thus, albeit knowing the origin, people who participated

²³¹ Cf. Paul Rozin and April Fallon, "A Perspective on Disgust," *Psychological Review* Vol. 94, No. 1 (1987): 23-41.

²³² Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 201; quoting Rozin and Fallon, "A Perspective on Disgust," 23.

²³³ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 201; quoting Rozin and Fallon, "A Perspective on Disgust," 24.

²³⁴ Cf. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 201.

²³⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 202.

²³⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, 202; referring to Rozin and Fallon, "A Perspective on Disgust," 28.

²³⁷ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 203.

²³⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 203-204.

in the experiment refused to eat chocolate fudge when it was shaped as dog-feces; they also refused to eat soup that was served in a sterile bedpan.

Nussbaum attempts to convince us that some beliefs that make up disgust are irrational. However, that does not disqualify a possibility for disgust to have an evolutionary origin or benefit – generalization can be quite functional in avoiding objects that might be dangerous. But disgust does not appear in infants before they are three years old and thus it seems that it is largely taught by parents and society – or to put it differently – even if disgust is a part of our natural equipment, it seems that disgust, like the ability of language, is largely shaped by social teaching. In fact Nussbaum asserts that Rozin’s research shows that disgust is a very powerful vehicle of social teaching.²³⁹ Yes, there are primary objects of disgust, as we have indicated; feces and other bodily fluids. Yet societies show a great deal of latitude in the way they extend their disgust reactions from primary to other objects. A great number of objects become objects of our disgust depending on our cultural teaching and traditions. Thus when a child is introduced to toilet training, he/she also gets to know the social teaching related to his/her bodily wastes and the related substances, which is a beneficial thing because in this way a child learns to avoid some truly harmful objects. Yet it also learns to see his/her own body as problematic. And so Nussbaum argues:

In this way, another root of conflict arises in the child’s life: for her own body now seems to her problematic, the source of vile substances. She learns to some extent, in some way, to cordon herself off against the decaying and the sticky in herself, and she comes to see herself in a new way as a result. A ubiquitous reaction to this sense of one’s own disgustingness is to project the disgust reaction outward, so that it is not really oneself, but some other group of people, who are seen as vile and vicious, sources of a contamination that we might possibly keep at bay.²⁴⁰

This mechanism that starts in an early developmental stage if not tamed in later years can pervert itself into societal processes of misogyny – and, indeed, Nussbaum attributes disgust to anti-Semitism and homophobia. Disgust always spreads outwards: “These vehicles of the disgusting are rarely if ever the child’s own parents or her closest circle: for that would not accomplish the desired cordoning off. If your cootie-catcher finds cooties on your mother, they are probably already on you too.”²⁴¹ Thus people who are ‘the other’ are usually conceived as disgusting, and this is precisely why Nussbaum finds disgust dangerous. Disgust threatens the idea of equal dignity and worth which are intrinsic parts of a favorable moral system.²⁴² And so Nussbaum argues:

²³⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 205.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 205.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 220-221.

²⁴² Disgust, thus, stems from human unwillingness to be a needy animal. When discussing disgust Nussbaum introduces possible differences in gender (an argument she rarely uses). Building on works of Thomas G. Long Professor of Law William Ian Miller, *The Anatomy of Disgust* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987) and sociologist and writer Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, 2 vols. transl. Stephan Conway (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, 1989), Nussbaum argues that the content of disgust seems to correlate with gender. Miller links disgust with misogyny and the male desire to create a distance between him and the slimy products of his own body and ultimately from his animality and mortality. From this perspective a woman is a carrier of the animal characteristics from which the male desires to dissociate himself. Theweleit in his study of elite corps of German soldiers after the World War I finds in their writings

[I]f a moral view encourages children to project their disgust reactions onto vulnerable people and groups, we may wonder about that system from a psychological viewpoint: for, as Thelweleit's study shows, people who cannot abide their own animality and learn to fantasize their bodies as pure machines are telling lies to themselves, and sustain a brittle and difficult existence. If, on the other hand, we discover that a moral view insists on equal respect for all persons and therefore teaches the children that it is wrong to single out a group as the disgusting ones, because we are all equally moral and animal, we will suspect that this view is psychologically promising, because it tells no lies and does not require children (and adults) to live lives of brittle self-deception.²⁴³

2.4.4 The Ambivalence Crisis and the Rise of Morality

Nussbaum returns to the early emotional development of the child and the ambivalence crisis that has its roots in high cognitive abilities and the bodily weakness of the infant. We might remember that starting from the moment of birth to around the age of two the infant experiences a wide range of emotions varying from love and gratitude to anger and shame. In most of these cases these emotions are directed to the same person who provided primary care for the child. Nussbaum is convinced that emotions are needed to provide the child with the map of the world:

The child's emotions are recognitions of where important good and bad things are to be found – and also of the externality of these good and bad things, therefore also of the boundaries of its own secure control. Fear and joy and love and even anger demarcate the world, and at the same time map the self in the world, as the child's initial appraisals, prompted by its own inner needs for security and well-being, become more refined in connection with its own active attempts at control and manipulation, through which it learns what good and bad things are parts of its self, or under its control, and what are not.²⁴⁴

Even in a context of a certain lack of control over his/her surroundings, it is essential for the infant to learn to experience itself as a relatively stable creature in a world that is not too hostile. Nussbaum suggests that Winnicott introduces a very insightful concept of the child 'being alone in the presence of mother.'²⁴⁵ This means that the child becomes able to be preoccupied with his/her own activities rather than seeking constant comfort from the caregiver. This is essential for the development of the self and such capacities as exploring the self's inner life and creativity. The 'good holding' of the caregiver sets the context of trusting one's own environment – thus the ability 'to be alone' entails not only a physical being alone, but also the ability of the infant to relax and explore its inner life.

a hyper-contempt for women. In these writings a strong, clean male soldier body is highly contrasted with sticky, slimy, and polluted bodies of the women from whom they were born and had sexual relationships with. Nussbaum notes that we can see from Thelweleit's works that for the soldiers largely all bodies of women were objects of disgust, yet at the level of conscious conceptualization they made a sharp distinction between the bodies that belonged to them in some sense (mothers, wives, nurses) and all the rest (prostitutes, working class women). The former were portrayed as pure and the latter as sticky and disgusting. Thus disgust always remains in the 'other' to us. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 221-222.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 223.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 206-207.

²⁴⁵ We will come back to this topic in the context of compassion in Chapter II, sections 4.4 *The Spirit of Love*; 4.4.1 *Ethics, Compassion, and Play*; and 4.4.2 *Concluding Remarks*.

“The personal kind of aloneness is always inherently relational,” Nussbaum states, “someone else is always there, and it is from the shadow of the early holding object that creative aloneness derives its richness.”²⁴⁶ And she furthers “[i]n order for this sense of safety to emerge, the child must be able to feel held even when not being physically held: she must come to feel that the environment itself holds her.”²⁴⁷

Thus if a child is provided with adequate parenting, his/her emotions evolve in a relatively stable environment. But a characteristic of life as not being under our full control always remains – caregivers must come and go – and “before long a time comes when the child, further cultivating her imagination of absent possibilities, recognizes that the very same objects who love and care for her also go away at times and attend to other projects, heedless of her demands.”²⁴⁸ And precisely at this stage Nussbaum situates a pivotal stage of the development of the child’s emotions – the emotional conflict stemming from a grasp that love and anger are directed to one and the same person. And so Nussbaum claims “she now really has love for the first time – if we think of a recognition of the separateness and independence of the objects as a requirement of real love. But this love is colored in its very genesis by a profound ambivalence.”²⁴⁹ The child’s anger also gets a definite object (compared to previous rudimentary emotions that were directed to the alleviating and disturbing processes). “This anger,” Nussbaum argues, “as Bowlby correctly emphasizes, is itself ambivalent, for it is mixed up with the wish of love to incorporate and possess the needed object, and the anger itself may be used as a device of control.”²⁵⁰ This anger gives rise to jealousy – a wish to possess the object and get rid of competing forces.²⁵¹

Nussbaum suggests looking at how the crisis of ambivalence would appear in a child of a more fortunate development.²⁵² The crisis even in a more fortunate context is a painful one. As the child becomes increasingly aware of the fact that the object of his love and anger is the same person – he/she starts to experience his/her own angry wishes. The child thus, for the first time is confronted with the co-presence of goodness and badness in himself/herself. At this stage Nussbaum introduces another important emotion, namely, the emotion of guilt.²⁵³ Guilt is a judgment that there exist pieces of oneself that are bad, desire

²⁴⁶ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 208.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 208.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 209.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 209. Nussbaum takes the idea of the ambivalence crisis from John Bowlby, *Attachment and Loss* Vol. 2: *Separation: Anxiety and Anger* (New York: Basic Books, 1973). She notes that this stage is also a central focus of other object-relations psychoanalysts such as Bollas and Fairbairn.

²⁵⁰ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 210.

²⁵¹ Nussbaum, drawing on some aspects of Fairbairn finds in the dynamics of jealousy and envy the start of Oedipus complex. And thus she argues: “Rather than being about sex *per se*, this drama is about the infant’s object relations more generally – her need for sustenance, security, and love, her unwillingness to accept the separateness of the source of these good things, and her primitive shame at the fact of her own needy incompleteness.” Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 210-211. Nussbaum’s argument, then, is that the core elements of the crisis of this age are ambivalent love/anger, mixed with shame and envy. The sexual aspect of these emotions will be very different according to particular culture and particular family. Her views on the Oedipus complex are inspired by, but go beyond the strictly psychoanalytic account of William Ronald Dodds Fairbairn, *Psychoanalytic Studies of the Personality* (London and New York: Tavistock/Routledge, 1952).

²⁵² Cf. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 214.

²⁵³ Nussbaum bases her argument on Klein’s observation of this stage. See Klein’s *Envy and Gratitude and Love, Guilt, and Reparation*.

bad things, and have made bad things. And Nussbaum argues: “For the child has in a very real sense experienced a profound loss – of the totality of its world of bliss, of the pure goodness of the object of its love, of the full attention and love of that object, and finally, of its own full goodness and purity.”²⁵⁴ Thus a child experiences that some sort of threat does not come solely from the outside world, but is present in himself/herself.

The moment of this crisis is serious and painful, yet Nussbaum argues that if a child had fortunate parenting he/she by this stage would acquire some resources to deal with it. First of all, the child has a nascent sense of love and gratitude directed at the caregiver. The child also has developed a subtle interplay with the caregiver that entails openness and trust; the child also has an ability to wonder at the world around him/her and this wonder entails a loving gaze at his surroundings. Finally, through the ability ‘to be alone in the presence of mother’ a child by now can exercise his imagination and by this stage acquires the ability to imagine the suffering of the good object.²⁵⁵ Nussbaum thus suggests that the emotional resources the child has acquired will provide some strategies in dealing with the ambivalence crisis:

These capacities suggest a strategy she will increasingly follow: to wipe out bad things with good things, damage with loving deeds. A crucial part of this strategy of ‘reparation’ is the acceptance of proper boundaries to one’s demands, as the child understands, and shows increasingly in her acts, the fact that she lives in a world in which people other than herself have legitimate demands, in which her own needs are not the center of the universe.²⁵⁶

What we can extract from Nussbaum’s line of thinking is the idea that even the bad tendencies in human love can be the source of goodness. And so she continues:

What is remarkably suggestive about this line of thought is that it shows that the ambivalence of human love – which might at first be thought to be a bad feature of our difference from the animals – may also be an important source of the intensity and creativity of human love, the terrifying moment of discovering one’s own impurity the source of a genuine turning outward toward the recognition of another person’s needs.²⁵⁷

Furthermore, in this dynamic of locating the boundaries of one’s own demands and attempting to repair one’s own bad deeds, Nussbaum locates the starting point of morality and, indeed, its positive function for a human life. Morality demarcates the world by creating a space with borders – where your needs and mine can co-exist. Nussbaum argues that the comprehension and acceptance of the legitimate needs of the other and of a penalty once you transgress the boundary of the needs of the other stimulates creative and benevolent efforts of the child. And thus she sees moral guilt as a positive emotion:

Moral guilt is much better than shame, because it can be atoned for, it does not sully the entirety of one’s being. It is a dignified emotion compatible with optimism about one’s own prospects. The structure of morality thus performs a ‘holding’ function for the child, giving her

²⁵⁴ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 214.

²⁵⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 213.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 215.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 215.

a feeling of safety. In this sheltering structure she can play and exert herself.²⁵⁸

Nussbaum, thus, paints human morality as having not only a policing structure to safeguard the possibility for mutual co-existing, but as a phenomenon creating a trusting, creative, and even playful space. Even if a child recognizes the existence of the bad wishes in himself/herself, he/she does not have to shy away from it – there is always a way to repair his/her moral badness. The emotion of moral guilt here serves as a vehicle of creativity to look into one's own resources and construct benevolent action to repair one's bad deeds. Thus, one is fundamentally not helpless in the face of one's badness, even amidst crisis – one always has resources to make it better. The child, then, is able to recognize the goodness in itself and at the same time he/she is able to recognize the worth of the people around him/her (hence, the focus of this kind of morality is outward, it is always directed at recognizing the existence of the other). Morality thus holds an imperfect child in its loving embrace to say that the world is filled with forgiveness:

Morality protects the intrinsic worth of persons and their dignity, at risk from the damaging effects of the child's internal aggression. It is nonegoistic and focused on the intrinsic worth of the objects outside the self; it sets limits to self-interest and enjoins respect for the legitimate activities of others. But is also infused by love and wonder, and thus it is not a gloomy authoritarian morality. Indeed, morality performs the holding function of a loving mother (if we may use Winnicott's proviso, that this 'mother' may also be the father playing a 'maternal' role). Rather than making a forbidding and stifling demand for perfection, it holds the child in her imperfection, telling her that the world contains possibilities of forgiveness and mercy, and that she is loved as a person of interest and worth in her own right. She therefore need not fear that her human imperfection will cause the world's destruction. And because she is not stricken by annihilating shame at her imperfection, she will have less need for envy and jealousy, emotions that express her desire for omnipotent control of the sources of good: in this way, too, a benign cycle is established.²⁵⁹

Nussbaum thus suggests an interpretation of morality where instead of emphasis on human badness (which encourages stifling primitive shame), one promotes a loving and forgiving 'holding' that provides inner resources to wrestle the self's aggressive tendencies by creative and reparative actions. Nussbaum seems to suggest a parenting and moral education style that encourages a delight in our own humanness.²⁶⁰

By appealing to the emotional resources of the infant, Nussbaum also attempts to illustrate the pivotal role they play in the forming of our moral landscape (for worse or better). Therefore she praises moral systems that appeal to love, gratitude, wonder and is critical of moral systems that encourage primitive shame and disgust.²⁶¹ The former type of

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 215.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 217.

²⁶⁰ At this point Nussbaum shortly turns to possible gender differences once again. She claims that a request of not being a child anymore is much more inherent in the upbringing of males in many cultures. Boys are much more usually taught that dependency is shameful and a true maturity requires separation and self-sufficiency, while girls are much more likely to be taught that maturity involves interdependence and that emotions that indicate need are appropriate. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 219-220. Nussbaum bases her argument on the work of feminist sociologist and psychoanalyst Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of the Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978).

²⁶¹ Cf. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 222-223.

moral systems produces people who are able to turn creatively to their reparative abilities, she argues. Most importantly, it nourishes and supports the vulnerable parts of the self. The latter not only produces people who are morally stiff – it actually harms the elements of the human being that need support and nourishment.

2.4.5 Facilitating Environment and ‘Mature Interdependence:’ From Families to Political Institutions

Winnicott and Fairbairn describe a norm of health – the condition which is reached after the ambivalence crisis is solved. Fairbairn uses the term of ‘mature dependence’ to describe a healthy psychological condition. Nussbaum changes the term into ‘mature interdependence’ for the purposes of her argument, yet essentially her alteration entails the same content as the original concept – it defines a child-caregiver relationship where the child is able to accept that those whom she cares deeply about and needs are separate beings that have projects of their own. She also points out that analysts tend to describe health as an easy-to-achieve phenomenon, yet it is always a lifelong task. Mature love is achieved not only through the recognition of separateness, but also by a wish to protect this separateness. And even when one has realized the principles of the processes of maturity, the struggle against perfection and totality is always present:

Behind the increasing competence and maturity – and, indeed, the mature and generous love – of a ‘normal’ human adult lurks much that the Stoics and Proust correctly describe, in an inchoate and often preverbal form that is therefore, while cognitive, especially impervious to reasoning and argument – a seething jealousy, a demand to be the center of the world, a longing for bliss and comfort, a desire to wipe the competing object off the face of the earth – any of which may be very ill-suited to some of the adult’s chosen plans and projects. The ambivalence crisis is never completely resolved, and reparation remains a lifelong task.²⁶²

Apart from stressing that creating a psychologically healthy and thus facilitating environment is a continuous task, Nussbaum points out that this happens not only in an environment of the immediate family context, but also at the level of political institutions (and this argument marks that she moves well beyond classical objects relations analysts in her emotional development account). She argues that “people cultivate emotions in larger social and political groupings, and they need to learn the types of imagination and empathy suitable to those interactions.”²⁶³ Thus, she adds political institutions and systems of law as elements of a facilitating environment where our emotions as citizens can evolve. Political institutions that support capacities for love and reparation are preferred because these are primary goods that any just political regime should support.²⁶⁴ That is the very core of Nussbaum’s concept of an adequate political regime – a regime that supports psychological health. This kind of regime will have a particular vision of its citizens:

All are allowed to be children, in the sense that all are permitted to be imperfect and needy, and

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 225.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 225-226.

²⁶⁴ See Chapter II, section 4.1. *Education of the Judgment of Seriousness: What Things We Should Really Value?* with all its subsections for our presentation of the capabilities approach which, for her, embodies just, constitutional principles to guide liberal democracies.

an essential of regard for the humanity in them is to attend to the ‘holding’ of those needs and the creation of a political ‘facilitating environment.’ Thus a norm of psychological maturity also suggests a norm for public life, a commitment to the meeting of basic needs, or, to put it differently, to support for a group of basic human capabilities...It is also well suited to replicate itself stably over time, since its leading ideas support the formation of personalities that are likely to be intensely concerned with the needs of others, and thus to support for its leading ideas.²⁶⁵

2.4.6 Concluding Remarks

Nussbaum alters the Stoic theory of emotions by including the childhood developmental history. This step adds temporal and narrative structure characteristics to the nature of emotions. It also has some consequences for how we conceive of emotions and thus their possible education.

For Nussbaum the idea that emotions have history and so the idea that their adult form has roots in our childhood sheds light on how we can understand our emotional lives more deeply. She is convinced that this can explain why on a daily basis an adult reflecting on his/her emotions can feel that they indeed do not resemble his/her values. But if our emotions have a past they are also connected to some distant objects and even value-conflicts we might not be conscious about in the present. “The past wells up in us,” Nussbaum claims, “in ways that surprise the deliberately intending self.”²⁶⁶

Once we can get a grasp of that, and understand that there is no non-intentional force moving us around, we can identify the true object of our emotions. In this way, Nussbaum opens a conceptual space for ‘mysterious’ and ‘ungoverned’ facets of our emotional lives and this influences her view on the education of emotions. She thus argues: “This means that for such views virtue need not to be construed (as Kant construes it) as a matter of strength, the will simply holding down the brutish impulsive elements of the personality. Instead, we can imagine reason extending all the way down into the personality, enlightening it through and through.”²⁶⁷

Emotions, Nussbaum argues, also have a narrative structure and this opens a door for

²⁶⁵ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 227. Chapter II of this dissertation that encompasses Nussbaum’s views on compassion is precisely her vision of meaningful morality and of a well-arranged society; both of them providing a good ‘holding’ for persons/citizens.

²⁶⁶ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 232.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 232. At this point Nussbaum offers some critical remarks about Aristotle’s way of doing ethics: “My view, then, urges us to reject as both too simple and too cruel any picture of character that tells us to bring every emotion into line with reason’s dictates, or the dictates of the person’s ideal, whatever that is. Given human ambivalences and neediness, and the emotions that have grown out of that, this is simply not a sensible goal to prescribe; and prescribing an unachievable norm of perfection is the very thing that can wreak emotion havoc, as B’s [a Winnicott’s patient with extensive emotional problems whose analysis Nussbaum frequently uses to support her arguments] case shows us. If Aristotle’s view entails that the good person can and should demand emotional perfection of herself, so that she always gets angry at the right person, in the right way, at the right time, and so forth, then Aristotle’s view is tyrannical and exacts of us more than humanity can deliver.” Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 234. And she continues: “And it is the Stoic tradition that develops to the most extreme point the idea of zealous critical surveillance over desire and emotion (including the extirpation of the latter where possible). But there is something like this in Aristotle, too, albeit more cheerfully expressed. To this extent, my neo-Stoic view of emotion, by providing the emotions with a history, has already diverged from normative Stoic ethics, and even from Aristotle: for already in my psychological account I provide the basis for condemning those normative approaches as excessively violent toward human complexity and frailty.” Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 235.

her to ascribe to arts a very prominent role in human self-understanding. Narrative artwork has an ability to enter our emotional lives.²⁶⁸ And so storytelling and narrative play become important aspects of cultivating a child's imagination – and in this sense, some serious matters happen when a child plays – through this activity he/she learns to imagine the experiences of others. In addition, play can aid a child in the ambivalence crisis in multiple ways: it helps to imagine the pain of others, it nourishes curiosity, aids the reparative powers, and finally it strengthens the child's ability “to see other people in non-instrumental and even non-eudaimonistic ways, as objects of wonder in their own right.”²⁶⁹

We have now completed our description of Nussbaum's cognitive theory of emotions. We have learned that our author conceives of emotions as visions capturing the geography of life. Much of Nussbaum's imagery comes from Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*. Not only do various interlocking stories and characters from this work surface here and there in Nussbaum's book, sometimes in unexpected ways, but also the very term upheaval has its roots in Proust. The term that does not make it into Nussbaum's definition of emotion itself is nevertheless so characteristic of the phenomenon that she considers it worthy of her title – *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions*. The term upheaval seems to capture something very essential about emotions. This is true even when they are thought of as intelligent forces, dynamic parts of a dynamic reason. It captures the heights and depths of the movements of emotions in their embracing and rejecting facts about the world. Just think, Nussbaum writes:

The world of Charlus in love is compared to a landscape full of mountains and valleys, produced as if by ‘geological upheavals of thought;’ and this differentiated landscape is contrasted with the ‘uniform plain’ of his previous unattached life, where no idea stood out as urgent or salient, no evaluation jutted up above any other. His self-sufficient world was, we might say, very much like the world seen from the point of view of a far-distant sun, a world not yet humanized by the earthquakes of human love and limitation, which are at one comic and tragic. His new world of twisted jealousy and towering love is a more agitated world, alive as it is at every moment to small movements of thought and action in a person whom he in no way controls (and who is, besides, especially inscrutable and unreliable). And yet the narrator tells us that this world is a world ‘enriched’ – and enriched by the agitation itself (*‘par là même’*).²⁷⁰

This excerpt from Nussbaum's work expresses suitably the core of her vision of the emotional life. We have presented her main arguments in support of that vision in the hope of shedding some light on what it means to see emotions as value-laden cognitive processes attempting to make sense of the world.

3. THINKING OF NUSSBAUM'S ACCOUNT OF EMOTIONS: SOME CRITICAL REFLECTIONS

We would like to confront Nussbaum's theory of emotions with the views of some of her most prominent peers working in the field of philosophy of emotion. Our prime interest is the ethical dimension of emotions and Nussbaum's cognitivist theory suggests insightful

²⁶⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 236.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 237. We will come back to this point in Chapter II, section 4.4 *The Spirit of Love* and subsection 4.4.1 *Ethics, Compassion, and Play*.

²⁷⁰ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 88.

comments on the meaning of emotions in our everyday lives. Because emotions are also observable phenomena, it seems helpful to counterbalance Nussbaum's account with other accounts that show particular interest in intersections of scientific and philosophical reflections. Together with Aaron Ben-Ze'ev, a philosopher of psychology, we are reminded that there are two ways to think about emotions:

I merely want to cite Aristotle's claim that anger can be described on two major levels. A scientist may describe anger as a boiling of the blood and the presence of heat around the heart, and a philosopher may describe anger as the desire to retaliate by returning evil for evil (Aristotle 412b19). The desire to retaliate cannot be found in the boiling blood – which is, however, a necessary supporting basis for that desire. To explain that desire, we have to refer to the evil that was inflicted and not to the boiling blood.²⁷¹

From Nussbaum's thought we could have seen that she clearly chooses a philosopher's path in describing emotions, but let us for a moment examine those elements that also take into consideration 'the boiling of the blood' in the works of other thinkers. This section will thus proceed in the following structure: first of all, we will introduce the state of contemporary philosophical discussions on the emotions which are stemming from the debate on the distinction of emotions as basic and complex (we will soon attend to the explanation of this distinction, for now we indicate that basic emotions can be described as short-lived emotional responses that have concrete homologous physiological expressions attached to them while complex emotions can be described as responses to relatively sophisticated situations involving a great amount of cognitive activity). Here we will encounter a concise explanation of the distinction from the perspective of psychology and from the perspective of neuroscience. When it comes to the latter, we will present the approaches of Antonio R. Damasio and Joseph E. LeDoux, two very prominent researchers in the area of neuroscience whose ideas are widely utilized (by Nussbaum as well), in the philosophy of emotion.²⁷² In this part we will encounter Nussbaum's appropriation of Damasio's and LeDoux's research which will be confronted with the thought of Paul E. Griffiths, a philosopher of science, who argues that a distinction between basic and complex emotions is real and one should consider it seriously in one's reflections on the nature of the emotions. He, in fact, claims that the phenomena we normally label as 'emotions' can be so distinct that we can hardly think of emotions as constituting a single category. This will lead us to examine more carefully the question of the connection between the emotions, the body, and the brain. Here we will encounter arguments of Jesse J. Prinz, a philosopher of psychology, who argues that emotions appear without cognitive appraisal judgment and suggests his 'embodied appraisal approach' where our body is perceptive to our surroundings and makes judgments concerning how we are relating to it.

²⁷¹ Aaron Ben-Ze'ev, "Emotion as a Subtle Mental Mode," in *Thinking about Feeling: Contemporary Philosophers on Emotions*, ed. Robert C. Solomon (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 253.

²⁷² Damasio's research focuses on the relationship between the brain and consciousness, see Antonio R. Damasio, *Descartes' Error*; also *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1999). LeDoux explores the relationship between the brain, emotions and memory with a particular interest in the mechanisms behind fear and anxiety. See Joseph E. LeDoux, *The Emotional Brain*; also *Synaptic Self: How Our Brains Become Who We Are* (New York: Viking, 2002).

Prinz's perspective presents important considerations for an argument not to abandon the bodily dimension in our reflections on emotions, even when we consider their ethical character, as the body seems to be an intrinsic part of our experience of emotions.

After suggesting that the body does matter, we will move to the dimension of feelings – the experiential sphere of the emotions. Here we will encounter late philosopher Peter Goldie who had a keen interest in emotions. Goldie urges that feelings *are* a constitutive part of the emotions, because without feelings emotions would not be what they are. Goldie's ideas are supported by late philosopher, Robert C. Solomon, a famous forefather of the cognitivist theory of emotions in philosophy, who in the course of his thought moved from the dismissive position regarding the dimension of feelings in emotional experience to appreciating feelings as expressions of judgments of the body. We will conclude this section by suggesting that Nussbaum's robust theory of the ethical significance of emotions would benefit from making more explicit the distinction between basic and complex emotions (and admitting that she is mostly concerned with the latter type). We believe that Nussbaum's theory would also benefit by taking the body, in general, and the feelings aspect more seriously as they appear to be intrinsic to emotional experience.

3.1 A DISTINCTION BETWEEN BASIC AND COMPLEX EMOTIONS

The distinction between basic and complex emotions marks a very important discussion in contemporary Anglo-American philosophy which stems from the discussion in psychology and neuroscience. Today in the field of psychology one can find two most prominent paths to discuss the nature of emotions, namely, the basic emotions approach and the 'appraisal' or 'cognitive' approach.²⁷³ The former approach considers emotions to be part of our evolutionary heritage, that is, they are relatively simple, automatic entities which typically are manifested in bodily feelings and are expressed through universal, non-plastic facial expressions. This approach identifies six basic emotions of anger, disgust, fear, joy, sadness, and surprise (though this definite list is also a matter of debate) and the rest of the emotions are seen as a mixture of the basic ones. The appraisal or cognitive theories are interested in accounting for the emotions that appear to have a more complex structure and explore intentionality of emotions, their connection to associated cognitions and their capacity to situate us in the world not only as reactions to certain stimuli, but as responses to human personal narrative and viewpoint.

To contextualize the two approaches we can briefly attend their historical overview. There are three major thinkers cited as proponents of the basic emotions approach. Firstly, Charles Darwin and his *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872)²⁷⁴ which is, in fact, considered as a source of inspiration which instigated the modern basic emotions approach. To put his main thesis simply: "Darwin reasoned that if humans share a common ancestral heritage with other mammalian species, then humans should give evidence of homologous behaviors, and he described emotional expression in these

²⁷³ Cf. Maria Gendron and Lisa Feldman Barrett, "Reconstructing the Past: A Century of Ideas About Emotion in Psychology," *Emotion Review* Vol. 1, No. 4 (2009): 316.

²⁷⁴ Charles Darwin, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1965); (Original work published 1872).

terms.”²⁷⁵ Secondly, William James is often cited as a member of this group, with his influential article “What is an Emotion?” (1884).²⁷⁶ There he advanced the thesis that emotions are mental events that trigger physical changes in the body.²⁷⁷ This view otherwise known as the James-Lange theory²⁷⁸ can be cited as siding with a basic emotions approach because it argues “that stimuli in the environment are prepared to elicit a specific reaction which is perceived as a specific emotion.”²⁷⁹ This theory is also commonly known as the ‘feelings’ theory due to its consideration that all conscious emotions are experienced through bodily feelings. The third very prominent proponent of the basic emotions view is Paul Ekman with his seminal *Emotions in the Human Face* (1972)²⁸⁰ where he, “inspired by Darwin’s approach, takes emotional expressions to be important parts of ‘affect programs’ – complex responses found in all human populations, which are controlled by mechanisms operating below the level of consciousness.”²⁸¹ Ekman’s theory prescribes “very specific configurations of facial muscle movements that are proposed to correspond to different emotion categories in a one-to-one manner.”²⁸²

The shift in psychology in attempting to explain emotions of a complex character took place with the research of Magda B. Arnold who is often cited as the first appraisal theorist. With her seminal *Emotion and Personality* (1960),²⁸³ Arnold moved from feeling and behaviorist understandings of emotions and developed the idea that emotions typically have a formal object and involve evaluation at the fore. She described the appraisal as the process through which an individual determines the significance of the situation. This, in turn, “gives rise to attraction or aversion, and emotion is equated with this ‘felt tendency

²⁷⁵ Gendron and Feldman Barrett, “Reconstructing the Past,” 322.

²⁷⁶ William James, “What is an Emotion?,” *Mind* 9 (1884): 188-205.

²⁷⁷ Cf. Gendron and Feldman Barrett, “Reconstructing the Past,” 323-324.

²⁷⁸ To put the core of this theory in a nutshell: “William James proposed a variant of this view (commonly known as the ‘James-Lange’ theory of emotion, after James and Carl G. Lange) according to which emotions are specifically feelings caused by changes in physiological conditions relating to the autonomic and motor functions. When we perceive that we are in danger, for example, this perception sets off a collection of bodily responses, and our awareness of these responses is what constitutes fear. James thus maintained that ‘we feel sorry because we cry, angry because we strike, afraid because we tremble, and [it is] not that we cry, strike, or tremble, because we are sorry, angry, or fearful, as the case may be’ (James 1884, 190).” De Souza, “Emotion.” The James-Lange view and a variety of accompanying interpretations are based on seminal works that were written independently of each other by James and a Danish physician Carl Georg Lange and his *Om Sindsbevaegelser: Et Psyko-fysiologisk Studie* (Copenhagen: Jacob Lunds, 1885). Yet even this more mainstream classification of the James-Lange theory does not remain uncontested. Gendron and Feldman Barrett argue that James’s approach would be more adequately construed as a ‘psychological constructionist approach’ and that his approach differs from Lange’s in some important points: “Because of the similarity in their views, James and Lange have often been concatenated into a single perspective and Lange’s basic emotions leanings are often misattributed to James. Whereas James stressed that variability in emotional responding is the norm, Lange argued that emotions can be scientifically studied because there is an objective physiological signature for each emotion kind (i.e., he assumed discrete emotions were biologically primitive).” Gendron and Feldman Barrett, “Reconstructing the Past,” 324.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 324.

²⁸⁰ Paul Ekman, Wallace V. Friesen, and Phoebe Ellsworth, *Emotion in the Human Face* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1972).

²⁸¹ De Souza, “Emotion”.

²⁸² Gendron and Feldman Barrett, “Reconstructing the Past,” 322.

²⁸³ Magda B. Arnold, *Emotion and Personality: Vol. 1. Psychological Aspects* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960a); *Emotion and Personality: Vol. 2. Physiological Aspects* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960b).

toward anything intuitively appraised as good (beneficial), or away from anything intuitively appraised as bad (harmful).”²⁸⁴ The subsequent appraisal theories in psychology mainly accept the broad features of Arnold’s framework and differ mostly in the varying degrees of emphasis on those elements. The two other prominent and widely cited authors in the literature on emotion are Nico H. Frijda and his *The Emotions* (1986)²⁸⁵ and Richard S. Lazarus’ *Emotion and Adaptation* (1991).²⁸⁶

When it comes to the research in neuroscience, the works of Damasio and LeDoux make conceptual space for the existence of both, basic and complex, types of emotions. From the start of our discussion, we should introduce the distinction Damasio and LeDoux make between an emotion and a feeling. From a neuroscience point of view, emotions are reactions of the body to certain stimuli, thus, emotions are understood as purely physical signals appearing automatically and unconsciously while feelings appear when our brain interprets emotions. Both of the authors are aware that in common language, the terms emotions and feelings are used interchangeably, thus it is difficult to avoid confusion in this regard. LeDoux notes that in the beginning of his research on the emotions in animals: “I treated emotions in terms of essentially non-conscious brain states that connect significant stimuli with response mechanisms, and feelings as conscious experiences arising from these non-conscious brain states...By separating processes that non-consciously detect and respond to significant stimuli from those that create feelings, emotional mechanisms could be studied in animals without having to solve the problem of whether animals feel emotion, while at the same time honoring the importance of feelings in the human mind and brain.”²⁸⁷ Yet, LeDoux changed his perspective and in his current writings he prefers to stick to an everyday meaning of emotions (which in ‘folk psychology’ includes the dimension of feelings) and thus he claims: “Instead of differentiating between emotion and feeling, I stick with the everyday meaning of the terms, using them interchangeably to refer to the mental states that people experience when they face situations in which survival is challenged or enhanced.”²⁸⁸ LeDoux’s proposal is that all organisms can detect and respond to threats, but organisms that can be conscious of their own brain activity can feel fear (his research focuses on fear reactions in rats). Both Damasio and LeDoux also allow the traditional nomenclature of the category of emotion to stay (we will see later in the discussion that it is also challenged), and so they allow broader mental states to fit into this category; thus we can categorize emotions as basic (affects) and complex (awareness of our own feelings that can be caused by cognitive stimuli). LeDoux furthers:

²⁸⁴ De Souza, “Emotion,” quoting Arnold, *Emotion and Personality*, 171. We will encounter Aquinas describing the passions in a similar fashion – a passion is a movement toward or withdrawal from an object according to its sensible goodness or badness. Lombardo notes that Arnold was deeply influenced by Aquinas’s thought. See Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 11. He also indicates that a study on Arnold’s and Aquinas’s connection is offered by Randolph R. Cornelius, “Magda Arnold’s Thomistic Theory of Emotions, the Self-Ideal, and the Moral Dimension of Appraisal,” *Cognition and Emotion* Vol. 20, No. 7 (2006): 976-1000.

²⁸⁵ Nico H. Frijda, *The Emotions. Studies in Emotions & Social Interaction* (Cambridge/Paris: Maison des Sciences de l’Homme and Cambridge University Press, 1986).

²⁸⁶ Richard S. Lazarus, *Emotion and Adaptation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

²⁸⁷ Joseph E. LeDoux, “Feelings What Are They & How Does the Brain Make Them?,” *Daedalus* Vol. 144, No. 1 (2015): 97.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 98.

Emotions resulting from non-conscious motive states emerge in consciousness in a bottom-up fashion, but emotions can also be built from cognitive processes in a top-down fashion without the involvement of motive state ingredients. So-called social emotions are like this (for example, feelings of compassion, pride, and shame). These arise from our assessment of our circumstances. While fear is a prototypical bottom-up emotion, it can also arise from top-down influences. We can think our way into fear and activate a defensive motive state this way. Additionally, we can have intellectual fears, such as the fear of failing in life, of our eventual death, or of alien abduction, that depend on top-down processes rather than simply emerging bottom-up from a motive state as a result of external stimuli.²⁸⁹

Damasio adds to LeDoux's argument and further explains that the emotions are:

part and parcel of the machinery with which they regulate survival...sandwiched between the basic survival kit (regulation of metabolism; simple reflexes; motivations; biology of pain and pleasure) and the devices of high reason, but are still very much a part of the hierarchy of life regulation devices...And as a result of powerful learning mechanisms such as conditioning, emotions of all shades eventually help connect homeostatic regulation and survival 'values' to numerous events and objects in our autobiographical experience. Emotions are inseparable from the idea of reward or punishment, of pleasure or pain, of approach and withdrawal, of personal advantage and disadvantage. Inevitably, emotions are inseparable from the idea of good and evil.²⁹⁰

Damasio also distinguishes three types of emotions: primary, secondary, and background. Primary emotions correspond to the oldest group of basic emotions and they are independent from consciousness. The members of this group are "[f]ear, anger, sadness, disgust, surprise, and happiness have been found to be universal emotions in terms of a facial expression and recognizability."²⁹¹ Secondary or social emotions correspond to more complex stimuli (natural as well as learned) and they include "sympathy, embarrassment, shame, guilt, pride, jealousy, envy, gratitude, admiration, indignation, and contempt"²⁹² as members of this group. They also involve substantial areas of the neocortex.²⁹³ Background emotions refer to the always present awareness of our own body condition and the examples of these are: fatigue, energy, excitement, wellness, sickness, tension, relaxation, surging, dragging, stability, instability, balance, imbalance, harmony, discord.²⁹⁴

We should note that Nussbaum in her discussion seems to be interested in secondary emotions, but without making a clear distinction between them and basic emotions. We should also press here that an acceptance of the distinction between basic and complex emotions is no dogma in philosophy, Ben-Ze'ev, for example, construes emotions as a

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 105.

²⁹⁰ Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens*, 54-55.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 285.

²⁹² Antonio Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza. Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain* (Orlando: Harcourt Inc., 2003), 45.

²⁹³ The neocortex in the human case is involved in more advanced functions, for instance, sensory perception, generation of motor commands, spatial reasoning, conscious thought and language. See Jan H. Lui, David V. Hansen, Arnold R. Kriegstein, "Development and Evolution of the Human Neocortex," *Cell* Vol. 146, No.1 (2011): 18-36.

²⁹⁴ Cf. Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens*, 286.

‘subtle mental mode’ which included cognition, evaluation, motivation, and unintentional feeling. He claims:

A heated dispute in the philosophy and psychology of emotions is whether there are certain emotions that can be regarded as basic. Above all, ‘basic’ means simple, as opposed to complex. Accordingly, any emotion is a simple irreducible emotion, or it can be analyzed into a simple emotion plus x, where x is either another emotion or some nonemotional element. When emotions are considered as a mode of the mental system, they become more complex and a simple reduction of them to a few basic forms is less plausible. Indeed, criteria for simple or basic emotions vary from one theory to another, and such differences cast doubt on the existence of basic emotions.²⁹⁵

Nonetheless, we consider that the works of LeDoux, Damasio and Ekman conducted on facial expressions of emotions, give a sufficient amount of scientific evidence to hold that the distinction between the basic and the complex emotions is real. Nussbaum takes into consideration the works of all three authors and while she is critical of Ekman’s approach,²⁹⁶ she is generally appreciative of the works of LeDoux and Damasio and considers that their scientific findings do not contradict her cognitive theory of emotions.²⁹⁷ When it comes to the works of LeDoux, Nussbaum claims that his views are already cognitive in a sense because the transmission of information is central to it.²⁹⁸ Moreover, for her LeDoux essentially does not study the emotion of fear *per se*, but “Ledoux claims only to have uncovered some phenomena involved in fright behavior, not to have illuminated the subjective experience of emotion of fear, in either rats or humans.”²⁹⁹ Thus, Nussbaum seems to not regard the fright behavior as fear and she claims to do so basing it on the claims of LeDoux himself. What about the physiology of the fright reaction? Nussbaum claims that it does not affect the cognitive view of emotions: “We should certainly not eliminate the intentional account in favor of a physiological account, and we should not at this time include a particular physiological process as a necessary element in a definition of a given emotion type – although we should not rule out the possibility that such a move will in the future be supported by adequate evidence, at least for some simpler emotions, such as fear and surprise.”³⁰⁰

Damasio in his turn is also regarded as an ally of a cognitive theory of emotions. For Nussbaum: “Damasio’s primary concern, in *Descartes’ Error*, is to convince his reader that the emotion/reason distinction is inaccurate and misleading: emotions are forms of intelligent awareness. They are ‘just as cognitive as other percepts,’ and they supply the organism with essential aspects of practical reason.”³⁰¹ And we can find her continuing: “His secondary aim is to show that emotional functioning is connected with particular centers in the brain. (A further claim, that the object of all emotions is the agent’s own

²⁹⁵ Ben-Ze’ev, “Emotion as a Subtle Mental Mode,” 267.

²⁹⁶ One can look back at our discussion on Nussbaum’s views on Ekman’s work in section 2.3 *On Origins of the Emotions: Between Nature and Nurture*, especially footnote 175 in this chapter.

²⁹⁷ Nussbaum discusses the most salient ideas of these two neuroscientists in the *Upheavals*, section IV. *Nonreductionistic Physiological Accounts: Ledoux, Damasio*, 114-119. Here she offers a relatively short discussion on the physiological aspects of emotion from a neuroscience point of view.

²⁹⁸ Cf. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 114.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 115.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 115.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 115-116. Here she quotes Damasio, *Descartes’ Error*, xv.

body, is unconvincingly argued, as I shall mention later.)”³⁰² Why then is Nussbaum not convinced that an object of emotions is one’s own body? For her that is essentially a revival of a James-Lange theory of emotions, but in a less reductionist way (the James-Lange theory claims that bodily activity produces emotions and not the other way around). The body, for Nussbaum, participates in emotion in a sense that the subject is aware that it is he/she who has an emotional experience. “So in that sense,” she claims, “an awareness of self (and therefore, often, one’s body) is a part of the experience of any emotion. It does not follow from this that the emotion’s *object* is the body: the object is the goal or person or thing, whatever it is, to which the subject is attending.”³⁰³

Nussbaum, then, continues to argue that emotions are bodily in the sense that they happen to a waking sentient being, but emotion in itself is not merely a physiological event. Physiological reactions can accompany emotions, but she is hesitant to ascribe a particular set of physiological reactions to particular emotions, at least until neuroscience can provide us with univocal evidence in the human case. The core of emotion for her still remains a *eudaimonistic* (involving me and my goals) judgment of value which can be so strong that it can activate all of our sentient system, but bodily reactions can be accompanying parts of emotion without constituting it. She, moreover, does not consider or make explicit the difference between basic and complex emotions as possibly distinct phenomena.

The achievements of neuroscience are interpreted in a different way by Paul E. Griffiths. Griffiths, contrary to Nussbaum, regards the difference between more simple or basic and complex emotions as a real difference. Moreover, he argues that the phenomena that usually fall under the generic term of ‘emotion’ are so different that it is difficult to see how they can constitute a single category. Griffiths points out that Nussbaum’s theory is a classical example of arguing that emotions are all one kind as she claims that all the emotions are ‘intelligent responses to the perception of value.’³⁰⁴ He acknowledges that Nussbaum is willing to recognize a relatively low level of appraisal triggering the emotions – as she allows for young children and animals to experience true emotions. Griffiths cites Nussbaum claiming that “[w]hat we need, in short, is a multifaceted notion of cognitive interpretation or seeing-as, accompanied by a flexible notion of intentionality that allows us to ascribe to a creature more or less precise, vaguer or more demarcated, ways of intending an object and marking it as salient”³⁰⁵ and credits her for a compelling description of what is required from an adequate account of emotional cognition. Yet he wants to point out that Nussbaum misses the point that levels of emotional appraisal do not differ only among organisms – they differ within a single organism.

From this perspective emotions seem to not be a natural kind and in philosophical reflections on them we should attempt to be equally true to biological facts and our conceptual philosophical requirements.³⁰⁶ Griffiths suggests then that to analyze emotion

³⁰² Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 116.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 119.

³⁰⁴ Cf. Paul E. Griffiths, “Is Emotion a Natural Kind?,” in *Thinking about Feeling: Contemporary Philosophers on Emotions*, ed. Robert C. Solomon (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 244.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 245 quoting Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 129.

³⁰⁶ Griffiths is convinced that “there is no object of scientific knowledge which corresponds to ‘emotion.’” Griffiths, *What Emotions Really Are*, 16. Thus, he fractures the category of emotion into three parts of

as a single category cannot serve the purpose of a scientific enquiry and suggests a useful comparison with the term ‘vitamin:’

Vitamins are not, as was once thought, ‘vital amines’ but a diverse group of chemicals with diverse roles in physiology sharing the feature that humans cannot synthesize them, or can synthesize them, as with Vitamin D, only under advantageous environmental conditions. Their absence leads to ‘deficiency diseases’ with diverse etiologies and diverse prognoses. So the concept of a vitamin can be analyzed, and individual vitamins and even some groups of vitamins are natural kinds, but ‘vitamin’ itself is a superficial descriptive category. It is not a sensible scientific project to investigate the nature of vitamins *in general*. The question ‘What is a vitamin?’ is best answered by describing the main kinds of vitamin and how different they are from one another.³⁰⁷

Thus emotion as a generic term is a superficial descriptive category for him because all the phenomena and experiences that are used in vernacular language, psychology, neuroscience, and philosophy do not constitute a natural kind of category. A natural kind, to explain it briefly, is a relatively fixed category about which we can make scientific claims. “Scientific classifications of particulars into categories,” Griffiths argues, “embody our current understanding of where such projectable clusters of properties are to be found. The species category, for instance, classifies particular organisms into sets that represent reliable clusters of morphological, physiological, and behavioral properties.”³⁰⁸ Thus Griffiths claims that taking into consideration the current state of research on emotions, emotions cannot claim the status of a natural kind category and a thinker does not do justice to the complexity of emotions if he/she attempts to produce a general theory of emotion (as we have seen Nussbaum doing). Why cannot emotions be categorized as a natural kind in line with classical examples, such as biological species and chemical elements? Griffiths suggests an illuminating example:

Suppose, for example, that you are waiting in line outside a nightclub. After twenty minutes, someone unexpectedly pokes you sharply in the small of the back. You spin around, making a threat expression, probably the ‘square-mouthed’ variety, your body adjusts physiologically for violent action, and your attention is entirely on your assailant. If the situation is rapidly defused (you are male and an attractive young woman has tripped against you and is smiling apologetically) then this will be a pure case of affect program anger. On other occasions, however, a person ‘having an emotion’ is responding in a more cognitively complex way to more highly analyzed information. The episode may or may not involve the occurrence of one or more affect program responses. Suppose, for example, that you are locked into a dysfunctional pattern of interaction with your spouse involving continual fault finding and put-downs, this pattern emerging without any intention from the particular patterns of relationship management you both bring to the marriage. The pattern has resisted your occasional attempts to consciously improve your behavior and, as you reflect one day on what appears to be the

“socially sustained pretenses, affect program responses, and higher cognitive states.” Griffiths, *What Emotions Really Are*, 17. All of them are construed as emotional experiences, but what Griffiths wants to argue is that “[t]he affect program states are phylogenetically ancient, informationally encapsulated, reflexive responses which seem to be insensitive to culture. The other emotions are aspects of higher cognition which differ across cultures due to the roles of culture in psychological development. The two kinds of emotion have different phylogenies, different adaptive function, different neuroscience, and different roles in human psychology.” Griffiths, *What Emotions Really Are*, 16.

³⁰⁷ Griffiths, “Is Emotion a Natural Kind?,” 234.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 235.

inevitable degeneration of the relationship, you experience a deep sense of guilt and self-loathing.³⁰⁹

Both of these rather different instances, a sudden anger reaction, falling beautifully into a reaction of an affect program,³¹⁰ and a sense of guilt and self-loathing stemming from coming to terms with the status of your marriage, a helpful example, of a more complex cognitively-laden emotion, are nonetheless regarded as emotions in vernacular language and in various scientific disciplines. Griffiths' argument that emotions are not a natural kind, a unified category, rests precisely on these two examples of an affect program emotions or basic emotions and complex cognitively-laden emotions. Both of these cannot be reduced to each other. He rejects the view that basic emotions are not emotions in a proper sense or they are proto-emotions.³¹¹ Griffiths also concludes that the complex emotions cannot be seen as a species of basic emotions or blends or elaborations of them. Yet he agrees that there is a link between the two and the complex emotions which "may involve basic emotions as parts, depend on basic emotions for their development in the child, and interact with basic emotions in typical ways in real-life situations."³¹² Essentially, thus, Griffiths argues that there are at least two types of known emotions and we should investigate them on these terms without putting them into one generic category as basically the same phenomenon.³¹³ Emotions are, indeed, forms of awareness of our

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 236.

³¹⁰ The term 'affect program' refers to the mentioned branch of evolutionary psychology with Ekman being a leading figure.

³¹¹ Cf. Paul E. Griffiths, "Basic Emotions, Complex Emotions, Machiavellian Emotions," in *Philosophy and the Emotions*, ed. A. Hatzimoysis, Royal Institute of Philosophy No. 52. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 26, 164.

³¹² Griffiths, "Is Emotion a Natural Kind?," 237.

³¹³ We could argue that Griffiths' distinctions are between more natural and less natural phenomena – basic emotions corresponding to the former and complex emotions to the latter categories. In assessing them we should keep that distinction in mind and research them in the terms and scientific approaches suited to each. A basic emotion conceived in terms of affect theory is not cognitive in a strict sense. Complex emotions, Griffiths argues, are not just blends of simultaneous release of basic emotions. Complex emotions seem to occur as responses to complex stimuli and need a more complex cognitive appraisal. Thus, "[s]ituations that elicit sexual jealousy or moral indignation do not differ from each other merely in the proportions of danger, conspecific challenge, noxiousness and loss that they involve." Griffiths, *What Emotions Really Are*, 102. Furthermore, they may endure longer than basic emotions and do not necessarily result in facial expression characteristic to affect theory. We could think of complex emotions as blends of basic emotions if they would plug in an idea that they also include additional cognitive activity. Griffiths explains it in the following way: "The idea that complex emotions are elaborations of basic emotions resulting from the integration of activity in phylogenetically ancient brain structures with activity in the neocortex is currently the most popular proposal to reintegrate the domain of emotion. This is largely because of the work of the neuroscientist Antonio Damasio (1994, 1999). Jesse Prinz has captured the spirit of this approach with the analogy that basic emotions are shots of hard liquor and complex emotions are cocktails in which specific hard liquors are mixed with specific nonalcoholic ingredients (Prinz 2000). The basic emotion is the motivational 'kick' in each complex emotional cocktail." In Griffiths, "Is Emotion a Natural Kind?," 239, he refers us to the Jesse Prinz paper, "Getting to the Heart of Emotions," delivered at the American Philosophical Association annual meeting, New York, 2000. Griffiths, then, suggests a new classification and approach to emotional theory, which itself is received with varying opinions. One thing we can infer from this proposal surely is the fact that the research on the nature of emotions is itself in a transitional period as Damasio's answer to Griffiths' proposal also indicates: "At this point, my preference is to retain the traditional nomenclature, clarify the use of the terms, and wait until further evidence dictates a new classification, my hope being that by maintaining some continuity we will facilitate communication at this transitional stage. I will talk about three levels of emotion – background, primary and secondary. This is revolutionary enough, given that background

environment, but some involve low-level and some high-level appraisal. To describe low-level appraisal as evaluative judgment is simply misleading for Griffiths. From a neuroscience point of view, he argues, the low-level appraisal processes seem not to have access to other information which is represented elsewhere in the brain, but most importantly their goal is “not truth-preserving, but heuristically survival-enhancing.”³¹⁴ Thus, “[i]t does not follow by any reasonable deduction that if I have been poked hard and unexpectedly in the small of my back then I have suffered ‘a demeaning offence to me and mine’ but the automatic appraisal mechanism for anger will reliably draw that conclusion.”³¹⁵

Do Griffiths’ views pose a challenge to Nussbaum’s thought on emotions? It appears that her cognitive theory of emotions does not stand at odds with research outcomes of such neuroscientists as LeDoux and Damasio, thus it is not groundless from a natural sciences point of view. But it lacks some more sophisticated distinctions in approaching the variety of emotions – especially if we acknowledge that a distinction between basic and complex emotions is real. Nussbaum’s theory in essence is preoccupied with complex, cognitively-rich emotions, but she wishes to extend the definition of emotions as cognitive value judgments to all species of emotions, which keeps her theory conceptually bound, but not entirely faithful to a possible nature of basic emotions as more primitive states of awareness.

John Deigh, a professor of philosophy, argues in a similar fashion that each cognitive theory of emotions needs to account for basic emotions, and each affect theory needs to account for a cognitive element in emotions. Thus, if we start to think of emotions there will be two elements we have to include – their intentionality and the fact that humans and animals share them.³¹⁶ Nussbaum in our assessment, is committed to making it clear that emotions are something that we share with non-human animals and there are certain strengths and weaknesses coming from this common heritage. Yet, her works also seem to suggest strongly that human emotions are rather distinct from animals due to the more complex cognitive capacities we possess, due to existence of language, due to the ability to grasp the concept of time and, subsequently, our personal histories and history of our cultures in a broad sense – all of this offers extra dimensions influencing the way human beings emote.³¹⁷ Thus, as mentioned before, she does not make a sharp distinction between primitive/basic emotions and more complex emotions. We would like to press once more that this kind of distinction would be useful in discussing emotions as they seem to appear in human experience.

3.2 EMOTIONS, THE BODY, AND THE BRAIN

This leads us to another aspect of the discussion, namely, the role of the body in an

emotions are not part of the usual roster of emotions (1999, 341).” Griffiths, “Is Emotion a Natural Kind?,” 241. Griffiths here quotes Damasio’s, *The Feeling of What Happens*, 341.

³¹⁴ Griffiths, “Is Emotion a Natural Kind?,” 247.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 247.

³¹⁶ Cf. John Deigh, “Primitive Emotions,” in *Thinking about Feeling: Contemporary Philosophers on Emotions*, ed. Robert C. Solomon (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 9.

³¹⁷ See section 2.3 *On Origins of the Emotions: Between Nature and Nurture* with all its subsections of this chapter and Chapter II, section 3.1 *Radical Evil* with all its subsections.

experience of emotion since basic emotions seem to be accompanied by fixed facial expressions, as well as by certain other physiological elements. Cognitivist accounts, then, must face the question of whether there is a place for the body in the experience of emotion. If, together with Nussbaum, we want to assert that the core, the very essence, of any emotion is value judgment, does this mean that emotions are disembodied in some sense? We have seen Nussbaum arguing that emotions always occur to an embodied person, but for her the concrete physiological expression is not necessary to say that a particular emotion took place or that this expression enters the nature of emotion.

We would like to think of emotions and their possible relation to the body together with Jesse J. Prinz. In his thought Prinz is influenced by British Empiricism and so, not surprisingly, he turns to the James-Lange theory of emotions to construct his own. He does not take the James-Lange approach straightforwardly, but adds some significant alterations:

I believe that emotion is quite literally a form of perception. This is consistent with the view of James, Lange, Damasio, and others who relate emotions to the body. Like them, I defend a somatic theory. At the same time, I think existing somatic theories tend to leave too many questions unanswered. In particular, somatic theories do not explain why emotions seem so meaningful, intelligible, and rational. To rectify this deficit, it is important to show that emotions are not merely perceptions of the body but also perceptions of our relations to the world.³¹⁸

Emotions, then, for him are relatively simple entities, not collections of multiple elements, complex state of mind. Prinz, however, argues that while being simple entities, emotions have complex effects and information-processing tasks – and so he sees his own approach as an attempt to bring the body, mind, and world together.³¹⁹ We could say, then, that Prinz argues that emotions are somatic as well as semantic. We have seen that Nussbaum firmly endorses the position that emotions are semantic. We are particularly interested in the somatic role Prinz ascribes to emotions and in the possibility of finding a semantic meaning even in the knowledge of our bodies.³²⁰

³¹⁸ Jesse J. Prinz, *Gut Reactions. A Perceptual Theory of Emotions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 20.

³¹⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 20.

³²⁰ Prinz turns to neuroscience to argue that there is anatomical evidence that “emotions can be elicited via pathways from early visual structures, such as the pulvinar and superior colliculus, to the amygdala, which instructs other structures to perturb the body (LeDoux 1996; Morris, Öhman, and Dolan 1999). These pathways trigger an emotional bodily response without the mediation of any kind of judgment.” In this instance he refers us once again to the widely used book of LeDoux, *The Emotional Brain* and an article of J. S. Morris, A. Öhman, and R. J. Dolan, “A Subcortical Pathway to the Right Amygdala Mediating ‘Unseen’ Fear,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* 96 (1999): 1680-1685. A professor of philosophy Jenefer Robinson suggests an additional perspective of the two pathways in the brain via which the emotional stimulus is processed. She summarizes the core of LeDoux’s findings in the following way: “LeDoux concludes that he has discovered two different pathways for processing the same sound. On the one hand, there is a ‘quick and dirty processing system,’ which responds very fast, warns the organism that something dangerous may be around without identifying it very carefully, and gets the organism to respond appropriately to whatever it is. And on the other hand, there is a slower, more discriminating processing system, which operates through the cortex and figures out whether the thalamo-amygdala’s ‘affective appraisal’ is appropriate or not (LeDoux 1989, 1996).” Jenefer Robinson, “Emotion. Biological Fact or Social Construction?,” in *Thinking about Feeling: Contemporary Philosophers on Emotions*, ed. Robert C.

What Prinz argues in particular is that emotions can appear without an appraisal judgment. And he, in fact, is particularly critical of strict cognitivist theories like Nussbaum's. Prinz notes Nussbaum's suggestion that emotions can appear without any somatic component and thus "[t]he cognitive components bound to our emotions are something above and beyond the bodily changes or inner states that register bodily changes."³²¹ The problem with this kind of approach is that it holds that the cognitive appraisals bound to our emotions are disembodied. Furthermore, he considers Nussbaum's theory to be too demanding as it defines emotions as overly sophisticated cognitions.³²² Unlike Griffiths, Prinz does not credit Nussbaum for a sound multilevel appraisal account and considers her theory to center on metacognition – "[s]he says that emotions are judgments that our evaluative judgments are justified"³²³ (thus emotions, as Nussbaum construes them, are judgments about our judgments, Prinz thinks). He furthers that there is scientific evidence³²⁴ that young children up to the age of three or four and animals do not have a capacity for metacognition; thus Nussbaum's theory should be amended. We should take Prinz's interpretation that Nussbaum's theory of emotions is metacognitive cautiously – Nussbaum considers cognition in terms of awareness of our environment and not in terms of complex computing, moreover, she allows non-linguistic forms of emotional prepositions. Nonetheless, Prinz's insistence that cognitive appraisal theories, Nussbaum's including, seem to separate bodily and cognitive dimensions in a too sharp way seems a rightful critique.

Prinz turns to the research in evolutionary psychology and argues that "[m]ere change in facial musculature seems sufficient for an emotional response, even when we do not realize we are making emotional expressions."³²⁵ In this instance, we may remember Nussbaum's question inquiring into the essence of the emotion of grief – and asking

Solomon (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 35-36. LeDoux himself proposes thinking of emotions and cognition as "separate but interacting mental functions mediated by separate but interacting brain functions." LeDoux, *The Emotional Brain*, 69. In many aspects Robinson and Prinz have a very similar approach to emotions – they are primarily affective responses. Robinson's own proposal is the following: "My suggestion is that there is a set of inbuilt affective appraisal mechanisms, which in more primitive species and in neonates are automatically attuned to particular stimuli, but which, as human beings learn and develop, can also take as input more complex stimuli, including complex 'judgments' or thoughts." Robinson, "Emotion. Biological Fact or Social Construction?," 41. Thus in her conceptions emotions are automatically induced physiological changes, which give rise to action tendencies and then are guided by cognitive monitoring – she treats emotion essentially as a *process*. See Jenefer Robinson, *Deeper than Reason: Emotion and its Role in Literature, Music, and Art* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2005). In Prinz's conception, an emotion is a rather simple entity that does not entail a plurality of parts. In any case, even though both, Prinz and Robinson, do not wish to include phenomena that seem to elicit emotions in the content of it, both accounts are useful in demonstrating that the link between emotions and bodily responses is no accident.

³²¹ Prinz, *Gut Reactions*, 25.

³²² Cf. *Ibid.*, 36.

³²³ *Ibid.*, 36.

³²⁴ Here Prinz alludes to an article by Heinz Wimmer and Josef Perner, "Beliefs about Beliefs: Representation and Constraining Function of Wrong Beliefs in Young Children's Understanding of Deception," *Cognition* Vol. 13, No. 1 (1983): 103-128.

³²⁵ Jesse J. Prinz, "Embodied Emotions," in *Thinking about Feeling: Contemporary Philosophers on Emotions*, ed. Robert C. Solomon (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 46. He bases his claim on his interpretation of the psychology research by Robert B. Zajonc, Sheila T. Murphy, and Marita Inglehart, "Feeling and Facial Efference: Implications of the Vascular Theory of Emotion," *Psychological Review* Vol. 96, No. 3 (1989): 395-416.

whether grief is trembling of hands of the person or the sharp acknowledgment of the fact that a beloved person is irreversibly gone.³²⁶ Prinz turns the question around and wonders what is left of an emotion without a bodily reaction. Together with William James he asks: “What kind of an emotion of fear would be left, if the feelings neither of quickened heartbeats nor of shallow breathing, neither of trembling lips nor of weakened limbs, neither of gooseflesh nor of visceral stirrings, were present, it is quite impossible to think.”³²⁷ And if one mentally abstracts the bodily features of emotions – what is really left of them?

A question that deserves real attention and a delicate analysis is answered by Prinz in a manner inspired by empiricist philosophy which makes Deigh doubt whether these kinds of theories can truly account for intentionality of emotion. Thus, he claims “I think the somatic approach can subsume anything that deserves to be called an emotion.”³²⁸ This means that he firmly rejects the idea that some emotions do not involve a bodily change. Among these examples some thinkers suggest guilt which seems to not have a universal and strictly ascribed physiological state or emotions that endure for a long time, as in the case of thinking of a life-long love.³²⁹ Something that is ought to be classified as an emotion has to always involve a bodily change. In this sense Prinz asserts that the category of emotion is a more unified category than some thinkers would want to admit (for example, Griffiths). And so Prinz argues that “[l]ong-standing emotions deserve to be called emotions only because they dispose us to enter into patterned bodily responses”³³⁰ and he furthers, “I would defy the critic of James and Lange to identify a single emotion that lacks a bodily mark, at least dispositionally.”³³¹ Emotions should not be intellectualized, they are, indeed, a bodily event (though, one does not have to claim rigorously that each emotion has a distinctive physiology).

To be precise on exactly what kind of perceptions of bodily changes qualify as emotion (some bodily changes such as shivers from cold and fatigue would not be regarded as emotions), Prinz has to sharpen his perspective. Thus, he argues that particular kinds of mental states can classify as vehicles of emotions – specifically, the bodily states that are perceived as emotions are elicited by certain circumstances. Prinz inspired by Lazarus argues that emotions arise when an organism faces core relational themes, precisely, “organism/environment relations that bear on well-being.”³³² His redefined James-Lange theory, then, looks like this:

Core relational themes include dangers, losses, threats, achievements, status, demotions, and transgressions. In each case, there is an object, situation, or event that bears some relation to

³²⁶ We can recall the quotation we already met in section 2.2.5 *The Non-Cognitive Elements of Emotions*, of this chapter: “If my hands and feet were cold or warm, sweaty or dry, again this would be of no necessary criterial value, given the great variability of the relevant physiological connections.” Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 58.

³²⁷ Prinz, “Embodied Emotions,” 46. Here he quotes William James, *What Is an Emotion?* (1884). Reprinted in *What Is an Emotion? Classical Readings in Philosophical Psychology*, eds. Cheshire Calhoun and Robert C. Solomon (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 193.

³²⁸ Prinz, “Embodied Emotions,” 49.

³²⁹ Robert C. Solomon in *The Passions* discusses the long-standing emotions in these terms.

³³⁰ Prinz, “Embodied Emotions,” 50.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, 50.

³³² *Ibid.*, 53.

the organism. As a first stab, we can invite James and Lange to say that emotions are perceptions of those bodily states that are characteristically caused when an organism enters a relation that falls under a core relational theme.³³³

Thus emotions in cognitivist theories are similarly seen as bodily events which occur when triggered by a specific situation – that is – emotions have objects. Dissimilarly to cognitivist theories, Prinz does not argue that this object is apprehended cognitively; it is understood in terms of a classical affect theory as a trigger that elicits an affect file (to put it in other words, emotions in affect theory are pre-programmed reactions to certain triggers, but to apprehend that kind of object-trigger we do not need any explicit cognitive appraisal). How then does Prinz suggest we regard the intentionality of emotions? We have just seen Prinz claiming that emotions, indeed, have objects; that means, they are intentional. According to him emotions are intentional in two senses – they have general and particular objects. Thus, “[a]ll fears concern dangers (the formal object), and each particular episode of fear concerns a particular danger, such as an assailant, a great height, a loud noise, a dental visit, an upcoming exam, and so on (particular objects).”³³⁴ Intentionality conceived in cognitive terms, an ability to conceive an object of an emotion as concrete representation makes emotions something we can evaluate rationally and so ethically. But if we perceive them as intentional awareness of our own bodies (and cognitivist theories would find this superfluous) – this kind of intentionality just indicates that a body is in that concrete state. Thus, from this perspective a James-Lange theory is seen as inadequate to house the intentionality of emotions as awareness, not only of our own bodies, but as an assessment of an object outside us. Prinz claims that even Damasio agrees with this objection and he furthers:

Even Damasio gives in on this point. He says the James-Lange theory places inadequate emphasis on the role that evaluation plays in the induction of emotions (1999, 130). To make up for this shortcoming, he recommends that we identify emotions with sensations of bodily changes coupled with a mental evaluative process (139). This process can involve innate perceptual triggers in the case of the primitive (or ‘primary’) emotions exhibited by animals and children, but it will involve more complex cognitive processes mediated by the frontal cortex in the more advanced (or ‘secondary’) emotions of human adults.³³⁵

As we have seen from Griffiths’ argumentation both he and Damasio, suggest acknowledging existence and making distinctions between basic and secondary and complex emotions. Moreover, both types of emotions should be regarded as truly being emotions – and Prinz seems to focus on the first group of basic emotions wishing to fit the more complex emotions into characteristics of phenomena that are close, yet distinct from them. Prinz sees his theory as ‘embodied appraisal theory.’ Appraisal here should be understood “not as an evaluative judgment, but as any representation of an organism-environment relation that bears on well-being.”³³⁶ An evaluative judgment can be an

³³³ *Ibid.*, 53.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*, 54.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 55. Here Prinz refers us to arguments found in Antonio R. Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens*, 130, 139.

³³⁶ Prinz, “Embodied Emotions,” 57. Prinz argues that emotions can be defined by their expressions and by their eliciting circumstances. He wants to demonstrate that intentionality can be conceived not only in

appraisal, but Prinz argues that it is not the sole phenomenon that can be classified in this category:

If a nonjudgmental state represents an organism-environment relation that bears on well-being, it too will count as an appraisal on this definition. My suggestion is that certain bodily perceptions have exactly this property. They represent roughly the same thing that explicit evaluative judgments represent, but they do it by figuring into the right causal relations, not by deploying concepts or providing descriptions. Our perceptions of the body tell us about our organs and limbs, but they also carry information about how we are faring.³³⁷

Thus, Prinz essentially argues for giving the body an essential role in theories of emotions. This move, he argues, will not make emotions less valuable appraisals – they will inform us about our relation to the world, but their vehicle will be not a thought, not a cognitive judgment, but the judgment of our bodies. And so he concludes that “[i]n developing a theory of emotion, we should not feel compelled to supplement embodied states with meaningful thoughts; we should instead put meaning into our bodies and let perceptions of the heart reveal our situation in the world.”³³⁸

Prinz suggests an interesting and illuminating analysis of our emotions, especially in the way he regards the knowledge of the body as valuable. His account may have problems accommodating complex emotions, yet we think that he raises a very important objection to Nussbaum’s views – that in the experience of emotions, the body is more important than she wants to admit. As Jenefer Robinson plausibly argues: “In other words, a judgment or cognitive state all by itself can never produce an emotional state; it is physiological change

straightforward classical ways. Prinz argues that building on prevailing theories of mental representation, we can claim that “a mental state gets its intentional content in virtue of being reliably caused (or having the function of being reliably caused) by something (Dretske 1981, 1988; Fodor 1990).” Prinz, “Embodied Emotions,” 55. Here he uses the work of an American philosopher noted for work in epistemology and philosophy of mind, Fred Dretske, *Knowledge and the Flow of Information* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981), and the work of an American philosopher and cognitivist scientist Jerry Alan Fodor, “A Theory of Content, I and II,” in *A Theory of Content and Other Essays* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990). Prinz argues for considering his suggestion in light of the fact that there, indeed, might be causal relations that grant content without entering it. Emotions as perceptions of bodily changes, then, would be reliably caused by core relational themes. Prinz suggests an elicitation files model: “We can think of all of these body-change elicitors as belonging to a mental file – an elicitation file. That file may start out with a handful of triggers and expand over a life span. As we learn of new dangers, we may add new entries to the elicitation file. Elicitation files can even come to include evaluative judgments of the kind emphasized by defenders of appraisal theories. Each addition to an elicitation file will be sufficient for triggering the relevant bodily response, though getting admitted to the elicitation file in the first place will depend on similarity to or association with triggers that have already been attained. Consequently, all the representations that trigger the bodily response will do so in virtue of being recognized as dangerous, either explicitly or implicitly by similarity to previously established elicitors.” Prinz, “Embodied Emotions,” 55. This means, that if bodily perceptions, which according to him are emotions, are caused by reliable causation they have formal objects and so they are intentional in a broad sense. When it comes to particular objects of emotions, Prinz suggests looking at them from this perspective – all emotion theories can agree that bodily changes occur *in virtue* of a particular perception or a thought. What he attempts to prove, trying to illuminate the mechanism through an example of fear, is that “[t]he idea would be that a representation of heights gets coactivated with a somatic perception and linked to it in such a way that the former causes the latter to occur, and the latter wanes when the former becomes inactive.” Prinz, “Embodied Emotions,” 55. That means that Prinz argues that a cognitive appraisal can cause emotions as bodily perceptions without entering into their content.

³³⁷ Prinz, “Embodied Emotions,” 55.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 58.

that puts the emotionality into emotion.”³³⁹

3.3 EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS

So far we have encountered accounts that may interpret the content of emotion, its eliciting factors in different ways and so ascribe different roles to physiology and cognition, but they all seem to argue that emotions are a form of awareness around us. Now we would like to turn to the question of how we in fact become aware of emotion and thus become disposed to the knowledge it offers. We thus would like to discuss the feeling dimension of emotional experience. Peter Goldie argues for something we have encountered in the aforementioned accounts (be it an argument that emotions are appraisals of the significance of the environment to an organism, a kind of thinking we found in Griffiths and Prinz or theories that want to ascribe an explicit ethical dimension to them, as we found in Nussbaum), namely, that emotions are a ‘good thing.’³⁴⁰

While recognizing that philosophers may praise emotions, he also adds that cognitivist theories have systematically neglected the dimension of feelings in the emotions. Goldie points to Nussbaum’s work as a paradigmatic example of this. He argues: “So far as concerns bodily feelings, these, she says, are ‘without rich intentionality or cognitive content,’ or even ‘nonintentional;’ and as there is variability in feelings across people and cultures, and as we should admit the possibility of nonconscious emotions, bodily feelings cannot be part of an emotion’s identity conditions.”³⁴¹ Goldie disagrees with this assessment and starts his defense of the feeling dimension in emotion by defining them as an experience “of the condition of one’s body, such as the feeling of the hairs going up on the back of one’s neck; and feelings directed towards the object of one’s emotion, such as feelings of fear directed towards the strange man approaching one in the dark alley.”³⁴² He further argues that cognitivist theories may neglect feelings on the common misconception of the nature of them: “The misconception is that feelings are *brute*: they can tell us nothing about the world and how to act in the world, and this is because feelings are not *about* anything (or if they are about anything, they are only about the condition of one’s body). Moreover, feelings are inessential and peripheral to an account of what emotions are, although, of course, one might admit that they do sometimes occur.”³⁴³

Now before we turn to explore the feelings dimension of emotions we should see what Goldie holds emotions to be. Emotions are our engagement in the world.³⁴⁴ He, like Nussbaum, constructs emotions as intentional – “the thoughts and feelings in an emotional experience are (at least typically) directed towards objects in the world, beyond the bounds

³³⁹ Robinson, “Emotion. Biological Fact or Social Construction?,” 30.

³⁴⁰ Cf. Peter Goldie, “Emotion, Feeling, and the Knowledge of the World,” in *Thinking about Feeling. Contemporary Philosophers on Emotions*, ed. Robert C. Solomon (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 91.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 103 note 2.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 91.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 92.

³⁴⁴ Cf. Peter Goldie, *The Emotions. A Philosophical Exploration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 48.

of our bodies.”³⁴⁵ In addition, emotions “can be made intelligible by reference to the thoughts which are involved in it.”³⁴⁶ They are also involved in shaping and determining what we value. And stemming from this point, Goldie further argues, similarly to Nussbaum, that emotions can also reveal to us what we value “and what we value might not be epistemically accessible to us if we did not have such responses (cf. Stocker 1996).”³⁴⁷ Emotions, as is the case in Nussbaum’s thought, are seen as intentional phenomena situating us in the world and helping us to access the things we value ourselves.

Where does Goldie situate the dimension of feeling in the intentional and discriminating phenomenon of emotions? Goldie claims that “[f]eelings are an intimate and familiar part of emotional experience; without feelings, emotions would not be what they are.”³⁴⁸ Yet, he is well aware that feelings are a difficult topic to discuss – it is hard to describe them and, moreover, to capture the right place for them in an emotional experience. He recognizes a certain type of dynamics in cognitive theories, namely, to leave feelings out when defining the nature of emotions and, then, to hope to describe them as a separate dimension of emotional experience. He calls this an ‘add on’ strategy and argues that in this way we cannot capture what emotion truly is:

[T]o put feelings to one side for as long as possible, in the hope of giving as full an account of emotion as can be given without feelings, and in the hope of adequately explaining, or making sense of, action out of emotion just in terms of feelingless beliefs and desires, perhaps characterized impersonally. Then, according to this view, feelings should emerge as a separate component to round off the account – an add-on – comprising perhaps just awareness of the physiological changes involved in emotion, and quite distinct from any intentional elements.³⁴⁹

This displaces the role and importance of feelings in emotional experience. What Goldie attempts to do, then, is to take notions, familiar with cognitivist theories of emotions – a personal point of view and intentionality – and seat them at the center of emotional experience; and for him, seriously considering feelings in emotions seems an adequate way to do it. Goldie, in his account, separates feelings into two kinds – bodily feelings (perceptions of our own bodies, the feeling of one’s own heart racing, for example) and feelings towards (or we would say intentional feelings such as fear towards a barking dog). But where he departs from Nussbaum is in the claim that both are part of what emotion is. Further to this, Goldie warns us not to look at feelings atomistically. Emotional experience is always a holistic experience. While dissecting and discussing parts is something that is unavoidable and necessary in philosophy, one should not lose sight of the holistic aspect in the overall approach to emotion and “seeing feelings as embedded in an emotion’s narrative, as part of the person’s life.”³⁵⁰

When it comes to bodily feelings, Goldie claims that they supply us with

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 48.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 48.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 48-49. Here Goldie refers us to the philosophical exploration of emotion by Michael Stocker and Elizabeth Hegeman, *Valuing Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

³⁴⁸ Goldie, *The Emotions*, 50.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 50.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 51.

introspective knowledge of our bodily condition. Within this he situates facial expressions, hormonal changes, changes in the autonomic nervous system. We should note that Goldie is concerned with feelings of bodily change, the phenomenological aspect of it, not with the bodily change in itself as a fact that can be scientifically and impartially observed and measured.³⁵¹ Goldie agrees with the spirit of William James' approach and argues that emotion should not be understood as bodily change (a separation we encountered in claims of Damasio, LeDoux, and Prinz), but as a feeling of that change.³⁵² The changes must be felt (or experienced), after all. It is difficult to imagine someone being angry without *feeling* angry – “[w]ithout the ‘emotional flush and thrill’ (203), all you have is pure cognition.”³⁵³

Yet Goldie also wishes to alter James' approach to feeling – by arguing that a feeling does not always have to be conscious and that a feeling does not always have to be directed to our own bodies. He thus wants to keep true to James's argumentation, but to make conceptual space for a feeling *towards* and so he introduces a term of ‘borrowed intentionality.’ Goldie wishes to explain this, not so self-evident term, by starting with James' position:

An object falls on a sense-organ and is apperceived by the appropriate cortical centre; or else the latter, excited in some other way, gives rise to an idea of the same object. Quick as a flash, the reflex currents pass down through their pre-ordained channels, alter the condition of muscle, skin and viscus; and these alterations, apperceived like the original object, in as many specific portions of the cortex, combine with it in consciousness and transform it from an object-simply- apprehended into an object-emotionally-felt.³⁵⁴

³⁵¹ We can find Goldie explicating this choice of argumentation as being embedded in the daily experience of emotions and wanting to explain and contribute to an understanding of those: “Scientific investigation of the emotions, from a purely impersonal perspective, deploying purely impersonal theoretical concepts, inevitably – and quite appropriately from this perspective – makes no *use* of phenomenal concepts, which are available only from the personal perspective, whereas our everyday thought and talk is *essentially* personal and makes *essential* use of phenomenal concepts. In one sense, then, the impersonal stance of the sciences leaves nothing out; in another sense, it leaves much out, for it leaves out our ordinary, everyday way of thinking of our emotional experiences from the personal perspective.” Goldie, “Emotion, Feeling, and the Knowledge of the World,” 95-96.

³⁵² Goldie quotes the passage from James' article and argues that it captures something essential about emotions: “Without the bodily states following on the perception, the latter would be purely cognitive in form, pale, colourless, destitute of emotional warmth. We might see the bear, and judge it best to run, receive the insult and deem it right to strike, but we could not actually feel afraid or angry.” Goldie, *The Emotions*, 53 quoting James, “What is an Emotion,” 190. And “What kind of emotion of fear would be left, if the feelings neither of quickened heart-beats nor of shallow breathing, neither of trembling lips nor of weakened limbs, neither of goose-flesh nor of visceral stirrings, were present, it is quite impossible to think. Can one fancy the state of rage and picture no ebullition of it in the chest, no flushing of the face, no dilation of the nostrils, no clenching of the teeth, no impulse to vigorous action, but in their stead limp muscles, calm breathing, and a placid face? The present writer, for one, certainly cannot. The rage is as completely evaporated as the sensations of its so-called manifestations, and the only thing that can possibly be supposed to take its place is some cold-blooded and dispassionate judicial sentence, confined entirely to the intellectual realm, to the effect that a certain person or persons merit chastisement for their sins. In like manner of grief: what would it be without its tears, its suffocation of the heart, its pang in the breast-bone? A feelingless cognition that certain circumstances are deplorable, and nothing more. Every passion in turn tells the same story. A purely disembodied human emotion is a nonentity.” Goldie, *The Emotions*, 53 quoting James, “What is an Emotion,” 194..

³⁵³ Goldie, *The Emotions*, 53. Here he quotes James, “What is an Emotion,” 203.

³⁵⁴ Goldie, *The Emotions*, 54-55. Here he quotes James, “What is an Emotion,” 203.

What Goldie infers from this is an idea that while the feeling of emotion is a bodily experience, what makes it that particular feeling (and not just a feeling in general) is its combining with an object in the consciousness. James, for instance, describes grief in, we could say poetic images, of ‘suffocation of the heart’ and its ‘pang in the breast-bone.’³⁵⁵ What Goldie attempts to demonstrate is a conviction that “when we talk, taking James’s own example, of a grieving person feeling a pang in the breastbone, we want to say that the pang is a pang for the one who is being grieved over; although it is undoubtedly a feeling of something bodily, and can be pointed to as being in the chestbone, what makes it a pang of grief, rather than any old pang in the breastbone, is surely that it has been, as James says, ‘combined in consciousness’ with the object of the emotion.”³⁵⁶ Thus, at this point he comes back to the conception of emotion as a holistic experience: “[O]ur entire mind and body is engaged in the emotional experience, and all the feelings are ‘united in consciousness’ in being directed towards its object: united ‘body and soul,’ ‘heart and mind.’ For example, sexual desire is felt with the whole being – body and soul – for the one we desire. And, likewise, our whole being aches in grief for the one we have lost.”³⁵⁷ Furthermore, Goldie wants to show that the idea of borrowed intentionality should not be easily conceived only as a matter of phenomenology. It may be only a matter of philosophical dogma to insist that feelings are one or the other – either they lack intentionality altogether or they are intentional without a necessity for bodily change – they seem to be capable of accommodating both.

A feeling towards for Goldie is an intentional content of emotion which is directed towards the world. While bodily feelings can have, as we have seen, borrowed intentionality, a feeling towards has a direct intentional character: “No degree of bodily feeling can alone reveal to you what your emotion is about; the association of ideas is, initially, from the feeling towards to the bodily feeling, and thus, if you do not know what your thoughts and feelings are directed towards, you cannot find out merely through introspection of your bodily feelings.”³⁵⁸ Goldie’s concept of feeling towards in its essence is similar to what Nussbaum calls an emotion, but it is defined not as a form of thought only, but as a form of thinking with a feeling. Feelings towards are part of one’s consciousness of the world that surrounds him/her, but similar to Nussbaum’s thought, they do not need to exhibit reflective self-consciousness.³⁵⁹ Feelings, however, cannot be identified with beliefs and desires. Goldie further argues that: “In feeling towards, the imagination tends to be much more intractable than in thinking of; that is to say, the imagination tends to be less subject to the will – it tends actively to ‘run away with you.’ And it is, in part, because of this feature that the emotions are *passions*: your thoughts and feelings are not always as much under your control as you would want them to be.”³⁶⁰ What he essentially wants to argue, then, is that a feeling towards (which is an intentional thinking with feeling) is an experience which is a qualitatively new experience from just thinking of. We may be passive in the process of feeling towards, we may see that it is not

³⁵⁵ Cf. Goldie, *The Emotions*, 54.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 55.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 55.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 58.

³⁵⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 64.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 58.

as easily and cognitively penetrable as belief (for Goldie this is also something we can infer from our daily emotional experiences), but feeling towards alters the content of knowing something, it is distinct from just thinking of that object:

Coming to think of it in this new way is not to be understood as consisting of thinking of it in the old way, plus some added-on phenomenal ingredient – feeling, perhaps; rather, the whole way of experiencing, or being conscious of, the world is new (cf. Budd 1995: 153, who makes this point in another context). The difference between thinking of X as Y without feeling and thinking of X as Y with feeling will not just comprise a different attitude towards the *same* content – a thinking which earlier was without feeling and now is with feeling. The difference also lies *in* the content, although it might be that this difference cannot be captured in words.³⁶¹

Goldie thus wants to argue that feelings are part of emotional experience and we cannot attempt to try to describe emotions only basing it on some aspect of their nature (be it intentionality, cognition, bodily change) and then adding feeling. For him, saying that feeling is a part of emotions is a way to capture a personal point of view in them. We have seen that when talking about emotional feelings Goldie divides them into bodily feelings and feelings towards, something we may say is faithful to the distinction of basic-complex emotions. While discussing the bodily feelings he allows them to lack intentionality in some cases, but they can also have a borrowed intentionality – a pang of grief in my chest is, nonetheless, a pang *for* a person I lost. The intentional feelings towards are in many regards similar to Nussbaum’s concept of emotions. Goldie in similar fashion argues that feelings towards do not necessarily have to have distinct physiological expression or phenomenology, but they are, nonetheless, essential parts of emotional experience because feeling is something that makes emotion be emotion, after all. We find Goldie’s insights about the place of feelings in emotional experience yet another valuable, critical point to Nussbaum’s conception of emotions. Feeling, from a phenomenological point of view, seems to be part of the phenomenon of emotion, something that, indeed, is essential to its nature and not only a by-product of it.

Robert C. Solomon who was at the genesis of cognitivist theory of emotions in philosophy and whose thought is a focal point of many of the authors we have discussed here – either as being inspired by his thought or arguing vigorously against it – also considers feelings as important to emotional experience. Owing to his interest in existential philosophy, Solomon during his academic career was driven to challenge the primitivist conceptions of emotions (as he indicates himself, at the beginning of his career, emotions were seen as physiological, then as neurological syndromes conjoined with feelings).³⁶² According to Solomon emotions “are a kind of judgment – or rather, a complex of interlocking judgments, desires, and intentions.”³⁶³ Emotions, for him, are thus intelligent engagements with the world. They are intentional and so they are always about the world but in a keen and intense way. To sum his position up: “Emotions are not just about (or

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 59-60.

³⁶² Cf. Robert C. Solomon, “Emotions, Thought, and Feelings. Emotions as Engagement in the World,” in *Thinking about Feeling: Contemporary Philosophers on Emotions*, ed. Robert C. Solomon (New York: Oxford University Press), 76.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, 76.

‘directed to’) the world but actively entangled in it. So I now want to improve my analysis by making this point central, that emotions are subjective engagements in the world. I still favor the use of ‘judgment’ to make this point, but I now want to stress even more than I have before the idea that a judgment is not a detached intellectual act but a way of cognitively grappling with the world.”³⁶⁴

Solomon admits that in his earlier work *Passions* (1993) he was dismissive about the ‘feeling theory.’³⁶⁵ Thus, near to the end of his life Solomon came to understand that feelings might not be secondary to a cognitivist theory of emotions. Bodily experiences and manifestations, he claims “are not mere incidentals, and understanding them will provide a concrete and phenomenologically rich account of emotional feelings in place of the fuzzy and ultimately content-free notion of ‘affect.’”³⁶⁶ A point is similar to the one made by Goldie and not accidentally so – Solomon came to appreciate a fundamental, as opposed to, an accidental role of feelings in emotions also by acknowledging Goldie’s insightful critique of the cognitivist theories of emotions.³⁶⁷ What Solomon wants to argue then is that cognitivist theories do have a tendency to leave out the feeling dimension, but he also asserts that cognition, if properly construed can include this dimension. What does Solomon consider feelings to be? This dimension of emotions’ experience, for him, includes the movements of the autonomous nervous system (quickened pulse, galvanic skin response, bodily fluids release, etc.), facial expressions and bodily postures, arousal, action readiness – all of these seem to have phenomenological manifestations.³⁶⁸ And these things that make up for feeling can and should be included as part of the experience of emotion, and so Solomon suggests seeing them as judgments of the body. Thus, body, as in Goldie’s account, adds to our knowledge of the world.

In addition, Solomon, then, similarly to Nussbaum, construes judgment of emotion as both capable of processing propositional (linguistic) and non-propositional information. The latter for Nussbaum is used to include non-human animals and human infants into her account as beings capable of genuine emotions. It also enables her to make aesthetic experiences, such as dance and music, able to give non-propositional attitudes that can be received by our emotions. What Solomon does with the feeling dimension of emotional experience is something similar, but he allows our body to make the judgments that are also engagements in the world and by this enable the body to reveal a kind of knowledge to us:

Thus the judgments that I claim are constitutive of emotion may be nonpropositional and bodily as well as propositional and articulate. They manifest themselves as feelings. They may become reflective and self-conscious. What is cognition? I would still insist that it is basically judgment, both reflective and prereflective, both knowing how (as skills and practices) and knowing that (as propositional knowledge). A cognitive theory of emotion thus embodies what is often referred to as ‘affect’ and ‘feeling’ without rendering these unanalyzable. They may not be analyzable in the mode of propositional analysis, but neither are they simply manifestations of the biological substratum, as James and Griffiths suggest. There are feelings,

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 77.

³⁶⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 84.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 85.

³⁶⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 84.

³⁶⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 86.

‘affects’ if you like, critical to emotion, but they are not distinct from cognition or judgment and they are not mere ‘read-outs’ of processes going on in the body. They are judgments of the body, and this is the ‘missing’ element in the cognitive theory of emotions. They are profound manifestations of our many ways of emotionally engaging with the world.³⁶⁹

It seems that trying to reconcile a cognitive judgment and a feeling judgment in emotional experience might be a fruitful way to think about emotions. Feelings as judgments of the body are not conceived as brute and non-discriminating, but as adding to our knowledge about the world around us (and not only of our own bodies). This might be a good way to think of emotions in accounts that reflect on the human meaning of emotion as opposed to those accounts that focus only on something that can be defined as short-term neurological arousal. Emotion from a natural sciences point of view is also that, but when this ‘short term neurological arousal’ happens to us in our daily lives, it may also result in rather serious consequences and it is this aspect of emotional experiences that we are interested in.

3.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

We have encountered some critical comments that can apply to Nussbaum’s views given by her fellow philosophers. If we think of their comments in light of Nussbaum’s work we can conclude that her cognitive theory of emotions lacks a clear distinction and accounting for the existence and differences between basic and complex emotions. Nussbaum also seems to disregard a clear link between our emotions and our bodies. She is also rather dismissive of the element of feeling in emotional experience. Nussbaum’s own thesis would benefit from acknowledging that she focuses on complex emotions and especially on their cognitive element. However, that would still leave the area of feelings neglected. We should also note that bodily expression of emotion seems not to be secondary to emotion, as Nussbaum would like to portray it. Many authors would agree that in the case of complex emotion it would be difficult to speak of concrete physiological and phenomenological expressions of emotion, that may vary, but, nonetheless, the bodily change and the experience of it is what seems to make an emotion what it is.

We have attempted to present suggestions of what emotions might be and have considered how these suggestions propose a deeper understanding of the nature of emotion and their possible influences on our moral lives. Emotions, broadly speaking, seem to be a form of engagement with the world – they are important for our survival, social relations, and self-image. Complex emotions, furthermore, seem to involve a considerable amount of cognitive activity and, thus, they seem to be intelligent responses to the happenings around us. If emotions can be considered as having a kind of evaluative intelligence they should be considered seriously by ethical disciplines. Furthermore, if emotions are capable of processing information and present a deep personal grasp of the situation or as Goldie puts it – thinking with feeling as a new qualitatively distinct way of knowing an object, emotions should be taken into account in a moral education that wants to be effective.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 88.

³⁷⁰ In Chapter III, we will encounter a resonating idea in Aquinas’s thought – through the passion of love we add an extra qualitative dimension of knowing a particular object. See sections 3.1.1.2 *Is Sense Love a*

Distinct Passion? and 4.1 *The Influence of the Passions on Reason and the Will and a Possibility of Affective Knowledge in Aquinas's Thought* of that chapter.

CHAPTER II. MARTHA C. NUSSBAUM ON COMPASSION

1. INTRODUCTION

After inquiring into Nussbaum's theory of emotions we can turn to the presentation of a case study of compassion. This endeavor will enable us to grasp how, according to Nussbaum, the emotions can function concretely in the ethical realm. Moreover, compassion for Nussbaum is the most basic moral emotion and the basis of her own moral psychology and ethical vision.¹ Our endeavor in the upcoming pages will be similar to the one encountered in Chapter I – we will offer a synthesized picture of Nussbaum's thought on compassion as a praiseworthy ethical guide and will allow the author to argue on her own terms. By pursuing this approach we hope to do justice to her complex account of compassion which is especially relevant in the face of moral and political realities today. This chapter will proceed in the following manner: first, we will analyze the philosophical roots of Nussbaum's concept of compassion. This will be achieved by situating Nussbaum's vision of compassion *vis-à-vis* the Stoic vision which promotes human dignity as a main concept respecting the fundamental nature of human beings. After fleshing out Nussbaum's concept of compassion, we will proceed to her analysis of compassion's place in the general picture of human psychology. This will lead us to the major part of this chapter – an analysis of Nussbaum's views on educating compassion, enabling it to function as a reliable element in our ethical undertakings. This section will illuminate the importance of compassion to Nussbaum's ethical-political vision. Here we will encounter Nussbaum's conviction that the basic insights inherent to this emotion provide a deeper understanding of what we owe each other. In turn, if these insights are embodied in our ethical thought and political institutions they can further promote and sustain human compassion. This section will make evident Nussbaum's view that politics is inseparable from love. Having journeyed into Nussbaum's philosophy of compassion we will turn to the reception of her thought – Nussbaum's views will be challenged by Cates, Martin Kavka, and Amia Srinivasan. Cates will question Nussbaum's approach from a Christian perspective situating Nussbaum's concept of compassion *vis-à-vis* compassion understood as a Christian virtue. Kavka will approach Nussbaum from a Judaic point of view and will dispute her views that one cannot incorporate external transcendence claims into ethics. He will advance the possibility for such claims through the human emotions of compassion and love. Srinivasan will draw attention to the fact that the compassion promoted by political regimes might be oppressive to victims of injustice as a silencing mechanism.

1.1 A BRIEF NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

Compassion, in Nussbaum's view, "is a painful emotion occasioned by the awareness of another person's underserved misfortune."² There are numerous synonyms to name this experience in English such as pity, sympathy, empathy, and they all appear to be used in a

¹ Cf. Martha C. Nussbaum, "Compassion: The Basic Social Emotion," *Social Philosophy and Policy* Vol. 13, No. 1 (1996): 27-58.

² Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 301.

similar context and without clear distinctions.³ Why then does Nussbaum choose to utilize the term compassion? Nussbaum is aware that the terms were translated in philosophical tradition in different ways and invites us to take a look at her brief analysis of them.

The word pity was widely used to translate Rousseau's *pitié*⁴ and the Greek tragic terms *eleos* and *oiktos*. This term was associated with the undeserved nature of a misfortune and so also with potential questions of justice.⁵ In contemporary usage pity came to have "nuances of condescension and superiority to the sufferer"⁶ and because of the new connotation, Nussbaum chooses to avoid the term.

Empathy is another term used in a synonymous way as compassion. For Nussbaum, however, empathy represents "an imaginative reconstruction of another person's experience, without any particular evaluation of that experience; so used, obviously, it is quite different from and insufficient for compassion; it may not even be necessary for it."⁷ This imaginative reconstruction of another person's experience whether that experience is "happy or sad, pleasant painful or neutral,"⁸ lacks the character of suffering for the other person's misfortune and so the empathic imager can judge the situation "good, bad, or indifferent,"⁹ but cannot judge a grave predicament as compassion does.

When it comes to the term sympathy, Nussbaum claims that it "is frequently used in British eighteenth-century texts to denote an emotion equivalent to what I call 'compassion.'"¹⁰ Sympathy as compassion also alludes to the judgment that the situation of the other person is bad. "If there is any difference between 'sympathy' and 'compassion' in contemporary usage," Nussbaum states, "it is perhaps that 'compassion' seems more intense and suggests a greater degree of suffering, both on the part of the afflicted person and on the part of the person having the emotion."¹¹

After having a more clear view on the terminology we can proceed to our presentation of the emotion of compassion.

1.2 DEFINITION OF COMPASSION AND ITS PHILOSOPHICAL ROOTS

After getting acquainted with her theory of emotions, we should not be surprised that Nussbaum presents us with the account of something we could call a "rational compassion." To put it in her own words: "More than a warm feeling in the gut, compassion involves a set of thoughts, often quite complex."¹²

³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 301.

⁴ This term is widely used in his analysis of the emotion Nussbaum chooses to call compassion. See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Book, 1979).

⁵ Cf. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 301.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 301.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 302. Nussbaum bases her usage of the term on the interpretation of its history suggested by Lauren Wispé. See Lauren Wispé, "History of the Concept of Empathy," in *Empathy and Its Development*, eds. Nancy Eisenberg and Janet Strayer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 17-37.

⁸ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 302.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 302.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 302.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 302.

¹² Martha C. Nussbaum, "Compassion & Terror," *Daedalus* Vol. 132, No. 10 (2003): 12.

Nussbaum claims that she utilizes the structure of compassion found in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*.¹³ She continues that the Aristotelian compassion is in continuity with the previous conception found in Homer, the tragic poets, and Plato. The traces of the Aristotelian concept of compassion subsequently can be found in the works of Rousseau, Schopenhauer and Smith.¹⁴ Aristotle proposes that compassion has three value judgments inherent in this emotion: the judgment of seriousness of the suffering, the judgment that the person who undergoes misfortune does not deserve it, and the judgment that the one experiencing compassion and the sufferer have a certain similarity; thus, the observer experiences that he/she has similar possibilities that appear in the situation of the suffering person.¹⁵ Nussbaum agrees with the judgments of Aristotle and takes in the three thoughts compassion has, stipulating only that the third element is not entirely necessary and altering it by adding her fourth judgment. At this point we encounter Nussbaum's concept of compassion, which we will introduce in the proceeding section and then continue fleshing out other influences on Nussbaum's thought on this emotion.

2. COMPASSION AND ITS COGNITIVE CONTENT

Thus, here we take a closer look at the meaning of the thoughts which form the emotion of compassion. This section will present the thoughts Aristotelian compassion entails and will present the link Nussbaum makes between them and contemporary research. Nussbaum is convinced that the value judgments of compassion are rather universal and one can witness a "remarkable unanimity about core instances across time and place."¹⁶ The tragic elements of life endorsed by Aristotle are reaffirmed by Candace Clark's sociological study.¹⁷ The core instances to experience compassion remain the same with added specific elements, which are inherent to contemporary life. At this stage of Nussbaum's argument we encounter her attempt to build a bridge between the ancient and contemporary world and by this, seal the universality of her argument.

As mentioned above, the first thought compassion entails is the one of *size*. This cognitive element essentially signals that we judge that something serious happened to the person we have compassion for. This means that the onlooker judges that the event threatens the flourishing of the person in question.

What are these universal misfortunes people judge to have size across centuries? Nussbaum argues that Aristotle rightfully so indicated the following: "Death, bodily assault or ill-treatment, old age, illness, lack of food, lack of friends, separation from friends, physical weakness, disfigurement, immobility, reversals of expectations, absence of good prospects."¹⁸ This list is remarkably similar to the plight for which contemporary Americans feel compassionate.¹⁹ Nussbaum concludes that, naturally, what is to be taken

¹³ The definition can be found in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* I385b13 ff.

¹⁴ Cf. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 306.

¹⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 306.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 307.

¹⁷ The study examines the cases of sympathy among contemporary Americans. See Candace Clark, *Misery and Company: Sympathy in Everyday Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

¹⁸ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of thought*, 307.

¹⁹ Clark's list of tragic predicaments in America could be illustrated by the following passage: "When I looked at what had triggered sympathy, I discovered dozens of plights. The inventory encompasses all those

as an instance worthy of compassion may vary across societies and individuals. Yet, “the central disasters to which human life is prone are remarkably constant; constant as well is the fact that people take these disasters to be central.”²⁰

The second judgment is the judgment of *non-desert*. This judgment considers that the misfortune happened to the person without his/her own fault and thus this person does not deserve the suffering. To put it in other words: “Compassion [...] addresses itself to the nonblameworthy increment.”²¹ This element, Nussbaum states, is very prominent in Aristotle.²² Compassion, then, appeals to the sense of justice we have. The thought of non-desert is also particularly closely connected to the view or intuition that the things that matter to us ‘can be held hostage to fortune.’ The value judgment of not deserving the misfortune appeals to the disaster that happened from outside, the one that was not caused by the person, but by the unpredictable flow of life.

Once again Nussbaum guides us to the research of Clark to draw upon similar, contemporary experiences. Clark claims that contemporary Americans experience compassion only for the cases caused by “victimization by forces beyond a person’s control.”²³ This points out that even nowadays compassion is directed to events one might call ‘bad luck,’ something that happened to the suffering person without his/her active action or decision.²⁴ This judgment of compassion presents a rather controversial picture of the world. It speaks about an agent who is capable not only of active agency, but also is vulnerable to the world surrounding him/her and the unforeseen, painful happenings that can befall him or her. Thus, ultimately it speaks of an agent who ascribes existential value to the external goods. At this point we just want to highlight the consequences of the second judgment of compassion. In the upcoming sections we will elaborate on the worldview Nussbaum’s compassion suggests in greater length.

The last judgment of an adequate compassion is the judgment of *similar possibilities*. The cognitive content of this judgment signals that one will feel compassion over misfortunes that are likely to happen to himself/herself or the ones one loves. This

enumerated in blues lyrics (e.g., poverty, a partner’s infidelity, death of loved ones). It includes illness (including ‘functional’ or behavioral illnesses such as alcoholism and drug use), physical or mental disabilities or deformities, injury, and pain. The respondents also mentioned war trauma, sexual abuse, physical abuse, crime, victimization, disaster victimization, (e.g., by earthquakes, hurricanes, or airplane crashes), homelessness, infertility, divorce (or loss of ‘partner’), discrimination (e.g., in jobs or housing), political victimization (e.g., liberties abridged by tyrannical government), role strain (e.g., single parenthood), unwanted pregnancy, physical unattractiveness, car accidents, car trouble, house trouble (e.g., leaky roof), insensitive parents, ungrateful children, social ostracism, loss in competition (e.g., sports or job), depression, fear, public humiliation, accidental embarrassment, fatigue, bad judgment, ruined vacations, boredom, and discomfort (e.g., enduring heat, cold, or traffic jams).” Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 307-308. Here Nussbaum quotes Clark, *Misery and Company*, 83. Though the list clearly contains ‘milder’ elements, in essence, the instances worthy of compassion are close to the ones depicted by Aristotle.

²⁰ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 308.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 312.

²² *Ibid.*, 312. Nussbaum bases her claim on *Rhet.* I385b14, b34-86a1, I386b7, b10, b12, b13; *Poetics* I453a4, 5.

²³ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 313. Here Nussbaum quotes Clark, *Misery and Company*, 84.

²⁴ These tragic plights for American people do not involve ambiguity, as they separate rather sharply between realms of action and choice and fate and chance. Thus, Americans, generally speaking, would not include poverty as an unfortunate plight. Similarly, sexual crimes, as sexual assault would not get an immediate compassionate response. But alcoholism or abuse of drug substances are rather surprisingly perceived as ‘bad luck.’ See Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 314. Here Nussbaum is basing her argument on Clark, *Misery and Company*, chapter 3.

judgment speaks not only of the awareness of the fragility of the other person (as in the judgment of non-desert), it recognizes the fragility of oneself. For Aristotle, this judgment essentially means that compassion can be experienced by those who are acquainted with suffering, and people who experience themselves as omnipotent (they do not experience a lack in anything) will not have compassion.²⁵ Thus for Aristotle compassion has an intimate link with fear.²⁶ What is more, the judgment of similar possibilities, as its title already indicates, requires certain demarcation: who can I judge to be similar to me? This means that the emotion is dependent on the ability to see similarity between you and me. This perception of similarity is clearly formed and, thus, predisposed by the culture and upbringing one is born into. Hence, the emotion can be impeded by “all kinds of social barriers - of class, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation.”²⁷

2.1 ALTERING THE JUDGMENT OF SIMILARITY: *EUDAIMONISTIC* JUDGMENT

After stating the Aristotelian case, Nussbaum, however, hesitates to embrace the third judgment of compassion fully. She sees the first two judgments of seriousness and fault as necessary elements of emotion, while similarity is described as “only a helpful epistemological device.”²⁸ The similarity element in compassion, for Nussbaum, uncovers the significance of suffering, but its demarcating character and the requirement to have a certain prior community bond with the sufferer seems to be consequences that Nussbaum is not willing to accept. This would essentially mean that without the sense of commonness and perceived possible prospects undergoing the same pain, the emotion of compassion would fail to occur in the observer. Or to put it in other words – without the perspective to experience the same pain – one would not react to the pain of the person whose life does not manifest any similarities with his/her own; the only reaction to it would be indifference.

This perspective not only creates an impossibility for a human being on a significantly higher social, economical rank to experience genuine compassion if he/she fails to recognize his/her own vulnerability and similarity with the other, for Nussbaum this perspective also disqualifies the possibility of genuine emotion in a divine being. Nussbaum argues that we can imagine a divine (thus perfect being) feeling a genuine compassion for human beings without an understanding of shared similarity (and so similar possibilities to encounter the suffering) and vulnerability. Yet, in religious traditions we can encounter gods and godlike humans who feel compassion: “Zeus weeps for the death of Sarpedon; the Christian god feels ceaseless compassion for the errors and sufferings of mortals; the Buddhist who has successfully escaped from personal vulnerability and pain experiences compassion for the sufferings of those still fettered.”²⁹

²⁵ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 315. Quoting Aristotle I385b24 ff and I385b21-22, b31. Nussbaum claims that one can find a similar point in Rousseau’s *Émile*. In this work one can find Rousseau’s agreement with Aristotle that a necessary element, condition for *pitié* is knowledge of one’s own weakness and vulnerability. Nussbaum refers us to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile*, 224.

²⁶ Nussbaum directs us to read more on the link between compassion and fear in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* I386a22-8, 82b26-7 and *Poetics* I453a5-6.

²⁷ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 317.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 317.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 318.

So far we have highlighted several elements of the third judgment of Aristotelian compassion. Though Nussbaum sees it as a helpful tool to understand the impact of suffering, she reveals that this judgment is composed of a close link with fear, a strong demarcation element which attributes compassion only to 'my own' and deprives not only humans that perceive themselves as invulnerable, but also divine beings from genuine compassion. Thus Nussbaum chooses not to embrace this judgment fully, but to alter it. At this moment she turns to the *eudaimonistic* character of emotions we have presented in the previous sections.³⁰ Nussbaum claims that precisely this element is necessary for compassion, not similarity. This extension, curiously enough, is intended to safeguard the possibility of true emotion in a deity. To put it in her own words: "A truly omniscient deity ought to know the significance of human suffering without thinking of its own risks or bad prospects, and a truly loving deity will be intensely concerned for the ills befalling mortals without having to think of more personal loss or risk."³¹ At this segment of her argument Nussbaum tries to convince her reader that her alteration is necessary. Nussbaum attempts to construct a theory, which from her perspective, is well thought through and includes genuine emotion not only in humans, but it also extends to the deities of various religious traditions.

Nussbaum is convinced that the *eudaimonistic* judgment represents a deeper meaning of the Aristotelian judgment of similar possibilities, and as mentioned above, sees the latter as a certain tool to help to comprehend the former. "Imagining one's own similar possibilities aids the extension of one's own *eudaimonistic* judgment."³² Thus, Nussbaum sees her alteration as a necessary element of compassion and similarity as a heuristic tool. *Eudaimonistic* judgment means that the predicament of the other (even a distant other) falls into my circle of concern and that my own happiness depends on yours. Nussbaum affirms that this is a rather abstract judgment and so she leaves the connection with the Aristotelian judgment of similar possibilities – if we see the other somehow similar to us, we can imagine that his/her predicament can happen to us too. Nussbaum sees the link between the two judgments as useful for the work of imagination that is necessary for compassion to appear, yet the judgment of similar possibilities has an ancillary role and, strictly speaking, is not necessary for compassion to appear. The idea that what happens to others is of importance to me is necessary for compassion to appear and not the idea that I feel compassion for you because you are similar to me and your suffering is something that is likely to befall me. The main motive in this kind of reasoning is demarcation and fear and Nussbaum is after an inclusive and universal notion of compassion.

What we have encountered in this section is Nussbaum's attempt to define the content of compassion. These cognitive elements "are both sufficient for compassion and constituent parts of it."³³ That would essentially mean that once one judges a particular situation to meet the three criteria he/she will experience compassion.

2.2 COMPASSION AND REASON

³⁰ See section 2.2.3 *Emotions Are Eudaimonistic Value Judgments* at the beginning of Chapter I.

³¹ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 319.

³² *Ibid.*, 319.

³³ *Ibid.*, 325.

We have touched upon the definition and the cognitive structure of Nussbaum's concept of compassion. Clearly enough, her suggestion speaks of emotion, which cannot be labeled as an irrational feeling, but on the contrary – a thought-laden perception of the world and events around us. In Nussbaum's discussion on compassion, the link between reason and emotions is already clearly established in the nature of emotion itself, thus, we should not be surprised by the perspective from which she attempts to discuss the relationship between the two.

Nussbaum tries to convince her reader that the core discussion on the relationship between emotion and reason lies in the question: what do we mean by saying that emotions are irrational? Do we mean that emotions are irrational impulses of the human body or do we mean that emotions contain irrational thoughts within their cognitive structure? The first allegation belongs to a Freudian line of thinking, the second one clearly corresponds to the Stoic mistrust in the emotions. Nussbaum holds that the first allegation cannot hold any serious scrutiny and she attempts to discuss objections to compassion as an adequate ethical guide answering the latter concern.

2.3 DOES COMPASSION CONTAIN FALSE THOUGHTS? CLASSIC STOIC OBJECTIONS

2.3.1 The Radical Defense of Human Dignity

The first objection stemming from the Socratic teaching and encapsulated strongly in the works of the Greek and Roman Stoics, warns against the thoughts of which compassion is made of. Socrates was convinced that a good person cannot be harmed.³⁴ This position crowned by the teaching on virtue and self-sufficiency got its most influential form in the teachings of the Greek and Roman Stoics. The moral purpose or reason and will were depicted as the most important things in life. Furthermore, “this faculty of moral choice is the possession of all humans, and its virtuous use is always within our power, no matter what the world does.”³⁵ The moral purpose is the source of human equality – “its dignity outshines all circumstantial differences and renders them trivial.”³⁶

In this line of thinking, the intuition encompassed in compassion seems to be far from appropriate. The Stoics spoke of a dignified agent who is fully responsible for his or her life. The damages of life come not through unpredictable happenings, but through deliberate bad choices. Rather self evidently, the response to the evil events in life is blame, not compassion. Blame in the Stoic thought, Nussbaum states, “unlike compassion respects the primacy of moral purpose in each person, treating people not as victims and subordinates but as dignified agents.”³⁷

Compassion from this perspective suggests a controversial approach to a person by not respecting his/her full dignity as a free moral agent. Nussbaum summarizes this position in the following way: “If one respects the faculty of moral purpose in a human being, one will

³⁴ Cf. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 356. Here Nussbaum refers to Plato's, *Apology*, 41D, cf. 30DC.

³⁵ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 357.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 357.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 357.

not feel compassion, for one will see that faculty as a source of equal human worth, undiminished by any catastrophe.”³⁸

Nussbaum asserts that this position is Plato’s basis to criticize the genre of tragedy (the only one highly endorsed by Nussbaum herself as useful for moral learning), furthermore, this position was taken by Spinoza, and heavily influenced works of Descartes, Smith, and Kant.³⁹ At the core, we could describe this position as a radical defense of human dignity. Nussbaum furthers that this defense of human dignity manifests strong qualities of egalitarian cosmopolitanism, which chooses to ignore any kin attachments.

We are well familiar with the discussion on human dignity from the field of theology. The inherent human dignity, a teaching, which is at the heart of Christian morals, provides an impartial, ethical motive to guide human ethical behavior. Nussbaum, on her behalf, presents herself as an advocate of the collaboration between moral principles and emotions. She fleshes out the importance of emotion in her works more, because this topic is less self-evident than the importance of good moral principles for ethical guidance. In her discussion on human dignity as a guiding principle, however, Nussbaum expresses some reservations about it, if we treat it separately from the guiding light of compassion.

The idea of dignity, which was cemented very strongly by the Stoics, put through by Cicero, Kant and beyond can promote some questionable points if we take it uncritically.⁴⁰ The concept of human dignity clearly presents itself as a fair motive to respect equal humanity in each and every person disregarding his/her social/material circumstances, race, sex, and so forth. The very fact that you are a human being who is reasonable and free, prompts respect and equal treatment.

Nussbaum, however, is convinced that human dignity is a notion which is far less clear than we might think from first sight. If we look at the Stoic conception of it we discover that human dignity essentially represents human capacity to be above the beasts. We have reason, freedom, language, moral capacity and this makes us different from all the rest.⁴¹ This kind of dignity is an unconditional property because “you either have it, or, bestially, you don’t.”⁴² For Nussbaum, this poses the problem of denying animal dignity and any human moral obligation towards them.⁴³

Another problem Nussbaum ascribes to the concept of human dignity is a poor treatment of the value of basic human goods. This topic we shall discuss further in a few sections.⁴⁴ At this point it is important to mention that Nussbaum disagrees with the idea that dignity without a proper respect for other human goods is sufficient for *eudaimonia*. “Dignity,” Nussbaum asserts, “is just one part of her [a person’s] happiness – a piece of it that can itself be victimized and held hostage to fortune; her human dignity is being

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 357.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 358.

⁴⁰ See Martha C. Nussbaum, “Duties of Justice, Duties of Material Aid: Cicero’s Problematic Legacy,” *Journal of Political Philosophy* Vol. 8, No. 2 (2000): 176-206, to consult her views on the problematic of the Stoic understanding of human dignity.

⁴¹ Nussbaum, “Compassion & Terror,” 18. We move to discuss the argument found in this article as it presents Nussbaum’s critique of Stoic dignity in a nutshell.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 18.

⁴³ To look into this matter more deeply Nussbaum refers us to Richard Sorabji, *Animal Minds and Human Morals: The Origins of the Western Debate* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993).

⁴⁴ See the upcoming section 2.3.3 *The Value of External Goods*.

weighed in the balance with other goods and it no longer looks like the thing of surpassing, even infinite worth, that we took it to be.”⁴⁵ Human dignity in Nussbaum’s thought, then, is an element of *eudaimonia*, which needs proper protection as other elements of it. It can be affected by negative events and circumstances and so we should never look light-heartedly at human suffering because it touches one existentially. In this regard, we should think of communities suffering from constant deprivation of such basic goods as clean water, sufficient nutrition, lack of shelter, constant threats to security, situations of abuse and slavery, just to name a few instances. These events do not pose a threat to external goods only; they threaten the very core of humanity in the person. Nussbaum goes as far as saying that if we look at human dignity superficially we see in it an unbiased motivation to respect equal humanity in all. Yet if we try to deconstruct this concept and take a more critical look at it “it seems to license quietism and indifference to things in the world, on the grounds that nothing that merely happens to people is really bad.”⁴⁶

Nussbaum suggests yet another argument as to why we should look at the concept of human dignity understood as an absolute, invulnerable property cautiously. Nussbaum drawing on ideas of Marcus Aurelius, a Roman Stoic of the second century, tries to show that the Stoic understanding of human dignity implies something she calls death within life.⁴⁷ Marcus Aurelius advocated something we may call a non-reactive imagination. This imagination has to unlearn all the strong childhood attachments, thus, be cleansed from “intense partiality and localism.”⁴⁸ Ultimately as a crown of extirpation of all vivid attachments Marcus Aurelius urges one to stop being a lover.⁴⁹ For Nussbaum this leads to a picture of the world which seems to lack everything that we know as human: “But getting rid of our erotic investments, not just in bodies, but in families, nations, sport teams – all this leads us into a strange world, a world that is gentle and unaggressive, but also strangely lonely and hollow.”⁵⁰ For Nussbaum, the advocacy for this kind of world suggests a death within life. She asserts that the moral righteousness promoted by Marcus Aurelius could be real only in circumstances where human life does not exist. Human life as such is marked by imperfection, quirkiness, and uneven attachments.

Marcus Aurelius claimed that life as we know will, without a doubt, fade into oblivion, so we should not invest in a series of meaningless happenings. The only thing that truly matters and that will remain is moral order with its principles of truth and justice.⁵¹ Nussbaum is left restless with this answer and poses the question whether justice should not serve the living? The vision of justice which is detached from life and concrete circumstances of real communities seems like a vision we should not follow. For Nussbaum this vision seems to also be an easy theoretical escape from a complexity of practical ethical matters. Our moral choices are made when we engage in an honest

⁴⁵ Nussbaum, “Compassion & Terror,” 19.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁴⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 20.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁴⁹ Nussbaum points out that erotic love and desire are also taught to be seen in detached ways and the sexual act described as nothing more than “the rubbing together of membranes.” She refers us to Pierre Hadot’s, *The Inner Citadel: The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*, transl. Michael Chase (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), VI.13.

⁵⁰ Nussbaum, “Compassion & Terror,” 22.

⁵¹ Cf. Nussbaum using an argument found in Hadot, *The Inner Citadel*, VI.47.

dialogue with ourselves. To put it in Nussbaum's own words: "But in so far as we retain, as well, our local erotic attachments, our relation to that motive must always remain complex and dialectical, a difficult conversation within ourselves as we ask how much humanity requires of us, and how much we are entitled to give to our own."⁵² This approach leads not to extirpation of the emotions and compassion as a social motive, but the extension and education of it; a topic we will further discuss in subsequent sections of this chapter. At this part of Nussbaum's argument we have discovered her proposal to keep respect for human dignity, but not to treat it as an exceptionless moral principle, an idea we might be familiar with from the writings of revisionist moral theologians.⁵³ Nussbaum suggests that this respect for moral principles and not only acknowledgment of our attachments, but also appreciation of the values they disclose mean that "we need to negotiate our lives with a complex combination of moral reverence and erotic attachment, we need to have a keen imaginative and emotional understanding of what our choices mean for people in many different conditions, and the ability to move resourcefully back and forth from the perspective of our personal loves and cares to the perspective of the distant."⁵⁴ Hence, Nussbaum suggests that we should trust our imaginations and at the same time criticize them.⁵⁵ She is a staunch believer that in this dialectic of trust-criticism-and, then, trust again something similar to truth or at least understanding of moral situations may occur.

2.3.2 Mercy Rather than Compassion

Nussbaum further develops that the Stoic tradition should not be perceived as a cold-hearted perspective. Due to its conception of the human being and value it simply cannot accept compassion as a worthy moral sentiment. Yet the Stoics had an answer to the moral situations concerning guilt and their answer was mercy. Nussbaum continues that "believing that the only serious harms that befall others are the harms that they have caused themselves through their folly and wrongdoing, the Stoic nonetheless believes that it is extremely difficult to be good."⁵⁶

Thus the attitude of a true Stoic towards wrongdoings of the other should be free of harshness and in a lot of instances merciful. Nussbaum introduces Seneca's main arguments in favor of mercy:

First, it is expressive of his strength and dignity: it shows that he does not need to inflict pain in order to be a whole person. Second, it displays understanding of the difficulties of human life, which make it almost impossible to err in some respect; it displays, too, the awareness that the punisher is himself an imperfect person, liable to error. Third, it is socially useful, since it awakens trust and mutual goodwill, rather than fear and antagonism.⁵⁷

⁵² Nussbaum, "Compassion & Terror," 23-24.

⁵³ In this regard we could think of the works by James Keenan, S.J., Lisa Sowle Cahill, Margaret A. Farley, R.S.M.

⁵⁴ Nussbaum, "Compassion & Terror," 24.

⁵⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 26.

⁵⁶ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 365.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 365-366.

Nussbaum points out that we should not be surprised if we find ourselves wondering what then is the actual difference between mercy and compassion. What we encounter in Seneca's teachings is the cognitive content of compassion translated into terms adequate for the teaching on virtue.⁵⁸ If we would take a closer look at the mercy Seneca talks about, it also recognizes burdens inherent to human life. The main accent in mercy, however, lies in the recognition that the life of virtue is difficult to attain, thus, its emphasis is put on the things which one can control. We recall that compassion also recognizes the human struggle, yet its main accent lies in things that even virtuous behavior cannot control. Mercy states that there are no such cases, we are always responsible for our actions and their consequences and we should focus on perfecting our moral purpose; things outside it simply do not matter. Compassion is full of false ideas, to say the least. Mercy respects the full dignity of the human person and hence focuses on guilt (the only grave matters are always dependent on your own actions). "Mercy," Nussbaum states, "is mitigation in sentencing, not a verdict of not guilty."⁵⁹ Mercy, a Stoic thinker would say, can hold society far better than quirky compassion because it inspires "mutual gentleness not tinged with fearfulness or a gnawing sense of personal need."⁶⁰

2.3.3 *The Value of External Goods*

Nussbaum attempts to prove that the debate on the best ethical guide in social matters might have something deeper at stake. She is convinced that the anti-compassion tradition opposes the emotions and reason in the way not always evident for a contemporary reader. As indicated above the Stoic tradition with all its followers, indeed, holds that compassion and all other emotions are irrational. Yet irrational in this sense means not the absence of cognitive content, but a complete falseness of it. Compassion and other emotions are faulty because they are "not discerning and aimed at truth."⁶¹ Hence, Nussbaum tries to point out that the core of this debate in the very essence is ethical value.⁶²

⁵⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 366.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 366.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 366.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 369.

⁶² Nussbaum's argument in a nutshell attempts to convince us that the compassion and the anti-compassion traditions offer two visions of the well-functioning societies. Both visions in essence deal with the questions of ethical value and the good in attempt to provide an answer to a question: How should we live a good community life? We believe that the following quotation captures the core of the two visions: "The debate over compassion constructs, in effect, two visions of political community and of the good citizen and judge within it. One vision is based upon emotions, the other urges their removal. One sees the human being as both aspiring and vulnerable, both worthy and insecure; the other focuses on dignity alone, seeing in reason a boundless and indestructible worth. One sees the central task of community as the provision of support for basic needs; bringing human beings together through the thought of their common weakness and risk, it constructs a moral emotion that is suited to supporting efforts to aid the worst off. The other sees a community, a kingdom of free responsible beings, held together by the awe that they feel for the worth of reason in one another; the function of their association will be to assist the moral development of each by judgments purified of passion. Each vision, in its own way, pursues both equality and freedom. The former aims at equal support for basic needs and hopes through this to promote equal opportunities for free choice and self-realization; the other starts from the fact of internal freedom – a fact that no misfortune can remove – and finds in this fact a source of political equality. One sees freedom of choice as something that needs to be built up for people through worldly arrangements that make them capable of functioning in a fully human way; the other takes freedom to be an inalienable given, independent of all material arrangements. One aims

We have seen above that compassion clearly deals with value, ascribing existential importance to external goods. Compassion speaks of a vulnerable moral agent who can be not only touched by misfortunes of life, but can be “cut to the very core of the personality.”⁶³ This claim in essence means that a person is vulnerable in his/her attachments and rightly so because they do matter for a good life.

The anti-compassion position speaks of a world where the status of human being should evoke respect and this status can never be touched by anything that happens to a person, because the dignity of the person cannot be harmed.

Both positions meet at a point of equality – the anti-compassion perspective on the evident defense of fundamental human equality based on human dignity, the compassion tradition on the less evident (from the first glance) claim of similar possibilities inherent in its cognitive structure and being evoked by the recognition of a common human weakness and fragility.

We can clearly grasp the teaching of value in the compassion tradition, but what about the Stoic position? The Stoics teach about the value of virtue and fundamental human equality; that is evident. But if we look at particular virtues we will see that they are always aimed at a prudent arrangement of external goods. “Courage, justice, moderation,” Nussbaum points out, “all these virtues deal with our need for externals.”⁶⁴ The Stoic will deal with the arrangement of external goods through the teaching of preferred and dispreferred indifferents (basically, a term for preferred and dispreferred external goods, as in the Stoic thought those are not ‘goods’ at all. The Stoic points out their ethical value by the term ‘indifferents’), but will never ascribe real value to it.⁶⁵

Human dignity, hence, is entirely independent of fortune. For Nussbaum this poses a political-philosophical question of reconciling the defense of everyone’s right to the basic human goods and at the same time recognizing that humanity at its core does not need them.⁶⁶ How can our political regimes promote equal distribution of these, how can they advocate political rights and liberties, if we continue to claim that human dignity will not be touched by a deprivation of these?⁶⁷

The compassion tradition, we should note, does not advocate a needy, weak, ‘soft,’ so to speak, society. But it wants to urge us to see that even despite our fundamental similarity, “differences in class, race, gender, wealth, and power do affect the extent to which the sense of helplessness governs the daily course of one’s life.”⁶⁸ Recognizing this,

to defeat the selfish and grasping passions through the imagination of suffering, and through a gradual broadening of concern; the other aims to remove these passions completely, overcoming retaliation with self-command and mercy. One attempts to achieve benevolence through softheartedness; the other holds, with Kant, that this softheartedness ‘should not be at all among human beings.’ One holds that: it is the weakness of the human being that makes it sociable.’ The other holds that weakness is an impediment to community, that only the truly self-sufficient person can be a true friend.” See Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 368.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 371.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 373.

⁶⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 373.

⁶⁶ Cf. Nussbaum, “Compassion & Terror,” 18.

⁶⁷ Cf. Martha C. Nussbaum, “The World of Human Dignity: Two Tensions in Stoic Cosmopolitanism,” in *Philosophy and Power in the Graeco-Roman World: Essays in Honor of Miriam Griffin*, eds. Gillian Clark and Tessa Rajak (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 31-49.

⁶⁸ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 375.

the advocates of compassion try to promote an ethical viewpoint and a course of action that would promote a meaningful functioning of societies.

Nussbaum argues that the Stoic denial of the value of external goods is in a lot of cases romanticized. We choose to present her example of the philosophy of Nietzsche as most telling. Nietzsche whose ideas are influenced by Stoicism and who himself invokes Epictetus, Spinoza, and Kant as his masters advocated a view on the human being as an animal living entirely in the world of nature.⁶⁹ Nussbaum criticizes the mixture of his naturalism and romanticism, which is especially manifest in Nietzsche's glorification of all kinds of suffering.⁷⁰ "To those human beings who are of any concern to me I wish suffering, desolation, sickness, ill-treatment, indignities...."⁷¹ Nietzsche claims. Nussbaum, however, employs these claims as an example of absurdity of his position. In the romantic glorification of the renouncement of external goods "we find no sign of the simple truth that a hungry person cannot think well, that a person who lacks shelter, basic health care, and the other necessities of life is not likely to become a self-expressing philosopher or artist, no matter what her innate equipment."⁷² Maybe Nietzsche was imagining the higher men and their prophet Zarathustra, but we can be sure he did not ponder from where Zarathustra gets his basic welfare and the higher men their food or what they do all day long.⁷³

The compassionate tradition, on the other hand, also imagines societies and persons aspiring to high functioning. Yet compassionate imagination recognizes that in order to flourish we need external goods in the first place and the task of morally educated compassion is to arrange the priorities among them wisely. The high moral aspirations are ideals, which can grow out of the soil of basic human needs. Compassion sees that those needs are often threatened by events that are independent of our moral virtue and cautious actions – it recognizes this common threat to all human beings. Yet precisely because of this compassion, offers itself as a trustworthy clay of societies as it recognizes the fragility of the human condition and offers a course of action to treat human life accordingly.

2.3.4 The Limits of Compassion: The Problem of Bias

Nussbaum is convinced that the objection against compassion concerning the partiality of concern in this emotion is one of the most important ones. This doubt of compassion is expressed not only by the Stoic-Kantian line of thinking, but also by Utilitarian tradition, moreover, by some members of the pro-compassion tradition such as Adam Smith.⁷⁴ The thoughts that make up compassion need education because they primarily are aimed at people who are proximate to us. Yet Nussbaum is convinced that there is something very essential to a good moral life in the emotion of compassion and this ethical achievement,

⁶⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 383.

⁷⁰ Nussbaum refers us to Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*, 270; *The Will to Power*, 910; and a chapter of *Ecce Homo* "Why I am so Wise?" for some telling examples of the praise of the value of suffering.

⁷¹ Nussbaum quoting Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. W. Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Press, 1968), 910.

⁷² Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 384.

⁷³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 385.

⁷⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, 386.

presented even in a ‘raw,’ not educated compassion, if broadened can promote well-being of our societies.

“Compassion,” states Nussbaum, “is our species’ way of hooking the good of others to the fundamentally *eudaimonistic* (though not egoistic) structure of our imaginations and our most intense cares.”⁷⁵ Compassion, in other words, is the first experience of care for the good of others, even if at first it is limited to the circle of our close ones. The thought of the good of others in abstract terms speaks very little to us, but “when it is brought into relation with that which we already understand – with our intense love of our parents, our passionate need for comfort and security – [that] such things start to matter deeply.”⁷⁶ Compassion does an important work by making the plight of the other vivid to our imagination.

Nussbaum tries to convince her reader that the human mind can work with abstracts, but in moral matters they do not have the force of urgency and importance. Compassion is the first experience of the urgent care for loved ones, for his/her goods and ills. Hence, we can say that Nussbaum suggests that morality and the moral growth starts with the psychological equipment we have and this should not scare or discourage us. Compassion is limited, but the point of moral growth is precisely to start from this limited good and expand it to the broader community. Nussbaum employs the metaphor of circle used by Hierocles to explain how she sees compassion:

Imagine, he says, that each of us lives in a set of concentric circles – the nearest being one’s own body, the furthest being the entire universe of human beings. The task of moral development is to move the circles progressively closer to the center, so that one’s parents become like oneself, one’s other relatives like one’s parents, strangers like relatives, and so forth.⁷⁷

We can claim that this metaphor resembles the core of Nussbaum’s proposed perspective of moral growth. Here one starts with particular and limited concerns one can grasp and make sense of and gradually moves to a more well-informed and more universal concern. We can say that essentially Nussbaum attempts to advocate a theory with a ‘rich human meaning.’ This kind of theory will be structured around a chosen well-based argument, but it will allow morally relevant emotions to have a part in it. For Nussbaum emotions like compassion which already grow up from a good seed can break through even very complex moral situations and point one to the direction of some genuinely moral connections.⁷⁸ Good moral theories are inhabited by imagination and moral attachments glued by emotions; precisely from this they take their life and their force. Simultaneously, well-ordered emotions are informed and educated by moral principles. We could say that this is the core of Nussbaum’s ethics. Due to this conviction Nussbaum is a ‘friend’ of compassion. She trusts that the cognitive content of compassion if educated and added to a

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 388.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 388

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 388.

⁷⁸ To support this statement Nussbaum often employs the example of Nazi morals. She utilizes the work of Jonathan Glover to argue that strong moral meanings learned in childhood and encapsulated in emotions at times can cut through strong layers of ideology and rationalization. See Jonathan Glover, *Humanity: A Moral History of the Twentieth Century* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1999).

good moral theory is normative to ethics. More than that, without compassion any kind of ethics is not complete because it does not have a true, immediate, forceful care for the other. Nussbaum asserts very strongly that ethics without emotions can offer only a “‘watery’ concern all around.”⁷⁹

Seen in this perspective compassion is close to the heart of ethics because it enables one to see a real person behind moral principles. It offers fundamental resources for morality in order to animate it and make moral principles ‘alive.’ To be sure, imagination and emotions without moral principles lack fundamental guidance and are prone to go astray. However, Nussbaum adds “but it is also true that compassion guides us truly toward something that lies at the core of morality, and without which any moral judgment is a ghastly simulacrum.”⁸⁰

The task of compassion to draw the circles of care towards the center, is a lifelong mission, to be sure. But in the co-working of a principle and emotion Nussbaum sees an ethical enterprise being fruitful. Moreover, Nussbaum asserts that emotions can and, indeed, make our rational moral judgments complete. To put it in her own words: “judgments characteristic of compassion are essential for the health of a complete adult rationality.”⁸¹ Nussbaum is convinced that without compassion our “abstract sight of the calculating intellect is value-blind”⁸² and that “compassion itself is the eye through which people see the good and ill of others, and its full meaning.”⁸³

We could conclude that Nussbaum attempts to point out that ethics definitely should not rely solely on the insights of the heart alone. Yet complete ethical observation will take those insights into account because they suggest a value-laden observation. In its first, not educated forms, the judgments offered by the emotion of compassion are limited to the ones close to the primary care center. This, however, already points to some genuine human attachments in the first place and is a first school experience of the world outside of me, the world that truly matters for my own well-being. Nussbaum is convinced that this is not the final stop of compassion and it can offer something far broader than this. Compassionate imagination can grow and with an adequate teaching it can expand to our fellow human communities, disregarding the background that separates them and us. Compassion needs moral theories to grow and moral theories need compassion to become alive.

3. SITUATING COMPASSION IN THE PICTURE OF HUMAN MORAL PSYCHOLOGY

Nussbaum’s story of human compassion consists of attempting to show what compassion is, from where it appears in human emotional and behavioral make-up, and the possible ways to teach and sustain this emotion (the last element we will address in the upcoming sections on education of compassion).

⁷⁹ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 389. Here she refers to Aristotle’s, *Politics* II.4.

⁸⁰ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 390.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 391. This idea is very much inspired by Nussbaum’s collaboration with Amartya Sen and their critique of the theories of rationality which neglect the genuine, non-economic human concern for the good of the other. See Amartya Sen, *Choice, Welfare, and Measurement* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982).

⁸² Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 392.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 392.

We have presented a definition of compassion in the previous sections and now we will attempt to present the place of compassion in human moral development, or in other words, we will attempt to show how compassion comes to life after all. In Nussbaum's works we have discovered that she is a firm advocate of the positive human anthropology. The following quotation can illustrate her views rather well: "So for my account the problem is not how to plug the other things and persons into a fundamentally egoistic system; it is, instead, how to broaden, educate, and stabilize elements of concern that are already present – and in particular how to build a stable and truly ethical concern for persons, who are also objects of need and resentment and anger."⁸⁴ Thus, even the unstable proto-ethical elements in compassion are already the results of the generally positive psychological constitution of the human infant.

Yet we are well aware of the negative human behavior, we are also aware of the negative human propensities that become clear in human development. How can we grasp and explain it? Any account of moral psychology and ethics has to attempt to explain the problem of evil to develop adequate thoughts on human morality. In upcoming sections we will present Nussbaum's account of evil human behavior and in this way situate compassion in a fuller picture of moral human psychology.

3.1 RADICAL EVIL

Nussbaum is convinced that if we are to promote a good ethical life and extension of compassion we must know against what we stand. If we deliberate about the good, we also must deliberate about the evil and have a plausible account of it. There are many religious and secular attempts to find the roots of bad human behavior. In Christian accounts we ascribe this, for instance, to original sin and try to flesh out what the term actually means. In a secular context we can find accounts varying from ascribing moral corruption to social formation to more universal origins of moral corruption ascribing them to deep developmental emotional mechanisms.⁸⁵ Nussbaum's own approach to the account of evil is the following:

I shall suggest, however, that by following the lead of empirical work on disgust, compassion, peer pressure, authority, and other human tendencies – as well as clinical work on child development and the capacities for empathy and concern – we can extract the core of a 'reasonable political psychology' that people of many different overall views may endorse as a basis for political thought, considering it to be one element in their more comprehensive and, to that extent, different understandings of human nature.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 337.

⁸⁵ Cf. Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 163. We shift to this source because the account of radical evil is an evolution of Nussbaum's thought present in the *Political Emotions*, but absent in the *Upheavals of Thought*. In this account Nussbaum wants to address the problem of evil human behavior seriously and look into propensities to it prior to any human socialization. The elements of animality as a problem for compassion (in a sense of compassion being narrow, thus directed to the ones close to us), the concept of denying our own animal nature (anthropodenial) and disgust, shame, and envy negatively influencing our compassionate responses are present also in the *Upheavals*.

⁸⁶ Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 163.

This essentially means that Nussbaum hopes that her account can function in a pluralistic society without establishing any, be it secular or religious, comprehensive doctrine. In the very presentation of compassion we saw that it is limited in its scope, but Nussbaum wants to take one step further and not stop at the narrowness of our sympathy as an answer to the question of evil. She wants to answer the question from where the darker human propensities appear and develop. Nussbaum is convinced that human cultures throughout history suffer from the reality of stigma – group exclusion – be it mirrored in the Indian caste system, prejudice against other nations, religions, race, sexual orientation. Thus in her account she does not want to avoid the question of real evil – “deliberately cruel and ugly behavior towards others that is not simply a matter of inadvertence or neglect, or even fear-tinged suspicion, but which involves some active desire to denigrate or humiliate.”⁸⁷ Nussbaum thus in her understanding of the problem agrees with Immanuel Kant and finds in all human beings ‘radical evil’ – “a set of presocial tendencies to bad behavior, tendencies that go beyond those rooted in our shared animal heritage and which lie beneath cultural variation.”⁸⁸

Kant asserted that the roots of bad human behavior lie deep in human beings – “evil is radical, according to Kant – that is to say, it goes to the root of our humanity – because human beings, prior to concrete social experience, have a propensity to both good and evil, in the form of tendencies that are deeply rooted in our natures.”⁸⁹ Kant was convinced that under certain circumstances human beings will inevitably act viciously. When do these tendencies come to the surface and flourish the most? Kant’s answer is that the evil is always present – “the tempter, the invisible enemy inside, is something peculiarly human, a propensity to competitive self-love, which manifests itself whenever human beings are in a group.”⁹⁰ Thus, something dark that is already present in human constitution lets itself out whenever we are in the presence of others:

Envy, addiction to power, avarice, and the malignant inclinations associated with these, assail his [human being’s] nature, which on its own is undemanding, *as soon as he is among human beings*. Nor is it necessary to assume that these are sunk into evil and are examples that lead him astray; it suffices that they are there, that they surround him, and that they are human beings, and they will mutually corrupt each other’s moral disposition and make one another evil.⁹¹

Humans experience anxiety due to the mere presence of other humans. The bad tendencies are not freed by the mere need of something – and precisely in this part Nussbaum sees the strength of Kant’s account. “Even when,” she furthers, “people are well fed and housed, and even when they are reasonably secure with respect to other

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 164.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 164-165.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 166. Nussbaum using Kant’s argument found in *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (1793), transl. Allen Wood and George Di Giovanni (Reprint, New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 6:28.

⁹⁰ Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 166.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 166. Here Nussbaum is quoting Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, 6.94.

prerequisites of well-being, they still behave badly to one another and violate one another's rights."⁹²

We have to note that Nussbaum understands radical evil as an outcome of the structure of human developmental processes, in the dynamics of helplessness of the young infant's body and his/her cognitive sophistication, the egoistic need of omnipotence is born. This primitive narcissism leads human infants and later adults (if it is not overcome) to subordinate and enslave others to our needs. This is essentially the key to understand Nussbaum's views on the roots of evil. She, however, adds two elements to this account to complete it, namely, the tendency to yield to peer pressure and the tendency to obey authority, even if one needs to compromise a moral concern. Nussbaum sees these two tendencies as deeply rooted in human nature and they pose a threat for sustaining our democratic institutions. We will shortly introduce these two characteristics and the sources Nussbaum uses to construct her argument about them.

Nussbaum bases her views on peer pressure on the famous works on conformity by psychologist Solomon Asch. His experiment found in *Opinions and Social Pressure* shows that an average subject shows a high degree of submission, even when the truth of a fact is evident when peer pressure is present.⁹³ This tendency seems very troublesome to Nussbaum because it is "an impediment to truth telling."⁹⁴ Moreover, "it is all the more pernicious when brought to bear in situations already characterized by stigmatization and hierarchy."⁹⁵ Thus, Nussbaum sees the tendency to yield to peer pressure as very dangerous in combination with societal prejudices against such long stigmatized groups as gay people, people of color, Jewish people, people of middle East descent, etc.

When it comes to human tendency to obey authority, Nussbaum utilizes the famous study of Stanley Milgram, *Obedience to Authority*.⁹⁶ The study which had its setting in Yale's laboratory famously found out that subjects would follow instructions of the scientist and give a dangerously high voltage of electroshock to their 'learners,' who actually worked for Milgram. In the basic version of the experiment Milgram discovered that if a 'silvered glass' appeared between the subject of the experiment and his 'student' and they could not touch – 60 percent of subjects would continue to press the voltage plate till maximum voltage level; when the two would be in the same room this rate would drop to 40 percent; when the subject was forced to touch his 'learner' and force his hand to the shock plate – the rate would drop to 30 percent.⁹⁷ For Milgram this proved that "ordinary people, simply doing their jobs, and without any particular hostility on their part, can become agents in a terrible destructive process."⁹⁸ Milgram compared his own findings with Hannah Arendt's study of Eichmann and "agreed with her that evil is not found in a 'sadistic fringe,' but in normal people under circumstances in which they surrender personal accountability and simply go along with someone else's directives – a personality state that he called the 'agentic state.'"⁹⁹ Nussbaum is convinced that Milgram's studies are

⁹² Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 166-167.

⁹³ Cf. Solomon E. Asch, "Opinions and Social Pressure," *Scientific American* Vol. 193, No. 5 (1955): 2-8.

⁹⁴ Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 192.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 192.

⁹⁶ Cf. Stanley Milgram, *Obedience to Authority* (Reprint, New York: Harper Perennial, (1975) 2009).

⁹⁷ Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 194.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 194. Here Nussbaum is quoting Milgram, *Obedience to Authority*, 6.

⁹⁹ Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 195.

important and we can learn from them, but she does not agree with its pessimistic judgment for humanity. Moreover, she asserts that: “Nothing in Milgram’s work, however, shows that a robust training in independent thought, personal accountability, and critical dialogue cannot control and even surmount these tendencies.”¹⁰⁰ She also suggests that in Milgram’s works we can find a solution to the part of this problem, namely, proximity of people which allows one to see others as individuals.

Nussbaum perceives these two tendencies interacting in many ways with what she called radical evil (basically, an effort to cope with human weakness and helplessness) as they release the anxiety that comes from it. Yet, Nussbaum remains a staunch defender of moral education and the possibility of moral growth also in this area as she concludes:

These tendencies are just tendencies, however deeply rooted. They can be modified by upbringing and education, and they can also be shaped by situations. Nations can foster cultures of dissent, encourage personal accountability, and discourage bureaucratic anonymity. Perhaps most important, they can build cultures of empathy, encouraging the ability to see the world through the eyes of others and to recognize their individuality.¹⁰¹

Nussbaum considers Kant’s account of radical evil¹⁰² very insightful, but she does not want to stop with an answer that evil propensities are elicited by the presence of others and this gives birth to anxiety and competitively aggressive behavior. She wants to go a step further and look into the nature of these propensities and not stop at competitive human behavior, but explore the whole range of corrupted human actions.

3.2 RADICAL EVIL: WHAT LIES BEHIND IT?

Nussbaum, unlike Kant, thinks that a shared animal heritage is a part of the problem of evil. Our narrow sympathy is rooted in “a structure of imagination and affection that is a part of our likely evolutionary heritage, what enabled humans to survive as species.”¹⁰³ Nussbaum reminds us that typically mature human societies reject parts of this heritage as abandonment of elderly and disabled, for example, and seeks to transcend it with one of the biggest goals of ethics – impartiality.¹⁰⁴

In her account Nussbaum tries to draw our attention to both sides of our common animal heritage – the good, the proto-ethical achievements that are present in our constitution and the more troublesome parts of it. She tries to dissect how the propensities manifest themselves in human development trying to find out what emotions become strongly apparent at a certain age of human infancy and how they later on affect moral life and growth. Now we will try to present both negative and positive aspects of our emotional constitution.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 195.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 196-197.

¹⁰² We should also note that Nussbaum stresses that anything we call innate propensity is a phenomenon difficult to demonstrate. In her appropriation of radical evil she accentuates that “innate tendencies are activated by general structural features of human life (mortality, scarcity, interdependence of various kinds), and that the tendencies to bad behavior are likely outgrowths of these interactions.” Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 167.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 167.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, 167.

3.2.1 Animal Heritage: Problems for Morality

Despite propensities to good, ethically relevant emotions in human infants lack resources crucial for mature morality, namely, impartiality. Human infants, like infants of other species are keen to choose their own kind: “They prefer the faces of the racial type that are most familiar to those of unfamiliar races; they prefer speakers of their own language to speakers of a foreign language.”¹⁰⁵ This for Nussbaum shows that the good propensities are very limited in their scope and allows her to conclude together with Paul Bloom, a professor of psychology and cognitive science, that “the aspect of morality that we truly marvel at – its generality and universality – is the product of culture, not biology.”¹⁰⁶

Our animal heritage makes our compassionate concern inconsistent, it is bound to lose its immediacy over time, thus it fails in dealing with the permanent or reoccurring problems.¹⁰⁷ “More troubling still,” Nussbaum states, “people often act immorally, by their own lights, as a result of empathy-induced compassion.”¹⁰⁸ We will learn in the upcoming sections that compassion can be touched and educated by the vivid plight of other people’s misfortunes; a story can touch our imagination and give rise to the emotion. A vivid story of another person’s suffering tends to move one from ethical principles in favor of following up the lead of emotion. But the same mechanism can work in the direction we do not desire.

Furthermore, Nussbaum attempts to find the roots of group hatred, stigmatization, and exclusion in structures that are peculiar to human life. Human beings are born helpless and needy, in a state, which is unknown to other mammalian life.¹⁰⁹ Human infants have cognitive powers that do not rely on speech or motion. Nussbaum points us out to Bloom’s research, which shows that babies are able to smell and identify their own mother’s milk from the milk of another mother within the first two weeks of their life; they also learn rapidly to separate themselves from others and are good ‘mind readers.’ The shape of human infancy is unique – “human infants are both highly intelligent and helpless, a combination that shapes emotional development, not always for the good.”¹¹⁰

To describe the possible challenges to the infant’s development Nussbaum turns once again to the works of Daniel Stern. The infant experiences itself as a concentrated center of experiences coming from the outside world, be it positive or negative.¹¹¹ “We are reminded,” Nussbaum states, “of how completely solipsistic the infant’s world originally is. All experiences radiate from its own internal states, and although the infant is not yet able to demarcate itself from the surrounding environment in a secure way, its awareness is entirely of itself, and of external agencies only insofar as they lock, magnetlike, onto itself

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 156.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 156. Here Nussbaum is quoting Paul Bloom, “The Moral Life of Babies,” *New York Times Magazine*, 2010, May 5.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 156. Here Nussbaum is utilizing C. Daniel Batson’s, *Altruism in Humans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 195.

¹⁰⁸ Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 156.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 169.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 169.

¹¹¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 169.

and cause an alteration in its own states.”¹¹² Gradually, the infant learns that his/her experiences of hunger and distress are elevated by external agencies, and for quite some time these agencies are seen as separated parts (breasts, arms) not belonging to whole people. “So, the solipsism of infancy colors its first relations to objects: other people figure in the infant’s perceptions and emotions as pieces of the world that help (by feeding and holding) or hinder (by not being there immediately or for long enough.”¹¹³ Nussbaum is convinced that these first experiences shape our emotional life and relation to the world in ways we rarely think of. The infant’s experience, Nussbaum considers, can be very beautifully described in Sigmund Freud’s image – “His Majesty the Baby.”¹¹⁴ Babies expect to be the center of the world, but they are in a helpless situation, where there is no way to promote their wishes: “From this situation develops a host of intense emotions: fear of abandonment and hunger; joy at the restoration of the world; anger when the needed food and comfort do not arrive when wished; and, gradually, shame at the dissonance between expectation and reality. *I am the monarch, and yet here I am alone, hungry, and wet.*”¹¹⁵

Here in this intersection of narcissism and helplessness Nussbaum sees the start of radical evil. This tendency does not appear out of nothing, but is hosted by the context of human development. It gets its start in a form of a need to subordinate others to one’s own needs.¹¹⁶ At this point Nussbaum can meaningfully plug in to yet another concept in the account of problems of emotional and ethical development, namely, anthropodenial. Anthropodenial could be described as “the tendency of humans to refuse to acknowledge their animality and their kinship with other animals.”¹¹⁷ This tendency for Nussbaum causes the split between the life of rationality and soul and the life of the body (with all its realities such as sweat, urine, feces, sexual fluids), the latter is proclaimed to be non-existent in a lot of our philosophical thought. This is uniquely human. Nussbaum adds, “no nonhuman animal denies that it is an animal, hates being an animal, shrinks from others of its kind because they are animals. None aspires to be an angel, above its body and its smells and fluids.”¹¹⁸ At this point Nussbaum situates anthropodenial in her story of early human development. She points out that “what is really resented and denied is not humanity *tout court*, it is the helplessness that we feel, on account of bodies that are vulnerable and often powerless.”¹¹⁹

This primitive narcissism not only causes a lot of problems, it is also hard to overcome. “It is obvious,” Nussbaum states, “that narcissism of this type goes on exercising a pernicious influence in most human lives, as people focus greedily on their own security and satisfaction, neglecting the claims of others, or even seeking to convert them into a slave class who can be relied on to promote security.”¹²⁰

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 171.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 171.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 171.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 172.

¹¹⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, 172.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 159.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 159.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 172.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 172.

3.2.2 *Animal Heritage: Positive Contributions to Morality*

We have seen the possible shortcomings of human emotional equipment. It is remarkably similar to other non-human animals and animal emotions. Human compassion, just as animal, Nussbaum states, “is narrow in extent, relatively rigid, typically hostile to strangers, incapable of connecting to the distant through the imagination.”¹²¹ Human infants, however “from a very early age, prior to social learning, are well equipped to go further in these respects.”¹²² Nussbaum bases her argument once again on the research of Bloom, who suggests that babies experience the emotion of compassion.¹²³ By the age of two, toddlers show the signs of guilt after harming someone and in experiment with puppets, babies overwhelmingly chose the ones that display helpful and not egoistic behavior.¹²⁴ The traces of empathy, compassion, the grasping of guilt are all aspects of “human equipment prior to social shaping”¹²⁵ and this gives the moral theorist resources to work on and try to build on what is already there.

Looking back at the infant’s developmental story told by Stern we can encounter the seeds of this positive make-up that can grow into good ethical conduct if we build on it. We remember that Stern had described the infant’s world as solipsistic, sure only of his/her own existence and experiences. Stern, however, shows the infant’s appreciation of light, which prepares a way to positive and ethical value-laden emotions such as love:

Infants love light, and in calm moods they stare at whatever most attracts their attention. From the beginning, the world is somehow lovable and interesting, not simply an agent of pain relief. There is a self-directed tendency toward relief – security and freedom from distress – but there is also an outward-pulling tendency to investigate, a kind of incipient wonder, which prepares the way for love.¹²⁶

This love of light can be one of the triggers in helping to overcome the fantasy of completeness caused by early experiences of helplessness, in other words, it can help one to overcome primitive narcissism. The perception of the world as lovable is crucial: “It is this outward erotic movement toward the world and its alluring objects – which we can already call wonder, and which we can call love in at least a nascent sense – that proves crucial in propelling infants beyond the frozen state of narcissism.”¹²⁷

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 155. Nussbaum extensively utilizes works of F. B. M. De Waal to discuss morality of animals. For this question see F. B. M. De Waal *Good Natured: The Origins of Right and Wrong in Humans and Other Animals* (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 1996) and *Primates and Philosophers: How Morality Evolved* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).

¹²² Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 155. In this respect Nussbaum utilizes Paul Bloom’s *Descartes’ Baby: How the Science of Child Development Explains What Makes Us Human* (New York: Basic Books, 2004).

¹²³ Cf. Human infants at an early age show emotional contagion, connected to their ability for mimicry. They also learn to distinguish their own pain and the pain of the other very quickly – they cry more in response to recordings of other babies’ cries than other noises and the recordings of their own cries. Here Nussbaum utilizes the argument found in Bloom’s *Descartes’ Baby*.

¹²⁴ Cf. Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 156. Here Nussbaum utilizes the study exhibited in the first chapter of Bloom’s *Descartes’ Baby*.

¹²⁵ Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 156.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 171.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 173-174.

3.2.3 Concluding Remarks

So far we have touched upon very important aspects of Nussbaum's moral psychology and the role it should play in ethics. We have discovered her definition of compassion, which is taken from Aristotle and is highly influenced by the values found in the tragic Greek dramas. Later in the discussion we situated compassion in the context of human psychological equipment. In this regard Nussbaum utilizes contemporary research on children development and tries to show that compassion does not appear out of nothing, but has its roots in our developmental history and the channeling of this emotion is highly influenced by our early experiences. Nussbaum, moreover, analyzes the negative and positive human propensities and how they can shape our moral lives. She has suggested her proposition of the roots of evil human behavior – which she understands similar to Kant, as existing before any particular social shaping, but being elicited by the human condition itself. Nussbaum situates evil in the early stages of human development and sees it as narcissism, which is born out of the negative dynamics between human bodily weakness and high cognitive abilities and which, if not outgrown, can become the will to subordinate others to one's own will. Nussbaum is convinced that we have to address the reality of evil seriously to be able to talk about the good effectively. She, however, also takes good human propensities seriously and basing her thoughts upon the research on the behavior and development of young infants concludes that we can discover a predisposition to embrace the world as lovable. This love of light we will see later on holds something very important for our moral development. Now as we have established the basic understanding of compassion and situated it in human developmental history we can address the question of moral education.

4. EDUCATION OF COMPASSION

Even if we are convinced that compassion offers truthful insights on the nature of personhood and sheds some light on what adequate ethical behavior should look like, we are still to address a very fundamental question of moral education. We have seen that Nussbaum treats compassion as a natural proclivity of human psychology, which then is formed and is influenced by the particular context and culture of the person. Nussbaum is convinced that compassion reveals something essential about us and about how things should be. Yet this is not sufficient for good and sustainable ethical behavior. The thoughts that make up compassion need a proper education in order to grow and direct us at a moral good. Compassion is a complex moral emotion, which needs sustainable ethical guidance to contribute meaningfully to our moral growth. Nussbaum states that: "The problem is that each of its [compassion's] judgments need to be equipped with a correct ethical theory. The judgment of seriousness needs a correct account of the value of external goods; the judgment of nondesert needs a correct theory of social responsibility; the *eudaimonistic* judgment needs a correct theory of proper concern."¹²⁸

Yet before we address education of the three judgments of compassion, we consider that it is important to note that Nussbaum does not consider moral education only a private

¹²⁸ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 386.

matter. We will be right to say that family is a first school of moral values, yet Nussbaum, being a political philosopher, advocates that moral emotions would be promoted at the governmental level in the context of liberal democracy.¹²⁹ Thus the moral growth of compassion is not left aside as only a private matter, but, according to Nussbaum, the promotion of compassionate imagination should be institutionalized. That means that this kind of compassionate imagination ideally should inhabit our institutions and by this form morally responsible citizens.

Nussbaum is well aware that emotions are a messy material to deal with, but she is convinced that a good political regime needs a ‘reasonable political psychology,’ which could address deepest human motivation.¹³⁰ This reasonable political psychology should stand on two pillars: compassionate individuals and institutions which would embody compassionate insights. Nussbaum asserts that we could describe this dynamic as a two-way street: compassionate individuals craft institutions which embody their imagination, institutions in their turn can influence the development of compassion in individuals.¹³¹ The compassionate imagination can live in institutions in concrete ways such as: “In the creation of a tax code and a welfare system, in the creation of levels of offense and punishment in the criminal law, in democratic deliberation about human inequality at many different levels – and, finally, in reflection about the duties of rich nations toward poorer nations, in promoting both political and economic well-being.”¹³²

Having the understanding of the political scope of her thoughts on moral education we can proceed to the presentation of the education of the cognitive content of compassion.

4.1 EDUCATION OF THE JUDGMENT OF SERIOUSNESS: WHAT THINGS WE SHOULD REALLY VALUE?

Nussbaum claims that the judgment of seriousness is informed and educated by a good theory of external goods. In the general introduction of her theory of emotions we have encountered her account of the basic goods she worked out together with Amartya Sen (their working paths separated later on and Nussbaum highlights that she started to think of

¹²⁹ Throughout her works Nussbaum advocates liberal democracy as the most adequate form of societal arrangement. In *Upheavals of Thought* she defines it as “a political conception that attempts to win an *overlapping consensus* among citizens of many different kinds, respecting the spaces within which they each elaborate and pursue their different reasonable conceptions of good,” 401. In her formulation of liberal democracy she is highly influenced and builds up on the ideas of John Rawls. For comparison see John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996). Nussbaum’s own conception of political liberalism is laid-out in detail in Martha C. Nussbaum, *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) and *Creating Capabilities: The Human Developmental Approach* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011). Both books are very similar in its content and structure, the first one representing an earlier version written in a context of universal feminism. These books contain arguments presenting and defending the capabilities approach, while *Upheavals of Thought* and *Political Emotions* are works presenting the moral psychology behind the capabilities perspective.

¹³⁰ This idea is inspired by Rawls’ writings: “The principles of moral psychology have a place for a conception of justice... Thus some view of justice enters into the explanation of the corresponding sentiment; hypotheses about this psychological process incorporate moral notions even if these are understood only as part of the psychological theory.” See John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 491.

¹³¹ Cf. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 405.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 403.

the capability approach independently of Sen and prior to their encounter, inspired by Aristotle's ideas of functioning and Karl Marx's later appropriation of them).¹³³ The capabilities approach, we believe, might be called not only an alternative paradigm of understanding of the good in economics, but also an attempt to create an alternative narration of reality and by this way prompt a change not only in our understanding of a good emotional, social, economic, political functioning, but also promote an action to achieve it.¹³⁴

The capability approach, then, is a philosophical attempt to reflect upon and systematize prevailing intuitions of the meaning of human life. "The core idea is," Nussbaum states, "that of the human being as a dignified free being who shapes his or her own life in cooperation and reciprocity with others, rather than being passively shaped or pushed around by the world in the manner of a 'flock' or 'herd' animal. A life that is really human is one that is shaped throughout by these human powers of practical reason and sociability."¹³⁵ That is the underlying intuition behind the capabilities approach – in this way the citizens and the question of the good are approached. The question that is guiding this approach to well-being is very striking; it actually inquires what a particular person is able to do and to be.¹³⁶ Furthermore, Nussbaum is convinced that the intuition about the worth of the human being crosses the boundaries of cultures and we can find it encapsulated in various religious and some secular traditions. "We see the person as having activity, goals, and projects," Nussbaum opines, "as somehow awe-inspiringly above the mechanical workings of nature, and yet in need of support for the fulfillment of many central projects."¹³⁷ This approach makes a person "a bearer of value, and an end."¹³⁸

4.1.1 The Central Human Capabilities

The basic capabilities list we should note slightly differs according to the particular context in which it is presented. That means it is adjusted to the needs and specific problems of the particular nation. In the *Upheavals of Thought* we are provided with the following list: 1) Life; 2) Bodily health; 3) Bodily integrity; 4) Senses, Imagination, and Thought; 5) Emotions; 6) Practical Reason; 7) Affiliation; 8) Other Species; 9) Play; 10) Control over One's Environment.¹³⁹ Now we should emphasize that numerical order of this list is

¹³³ Cf. Nussbaum, *Women and Human Development*, 70.

¹³⁴ Nussbaum asserts that she conceives the capability approach slightly differently from Sen. Sen primarily sees capability as a space of comparison of the quality of life; Nussbaum agrees with this approach, but sees it as a weaker use of the approach, primarily being a philosophical foundation of the constitutional principles establishing a social minimum or threshold. To put it in her own words: "I agree wholeheartedly with Sen's claims about the capability space, and with the arguments he has used to support them, many of which will be replicated here. But my goal in this book is to go beyond the merely comparative use of the capability space to articulate an account of how capabilities, together with the idea of a threshold level of capabilities, can provide a basis for central constitutional principles that citizens have a right to demand from their governments." Nussbaum, *Women and Human Development*, 12.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 70.

¹³⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, 71.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹³⁹ Cf. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 416-418. It is important to highlight that this list is proposed in a political-liberal spirit and is "a list that can be endorsed for political purposes, as the moral basis of central constitutional guarantees, by people who otherwise have very different views of what a complete good life

relative and is necessary just to arrange the argument systematically; all the elements are of equal importance for a good human functioning.

The list of capabilities very closely resembles the Sophoclean and Aristotelian lists of tragic predicaments,¹⁴⁰ which should not surprise us because tragic authors and Aristotle play a fundamental role in Nussbaum's thought. She sees this list not as a tool of complete education of compassion's judgment of seriousness, but as a good way to inform it. This list, if embedded in public institutions, can speak to people in two ways. Firstly, "the list shapes the judgment in a particular way: for what it tells citizens is not only that certain calamities are particularly grave, but also that they are unjust, wrong."¹⁴¹ On the other hand, if we see that a certain item is not on the list, we are informed that it might not be central.

Nussbaum holds that the capability approach can form our moral judgments and compassion in a serious way because it is an outcome of the compassionate imagination. We believe that in this particular aspect of her ethics we can encounter the meeting of the two-way street Nussbaum mentions – a compassionate imagination forming concepts and institutions, and these in turn forming rational compassion.

Each component of the list is separate (so having one, will not compensate for losing the other), yet they are related to each other in multiple complex ways.¹⁴² We have seen already that the capability approach starts with an intuition that human being is valuable and certain abilities of his/hers bring out a moral claim. This moral claim, however, "must be understood as *a freestanding moral idea*, not one that relies on a particular metaphysical or teleological view."¹⁴³ Nussbaum is convinced that the human abilities that were put to the capabilities list are evaluated from the ethical viewpoint solely and "thus the argument begins from ethical premises and derives ethical conclusions from these alone, not from any further metaphysical premises."¹⁴⁴

4.1.1.1 What Are the Capabilities?

Nussbaum tries to convince her reader that capabilities are the spaces of a possible basic human functioning, which stem from the intuitive recognitions of human value and which can be found across cultures. The basic capabilities are not tied to any metaphysical viewpoint and they can be discerned based only on ethical evaluation.

There are three types of capabilities at stake in Nussbaum's analysis. First of all basic capabilities, those simply could be named as an innate human equipment necessary for the

for a human being would be." Nussbaum, *Women and Human Development*, 74. Yet the list "of the central capabilities is not a complete theory of justice. Such a list gives us the basis for determining a decent social minimum in a variety of areas." Nussbaum *Women and Human Development*, 75.

¹⁴⁰ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 418.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 418.

¹⁴² Cf. Nussbaum, *Women and Human Development*, 81. Nussbaum asserts that "one of the most effective ways of promoting women's control over their environment, and their effective right of political participation, is to promote women's literacy. Women who can seek employment outside the home have exit options that help them protect their bodily integrity from assaults within it. Reproductive health is related in many complex ways to practical reason and bodily integrity. This gives us still more reason to avoid promoting one at the expense of the others." Nussbaum, *Women and Human Development*, 81.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 83.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 83.

more sophisticated capabilities. Nussbaum gives the following example to explain it: “A newborn child has, in this sense, the capability for speech and language, the capability for love and gratitude, the capability for practical reason, the capacity for work.”¹⁴⁵

Secondly, there are internal capabilities and those could be described as “mature states of readiness.”¹⁴⁶ Sometimes this readiness is reached simply by time and bodily maturity (think of sexual functioning), but in most cases “internal capabilities develop only with support from the surrounding environment, as when one learns to play with others, to love, to exercise political choice. But at a certain point they are there, and the person can use them.”¹⁴⁷

Finally there are combined capabilities, “which may be defined as internal capabilities *combined with* suitable external conditions for the exercise of the function.”¹⁴⁸ Nussbaum explains this type of capabilities with the following example: “A woman who is not mutilated but who has been widowed as a child and is forbidden to have another marriage has the internal but not the combined capability for sexual expression (and, in most such cases, for employment, and political participation).”¹⁴⁹ The list of basic capabilities, then, speaks of combined capabilities.

4.1.1.2 Functioning and Capability

An important aspect to discuss is the relation between functioning and capability. Nussbaum speaks of both, but ultimately chooses capability language. Why does she choose this path?

Nussbaum is convinced that “where adult citizens are concerned, *capability, not functioning, is the appropriate political goal.*”¹⁵⁰ For a fully human life we need functioning, yet to keep faithful to the liberal democracy ideals, Nussbaum chooses to speak of capabilities as a political framework. We believe that the core idea is captured in the following quotation:

The reason for proceeding in this way is, quite simply, the respect we have for people and their choices. Even when we feel confident that we know what a flourishing life is, and that a particular function plays an important role in it, we do not respect people when we dragoon them into this functioning. We set the stage and, as fellow citizens, present whatever arguments we have in favor of a given choice; then the choice is up to them.¹⁵¹

Nussbaum is thus speaking of deliberating on the good which leads to a flourishing human life, demarcating the areas where it lies, creating the space for that flourishing, but never pressuring people to engage into action to achieve it. Nussbaum asserts that in this way we can guarantee a fundamental respect for freedom and human choices (and she makes it clear that one can choose a workaholic lifestyle and not respect play, but this is entirely different from someone forced to undermine play due to a lack of working day

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 84.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 84.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 84.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 84-85.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 85.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 87.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 88.

hour regulations).¹⁵²

This should not confuse us – good functioning is always an ultimate goal and hope for societies, yet for political reasons Nussbaum chooses the capabilities language as an adequate way to proceed. In this regard Nussbaum additionally offers a subsidiary argument pointing out that if people are pressured into making certain choices and do not have freedom of choice anymore, their actions lose their worth and they even may represent different functioning (in this case she adds: “functioning of the type this person wants will not arrive at all, if it is made the direct political goal in a way that does not allow latitude for choice”¹⁵³). “Play is not play,” Nussbaum stresses, “if it is enforced, love is not love if it is commanded.”¹⁵⁴

We think that her choice to utilize capability language represents the guiding light of the capabilities approach and her entire ethical project – Nussbaum suggests a universal ethical system, taking a stand on what the good is, yet she takes respect for freedom of choice seriously (and in this case internal sensitivities and personal differences), and attempts to avoid a paternalistic approach.

4.1.1.3 Capabilities Approach and the Relevance of Emotions

We believe that our short introduction to the capabilities approach can help to set a larger framework of Nussbaum’s thought on compassion. The capability approach informs compassion and other emotions but is also conceived according to the emotive knowledge and values they disclose. A closer look at her conception of the capabilities approach can help us to grasp the strong link Nussbaum makes between moral psychology and political philosophy and her constant emphasis of the importance of institutional embeddedness of morally relevant emotions.

As we have seen Nussbaum conceives of the capabilities approach as a philosophical systematization of the cross-cultural intuitions of what it means to be human and what human life is worth. She asserts that her method resembles Rawlsian reflective equilibrium – where “we lay out the arguments for a given theoretical position, holding it up against the ‘fixed points’ in our moral intuitions, and seeing how those intuitions both test and are tested by the conceptions we examine, hoping, over time, to achieve consistency and fit in our judgments taken as a whole.”¹⁵⁵ We also have seen that Nussbaum chose to talk about the human good in capability, not the actual functioning language – this is disclosing of her anthropological picture with strong accents put on human freedom and choice. And yet even though the capability approach tries to create spaces where humans could live a good life without pushing other citizens into any particular action, it still defines what human good might be. In this way Nussbaum is convinced that she suggests a middle ground between subjective welfarism and Platonism – two positions on how preference can figure in social choice.¹⁵⁶ The first position holds that “that all existing preferences are on a par

¹⁵² Cf. *Ibid.*, 87.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 88.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 88.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 175. Nussbaum uses the notion of reflective equilibrium taken from Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 384 n.16.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Nussbaum, *Women and Human Development*, 116-117.

for political purposes, and that social choice should be based on some sort of aggregation of all of them.”¹⁵⁷ Platonism meanwhile states, “that people desire or prefer something is basically not relevant, given our knowledge of how unreliable desires and preferences are as a guide to what is really just and good.”¹⁵⁸ This position is preoccupied with providing arguments for the objective value of a certain agenda and holds that actual desire and choice of particular individuals do not play any role in justifying what is good in political terms. Both positions hold real concerns,¹⁵⁹ but both are found insufficient by Nussbaum. Nussbaum’s own ambition is to maintain respect for human desire and choice, but at the same time take a stance at defining where good might lie. Her approach to capabilities, moreover, wants to avoid paternalism, but without suggesting a relativist point of view. To put it in her own words: “I shall argue that desire continues to play both a heuristic role in arriving at the list of the central capabilities and a limited ancillary role in their justification; nonetheless, it is fruitful to begin from a substantive account of central goods rather than to attempt to derive them from a strictly procedural approach.”¹⁶⁰ This means that Nussbaum holds that the capability language is able to define the areas of possible good human functioning. This is done with attention to people’s preferences, but ultimately those preferences are shaped by the material conditions people are in. Thus one needs to take a critical and careful look not only at what people desire, but also at how people come to want what they want. Nussbaum hence has an intuition that where the basic human capabilities are respected and promoted to functioning, people are able to have better-informed desires and eventually make better choices.

It should not surprise us that Nussbaum holds practical reason and affiliation capabilities central to the capability approach. To put it in her own words: “I have said that practical reason and affiliation are central to the entire project: they suffuse all the other capabilities, making them fully human.”¹⁶¹ Let us take a closer look at the content of these two capabilities. We will also add the capability of emotional functioning which has a direct link to the two others:

5. Emotions. Being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves; to love those who love and care for us, to grieve at their absence; in general, to love, to grieve, to experience longing, gratitude, and justified anger. Not having one’s emotional development blighted by overwhelming fear and anxiety, or by traumatic events of abuse or neglect. (Supporting this capability means supporting forms of human association that can be shown to be crucial in their development.)

6. Practical Reason. Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one’s life. (This entails protection for the liberty of conscience.)

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 117.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 117.

¹⁵⁹ Nussbaum describes the legitimate concerns of both positions in the following way: “Both positions are motivated by genuinely important concerns. Welfarism springs from respect for people and their actual choices, from a reluctance to impose something alien upon them, or even to treat the desires of different people unequally. In effect, it starts from respect for persons, interpreting that as equivalent to respect for preferences. Platonism springs from an urgent concern for justice and human value, and from the recognition that in the real world these values are frequently subordinated to power, greed, and selfish indulgence.” Nussbaum, *Women and Human Development*, 117.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 119.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 92.

7. Affiliation. A. Being able to live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction; to be able to imagine the situation of another and to have compassion for that situation; to have the capability for both justice and friendship. (Protecting this capability means protecting institutions that constitute and nourish such forms of affiliation, and also protecting the freedom of assembly and political speech.)

B. Having the social bases of self-respect and non-humiliation; being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others. This entails, at a minimum, protections against discrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, caste, ethnicity, or national origin. In work, being able to work as a human being, exercising practical reason and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers.¹⁶²

Practical reasoning, a very Aristotelian notion, in pursuing ethical life stems from her views on the nature of humanity – Nussbaum believes in human agency and she speaks of a self-defining agent who can give meaning and goal to his/her life. We should note that she tries to pursue this optimistic goal in a realistic way – in her project Nussbaum attempts to show interest and sensitivity for human evolutionary origins and its influence of human psychology (we have encountered this point earlier). She is also taking very seriously the particular cultural and material circumstances of a person – those are essential to be able to exercise human agency and freedom of choice and self-definition. Nussbaum sees these notions as real characteristics of a human being, but she does not perceive them as indestructible. Earlier we have encountered her views on dignity and human agency – her fierce conviction that human tragedies can strike to the core of agency, impeding this capacity in humans or even destroying it. In her capabilities approach justification, we can encounter further arguments defending this view. This approach was coined to reflect on the political situations of nations and suggest some constitutional guidelines in order to create spaces where individuals could practice their ability to define meaning in their lives and use practical reasoning to achieve this. Thus, we could say that Nussbaum’s ethical project can be conceived as an exercise in practical wisdom and is aimed at advocating a society where it could be exercised.

A second capability central to the whole project is the capability for affiliation. A part of Nussbaum’s layout of the content of this capability speaks of creating a space where one could live ‘with and toward others.’ This goal for Nussbaum is achievable through being able to imagine the situation of the other and be compassionate towards that person. This capability, Nussbaum furthers, is being protected by protecting the institutions which promote it. Our reflection on Nussbaum’s conception of compassion and the need to institutionalize and sustain it thus, can help us to grasp the content of the affiliation capability better. In this way we also learn why compassion can be considered central to her political philosophy.

The B part of this capability speaks of equal dignity of all individuals disregarding any social barriers. This capability speaks of a dignified agent who can practice practical reason (define his/her course of life) and be able to enter a workspace as a worthy peer.

Another capability central to our own project is the capability for emotional functioning. This capability has a direct link to the capability for practical reasoning – we have discovered earlier that for Nussbaum, adequate ethical deliberation always takes into

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 79-80.

account the knowledge that is disclosed by emotions. We can also see that the capability for emotions is supported by supporting the forms of human affiliation which are essential for human development. In this way it has a connection to the capacity for affiliation – the capacity which is strongly supported by protecting the emotion of compassion. Nussbaum, generally speaking, prefers and utilizes the capability language – but in the case of capability for emotions we can encounter her stating that the lack of actual functioning might be indicative of the fact that the capability was surrendered. “Emotional health is an area,” Nussbaum declares, “in which we can usually make such inferences from absence of functioning to absence of capability: if a person always shows suspicion and fear of other people, we usually infer damage to the capacity for love, rather than saying that this person, though able to love, has made a choice not to.”¹⁶³ The absence of emotional experience and responses then might be indicative of a lack of the capability itself. Furthermore, the capability itself speaks of being able to develop attachments where we can experience love, care, grief, and justified anger. We will also discover later on that love for Nussbaum is fundamentally an animating emotion, making trusting other people and life itself possible. This loving-trusting attitude liberates one from dangerous self-love and enables one to have meaningful relationships with others where one does not feel the need to control the other, but enjoys the dynamics of ‘subtle interplay.’ We will discuss this topic later on in this chapter.

4.1.1.4 *The Case of Anger*

The other element of this capability is a chance to experience ‘justified anger.’ We will take a closer look at this emotion together with Thomas Aquinas – anger, especially in a form of indignation, might be an interesting emotion to think of in a context of ethics. Let us nevertheless use the occasion to introduce in a small excursus what Nussbaum has to say about this emotion. *Women and Human Development* does not offer an elaborate account of Nussbaum’s views on anger.

If we turn to the *Upheavals of Thought* we can discover that here also Nussbaum does not engage in an elaborated discussion about the nature of anger. In several instances, however, Nussbaum addresses this emotion and we can interpret her views on it. In section VI, *Revenge and Mercy* of chapter 7 *Compassion: The Philosophical Debate* she briefly addresses the question of the relationship between compassion and retributive justice in the context of the Stoic thought. The worry of a friend of compassion in this regard is the acknowledgment “that the very view of the world that makes a conceptual space for compassion includes, by definition, strong attachments to external objects and therefore leaves a conceptual space for revenge.”¹⁶⁴ Revenge has a close link with retributive justice as an action inspired by this emotion. A Stoic in the face of anger and revenge would recommend the answer we know already, the extirpation of the passions. Anger is too ambivalent and dangerous, and once we adjust our concerns we will see that nothing is really worthy of our intense anger. Nussbaum’s own answer to this kind of Stoic is the following:

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 93.

¹⁶⁴ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 394.

In short, we should simply deny that the excess of anger gives us reason to remove it. We should boldly tell the Stoics that anger is sometimes justified and right. It is an appropriate response to injustice and serious wrongdoing. Indeed, extirpating anger would extirpate a major force for social justice and the defense of the oppressed. If we are worried that anger may spill over onto inappropriate objects, we should focus on that problem, not try to remove anger completely. And if we are worried that angry individuals may inappropriately turn to personal revenge, rather than accepting legal solutions, once again, we should focus on that problem, rather than trying to extirpate anger altogether.¹⁶⁵

Nussbaum seems to justify anger as a motive for social justice and in that sense it can be seen as a legitimate emotion (though anger is always ambivalent and dangerous). In the contexts of situations where we experience injustice that is willingly inflicted upon us the emotion of anger is justifiable. This seems to be a context of the capability for emotions and the notion of ‘justified anger’ encountered there.

In the context of the law, the energy of anger does not need to be connected with desire for personal revenge; the interest of punishing the offender can be channeled through the legal system. Nussbaum reminds us of an image of the Furies from the Aeschylus’ *Oresteia*.¹⁶⁶ The Furies are not banished from the city; they are civilized and made a part of Athena’s legal system. “[T]hey cease to snarl, to crouch like dogs, to sniff for blood[,]” Nussbaum writes, “[b]ut they do not cease to demand punishments for crime: and that sense to place them at the heart of the judicial institutions of the city is to announce that these dark forces cannot be cut off from the rest of human life without impoverishing it.”¹⁶⁷ For Nussbaum these dark and ambivalent forces are also forms of acknowledgment of the importance of the goods that crime is threatening to damage. And in that sense Nussbaum sees a connection between anger and compassion – compassion also understands the size of the goods we greatly value and thus subsequently it grasps the size of victims’ suffering. Thus anger and compassion both demand “of the legal system some appropriate acknowledgment of the meaning of that suffering, and of the fact that it was unjustly inflicted.”¹⁶⁸

Compassion is, not surprisingly, the best guide in these situations for Nussbaum. If in our ethical reasoning we create a conceptual space for deep attachments and thus for emotions as anger and revengefulness that are not that welcomed as love and compassion, we should focus on the growth of the latter. “What we should focus on, instead,” Nussbaum argues, “is how to channel emotional development in the direction of a more mature and inclusive and less ambivalent type of love. Compassion itself, by extending the agent’s concern to people with whom she is not in a relation of painful dependence, makes a powerful contribution toward that development.”¹⁶⁹ Compassion thus deals with questions of justice in a more constructive way by acknowledging the worth and meaning of the goods we value and the significance of suffering, but without the dangerous

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 394.

¹⁶⁶ *Oresteia* dates to the 5th BC and refers to a trilogy of the Greek tragedies. The main theme of it is the shift from taking personal revenge to the legal system. Furies in Greek mythology are chthonic deities of vengeance.

¹⁶⁷ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 396.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 397.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 395.

ambivalence that anger holds. Nussbaum believes that compassion is a good teacher and she claims “when we move the outer circles closer to the self, as an education in proper compassion urges, our inclination to favor projects of revenge toward these distant people, should we even have such projects, will be likely to diminish.”¹⁷⁰ And so she concludes: “Thus if we are justifiably angry with them [the wrongdoers], as we frequently will be, we will have reasons to handle the dispute without destruction.”¹⁷¹

In *Political Emotions* Nussbaum utilizes examples of great political leaders in her judgment, namely, Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, and Jawaharlal Nehru because of their capacity to touch the hearts of citizens by cultivating strong emotions aimed at the common work of building societies aspiring for justice. The question of anger comes to the fore in her example of Martin Luther King, Jr. She claims that the famous “I have a Dream” speech¹⁷² is a formative document of American education.¹⁷³ The speech is built on the ideas of freedom, dignity, inclusion and nonviolence. The range of emotions cultivated in this speech is very telling: King inspired in his listeners a justified anger caused by racism, but at the same time pleaded that violence is never an answer.¹⁷⁴ What Nussbaum wants to show is that King “by cultivating hope and trust, along with legitimate anger and insistent criticism...defuses the urge to violence.”¹⁷⁵ Nussbaum’s concept of legitimate anger, thus, seems to be an emotion instigated by a serious form of injustice. Yet anger is acceptable when it has a link with positive emotions, as in this case with hope and trust, which soothe a violent urge and inspire to build rather than to destroy. The acknowledgment that ‘we cannot walk alone’ in the speech for Nussbaum is also very central in breaking through the situations of injustice.

Anger is discerning in Nussbaum’s thought, as we can find her claiming: “In general, for a subordinated group, recognizing reasons for anger and blame can be an important part of asserting one’s equal dignity.”¹⁷⁶ Thus while getting angry while experiencing injustice and oppression we can discover who we are and what we are truly worthy of. Yet, anger in itself is always an ambiguous emotion that needs to be shaped by love. Anger in Nussbaum’s thought also has a strong connection with radical evil and its outcome

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 395.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 395.

¹⁷² One can listen to the speech and find it transcribed at <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihavedream.htm>

¹⁷³ Cf. Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 235.

¹⁷⁴ A very telling part of the speech in this instance is the following: “It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro’s legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. And those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. And there will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges. But there is something that I must say to my people, who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice: In the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.” The transcription of the speech available at <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihavedream.htm> [accessed 15 December, 2014].

¹⁷⁵ Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 237-238.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 152.

primitive narcissism.¹⁷⁷ Anger at our own helplessness stemming from the condition of our infant stage of development is not removed by time. It persists and Nussbaum argues that love and the spirit of play are the key components in taming and educating it.¹⁷⁸

Nussbaum has been thinking further about the question of anger and in May-June, 2014 she gave the series of lectures entitled *Anger and Forgiveness* in the prestigious John Locke Lectures series at Oxford University. The manuscript of these lectures is going to be published as the same entitled book in Autumn, 2015. A speech entitled *What is Anger, and Why Should We Care?* was given as a preparation for the John Locke Lectures and is posted on the University of Chicago webpage. From some comments also made available on the webpage we can concur that Nussbaum developed rather critical views on anger as an emotion often associated with justice and it seems she would now allow only a transitional form of anger.¹⁷⁹

Nussbaum acknowledges that anger becomes an increasingly popular theme in philosophy and that many people see the struggle against injustice as impossible without anger. This idea, however, for her is “fatally flawed” together with the “nonsensical” idea of retributive justice. Nussbaum’s concern is pragmatic and her perspective is looking forward, thus “a responsible leader has to be a pragmatist, and anger is incompatible with forward-looking pragmatism. It just gets in the way.”¹⁸⁰ Nussbaum argues that we ought to separate deed from the doer (a thought familiar to theologians from Catholic moral teaching¹⁸¹). The idea of the payback is useless because the pain inflicted on the wrongdoer does not bring what was lost back. Furthermore, while in the presence of wrongful acts we should focus not exclusively on punishment, but on the question of how to better the social welfare and the system of justice and education because those areas are critical in creating just societies. Nussbaum once again refers to the lives and work of Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Here Nussbaum once more points us to King’s *I have a Dream* speech that manifests transformed anger for revolutionary or transitional justice. We have seen from the small, yet telling part of the speech that King wowed emotions as anger, hope, and benevolence into a message of equality and better future together. And so he “takes anger and shapes it into hope and a call for constructive social action.”¹⁸²

4.1.1.5 Concluding Remarks

We took a brief look at anger as a part of capability for good emotional functioning. Nussbaum’s views on this emotion evolved into a sharper form of allowing only transitional anger and being critical of a strong link between anger and the fight against injustice. Anger for Nussbaum is an ugly and morally dubious emotion that has more

¹⁷⁷ The discussion on radical evil you can find in section 3.1 *Radical Evil* in this chapter.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 190. We will come back to this topic further in the chapter in section 4.4.1 *The Spirit of Love and Ethics, Compassion and Play*.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Meredith Heagney, “Martha Nussbaum on the Ineffectiveness of Anger (January 16, 2014),” <http://www.law.uchicago.edu/news/martha-nussbaum-ineffectiveness-anger> [accessed 15 December, 2014].

¹⁸⁰ Heagney, “Martha Nussbaum on the Ineffectiveness of Anger.”

¹⁸¹ See, for instance, the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliation and Penance* of John Paul II to the Bishops Clergy and Faithful and Reconciliation and Penance In the Mission of The Church Today.

¹⁸² Heagney, “Martha Nussbaum on the Ineffectiveness of Anger.”

negative consequences on our personal lives and the lives of our political communities. Nussbaum's final answer even in the face of injustice is compassion and love. She is convinced that people, even wrongdoers, should be separated from their evil actions and, furthermore, they always deserve sympathy and respect. She argues that this perspective is a way to truly get closer to justice.¹⁸³

There is a pragmatic force in Nussbaum's argument as it seems a more sustainable and better way to look at the future together without blaming each other (she does not exclude punishment for the crime, to be sure, Nussbaum argues that the focus should be a building action) and constructing the future together. This view is challenged, however, as it is accused of not being sensitive enough to the position and emotions of the one that was wronged, the victim.¹⁸⁴ Amia Srinivasan, a philosopher we will come back to at the end of the discussion of this chapter, argues that Americans accepted King's loving dream because the alternative was Malcolm X's politics of angry defiance.¹⁸⁵ Srinivasan also argues that to ask from victims politically endorsed compassion is a dangerous move because it might encourage the silencing of the voice of the suffering and so perpetuate the unjust political systems, (for Srinivasan, unlike for Nussbaum, our political regimes do not embody almost-just institutions that need further formation, for her they commit injustice and perpetuate unjust treatment of its citizens). We will come back to this topic and discuss it in greater length in section 5.4 *Is Compassion the Only Political Emotion We Owe to Others?* at the end of this chapter.¹⁸⁶

Now looking back for a moment at the capabilities approach, we should highlight that Nussbaum believes that it is a fruitful and adequate way to talk about the good of human being and human development. It attempts to be attentive to transcultural intuitions on the worth of human life, it attempts to respect human desire and choice in defining what that good is and the way one approaches it. At the same time it takes a moral stance pointing out the areas of the possible good and claiming that when those areas are not created, sustained and protected people are deprived from real choice and flourishing. Thus Nussbaum states: "It seems to me that the capabilities account deals well with the problems that plagued the preference-based approach. It does not waste time trying to smuggle a substantive account of central capabilities into a procedure for winnowing desire: it goes directly and forthrightly to the good (and the right), taking an unambiguously clear stand on the need for these items, as an enabling core of whatever else human beings choose."¹⁸⁷ Ultimately and fundamentally the capability approach is guided by the belief that "human beings are creatures such that, provided with the right educational and material support, they can become fully capable of all these human

¹⁸³ Cf. Meredith Heagney, "Martha Nussbaum on the Ineffectiveness of Anger."

¹⁸⁴ See our discussion in the section 5.4 *Is Compassion the Only Political Emotion We Owe to Others?* in this chapter.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. Amia Srinivasan's speech on BBC Radio 4, *Four Thought*, "In defense of Anger (August 27, 2014)," <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04fc70p>. The text can be found at http://users.ox.ac.uk/~corp1468/Welcome_files/Srinivasan_In%20Defence%20of%20Anger.pdf [accessed 25 November, 2014].

¹⁸⁶ We will also continue to discuss anger in Chapter IV, section 2. *Continuing the Case of Anger* with all its subsections, section 2.2 *Contemporary Thinkers on Anger: Anger as a Moral Response to an Imperfect World* where we will again encounter Srinivasan and 2.3 *Nussbaum Against Anger* where we will further explore Nussbaum's views on anger.

¹⁸⁷ Nussbaum, *Women and Human Development*, 149.

functions.”¹⁸⁸

4.2 EDUCATION OF THE JUDGMENT OF NONDESERT

The list of basic capabilities if embodied in political institutions can also shape them and the legal system of the country. The civil and criminal law should embody good standards for personal responsibility. Furthermore, public policies which address difficult situations of particular groups all help to form the judgment of nondesert.¹⁸⁹ The very complex discussions about the welfare and the basic minimum citizens should or should not be entitled to is a difficult topic in most nations. Nussbaum’s works suggest that the outlook on the person, which is encapsulated in the capabilities approach, can inform our thoughts on blameworthiness and justice.

Political discussions on the basic welfare, gender, and crime accountability can significantly inform the judgment of nondesert and evoke our compassion. “The society,” Nussbaum argues, “that incorporates the perspective of tragic compassion into its basic design thus begins with a general insight: people are dignified agents, but they are also, frequently victims. Agency and victimhood are not incompatible: indeed, only the capacity for agency makes victimhood tragic.”¹⁹⁰ This is not a binary choice for Nussbaum – ultimately both characteristics are true to being human. In the aforementioned range of discussions, if aid is renounced to people, it is done for the sake of respect of human agency (thus, choosing to see people as capable and not infantilize them with help). Yet Nussbaum holds that precisely the respect for human dignity requires safeguarding the basic minimum of welfare (as we have seen from her capabilities account; without it the basic capabilities cannot flourish into a true functioning). Nussbaum draws our attention to the fact that in a number of areas, governments create the safe spaces for citizens. Think of protection of the freedom of speech and press and protecting property rights. Even if we hold that people are capable of resourcefulness in a situation of adversity, we do not hold that we victimize the authors when we protect legal action assuring free press.¹⁹¹ Or we do not hold that owners of a property are defenseless when “laws protect citizens from theft and fraud; these laws are backed up by state power, in the form of a police force supported by tax money.”¹⁹²

In fact there are countless ways in which citizens receive material support from their governments which are perfectly acceptable for most of them. Yet why do we in our discussions single out poor people, racial minorities, and women? Thus Nussbaum asks: “what is there about the situation of being poor, or female, or black that means that help is condescending, and compassion insulting?”¹⁹³ Nussbaum is convinced that “legal guarantees, we think, do not erode agency: they create a framework within which people

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 83.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 418. We move to this source as we close down the discussion on the capabilities approach and move to the question of education of compassion. *Upheavals* present a large work on Nussbaum’s views on education of emotions.

¹⁹⁰ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 406.

¹⁹¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 407.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 407.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 408.

can develop and exercise agency.”¹⁹⁴ This view is stemming from her conception of personhood and the convictions embodied in the capabilities approach we discussed above – from the very beginning we need to create spaces where people could be enabled to flourish and material aid is a practical way to achieve it. Nussbaum claims that most of the middle class parents are aware that their kids need financial assistance to provide the basic food, shelter, and other components which lead to a meaningful human life so they could develop their full agency. “It is strange,” Nussbaum continues, “that we so often speak differently about the poor, suggesting that cutting off basic social support is a way of encouraging agency in poor mothers and children, and of improving their character, rather than a way of stifling agency, or of stunting it before it gets a chance to develop. If we do respect human dignity and the capacity for action, we owe them a chance to develop and flourish.”¹⁹⁵

In the thin line between blameworthiness and nondesert we can discover justice – the course of discussion and political action concerning these crucial areas of social life can teach the judgment of nondesert on how one could think of the plights of fellow citizens. The political discussion about what we owe to each other as citizens of particular and then global community, for Nussbaum, has a direct link to education of our thought of nondesert in compassion. Here we can discover the two way dynamics once again – the policies and laws inspired by compassionate imagination will suggest a course of action which will promote and protect a picture of the human being where he/she will be seen as a dignified agent who is at the same time vulnerable. This picture will show that to grow into full agency the human being needs recognition and nurturing of some basic entitlements. As the outlook of this compassionate imagination inhabits the governmental laws and policies it can form the compassionate imagination’s sense of justice in citizens. The laws and policies signal how we ought to see each other in matters where social justice is involved and by this educate the thought of nondesert of compassion.

4.2.1 Education of the Judgment of Nondesert: Compassionate Judges

Nussbaum also addresses the issue of legal rationality and its ability to approach questions of equality and criminal sentencing and by this way to form our compassionate judgments. Nussbaum, as a professor of law philosophy, is convinced that teaching compassion to the future servants of the legal system is crucial for that system in return to teach and inform societies. Thus she claims:

This means, I think, that it is especially important for judges and future judges to acquire the kind of information my imaginary curriculum for citizenship will offer – not just collecting many facts about the diverse ways of life with which he or she is likely to come in contact, but

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 407.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 413. In this instance Nussbaum also quotes William J. Brennan Jr., an associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court known for being a leader of the Court’s liberal wing. Brennan has stated that: “From its founding the Nation’s basic commitments has been to foster the dignity and well-being of all persons within its borders. We have come to recognize that forces not within the control of the poor contribute to their poverty...Welfare, by meeting the basic demands of subsistence, can help bring within the reach of the poor the same opportunities that are available to others to participate meaningfully in the life of community...Public assistance, then, is not mere charity, but a means to ‘promote’ the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity.” *Goldberg v. Kelly* (397 U.S. 264 [1970])

entering into these lives with empathy and seeing the human meaning of the issues at stake in them. Through that curriculum – which can and should be reinforced through instructions in law schools – the future judge will be especially likely to discern various kinds of unequal treatment that certain people and groups have experienced.¹⁹⁶

To illustrate the case of understanding the question of equality correctly Nussbaum invites us to think of the famous Supreme Court case *Loving v. Virginia*.¹⁹⁷ In 1958 Mildred Jeter, a black female, and Richard Loving, a white male, were married in the District of Columbia, according to its laws. The same year their marriage was ruled out as illegal by their native state of Virginia (there they returned to reside) due to violation of Virginia's ban on interracial marriage. The Lovings went to defend their case in Virginia's supreme court and challenged the constitutionality of Virginia's antimiscegenation laws. The court, however, decided that the laws are constitutional because both races suffer equal and symmetrical disadvantages from the prohibition of interracial marriages. Finally, in 1967 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled these laws out as unconstitutional because they clearly uphold white supremacy. This case helps Nussbaum infer that:

[A] democracy could try to construct equality out of laws and institutions alone, without an education of the heart and the imagination. It could simply command citizens to respect the equal rights of those different from themselves, and not to interfere with their legitimate activities. But such a regime of formal equal protection is fragile, as the *Loving* case shows us. When people approach an issue of equal protection externally and formally, without using their imagination to try to understand the human meaning and impact of the laws in question, they are apt to be obtuse about equality, taking formal neutrality to be sufficient for equal protection and missing the role played by hierarchies of race and gender in denying citizens the truly equal worth of the protection of the laws.¹⁹⁸

Nussbaum is convinced that we need judges capable of full rationality and that means that we need judges “who are properly emotional.”¹⁹⁹ True neutrality for Nussbaum requires examination of people's realities “with imaginative participation, looking in particular for evidence that certain groups have suffered unequal treatment and therefore need more attention if they are to be shown a truly equal concern.”²⁰⁰ Rational compassion in this case represents the ability of judges and jurors to master the human facts in front of them. The role of compassion in criminal sentencing is a complex issue, to be sure. But Nussbaum is convinced that “the good judge or juror understands that all human beings are fallible, and that the difference between criminal and juror or even judge is frequently made by personal and social circumstances.”²⁰¹ Being able to access people's situations more adequately creates a certain community between the judge and the criminal: “the judge's willingness to accord significance to the circumstances of an individual human life shows that he is not treating the offender as subhuman or irretrievably alien.”²⁰² Nussbaum discourages consulting disgust in the assessment of the situation of the criminal. This

¹⁹⁶ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 441-442.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 442-443.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 443.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 446.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 445.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 446.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 447.

dangerous moral emotion perceives others as completely alien to our world and for Nussbaum it is one of the inadequate ways to respond to evil. Disgust suggests that

evil is outside, alien, has nothing to do with us. Our disgust creates the boundary: it says, this contamination is and must remain far from our bodies. We might even say, in this case again, that we call disgust to our aid: by allowing ourselves to see evil people as disgusting, we conveniently distance them from ourselves.²⁰³

Nussbaum hence holds if that juridical system is inhabited by compassionate judges, their judgments inform society and form their rational compassion in return.

4.3 EDUCATION OF THE *EUDAIMONISTIC* JUDGMENT

Nussbaum opens this discussion by stating that the public and philosophical debates have no agreement on how much we owe to different groups of people, starting from the ones close to us and going as far as human community, yet we can find a rather general agreement that we are too narrow in our sympathies.²⁰⁴

Nussbaum is again convinced that legal systems and public policies can inform this judgment “by situating people close to one another, it makes it easier to see one’s plight in the plight of another.”²⁰⁵ She suggests several concrete strategies that may aid citizens to hear and see each other. Nussbaum argues that the abstract argumentation about human equality cannot break through the social barriers we have built. She suggests that affirmative action which would intend to empower the oppressed groups might be an important step in a practical change.

Another very prominent idea in Nussbaum’s works is a proper treatment of the mentally handicapped which can expand the bounds of compassion in enormous ways.²⁰⁶ Nussbaum uses the example of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*,²⁰⁷ an act of legislation, which in fact aids to alter the judgment of proper bounds of concern. The act ensures that every child can receive adequate education in the ‘least restrictive environment.’ Allowing mentally healthy children to be with mentally differently-abled children redefines the landscape of both lives. Furthermore, “when children see a wider range of behavioral and cognitive functioning in their classrooms, they are less likely to demonize these children as disgusting outcasts.”²⁰⁸

Our political communities and values they promote influence and define our judgments in essential ways, which are not always evident from the first glance. Nussbaum

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 451.

²⁰⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, 420.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 421.

²⁰⁶ Cf. Martha C. Nussbaum, “Disabled Lives: Who Cares?,” *The New York Review of Books* 48 (2001): 34-37.

²⁰⁷ “The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the federal law that supports special education and related service programming for children and youth with disabilities. It was originally known as the Education of Handicapped Children Act, passed in 1975. In 1990, amendments to the law were passed, effectively changing the name to IDEA. In 1997 and again in 2004, additional amendments were passed to ensure equal access to education.” <http://www.washington.edu/doit/Stem/articles?48> [accessed 30 June, 2014.]

²⁰⁸ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 422.

through her major works defends the idea that societies can be judged by their treatment of the ‘weak.’ If less abled people are integrated well in a society, or at least the legal action and policies attempt to do so, it indicates that this kind of society is not hiding from human weakness and fragility, characteristics, which next to capability and agency are a part of the human condition. Nussbaum defends and promotes an early encounter with ‘different’ people because, she is convinced, the proximity of the other, the chance to see the other person makes his/her plight real to us. At this moment of common experience, Nussbaum claims, the abstract theorizing about disability or whatever difficult situation of the other, becomes a concrete experience of the person, which is, rather self-evidently, more vivid and can touch us immediately. These experiences are very important at the young age to form not only our perceptions about different bodies and various kinds of cognitive abilities, but consequentially the way we treat weaker members of our societies. For Nussbaum, as mentioned above, our way of approaching the disabled people is disclosing of who we are. First, it shows the level of primitive shame in the particular community. “A society,” Nussbaum asserts, “will be most likely to decrease the influence of primitive shame on its public life if it conveys the idea that there is nothing shameful about having a human body subject to all vicissitudes of time, age, weakness, and illness.”²⁰⁹ This society no longer tells a story that all its members are independent rational adults and acknowledges and embraces the stages of weakness, neediness and dependency, which, in fact, mark beginning and ending of human life.²¹⁰

4.3.1 Humanities at the Aid of the Eudaimonistic Judgment: Tragedy and Comedy as Didactical Tools

The education of the *eudaimonistic* judgment and its aid – the similar possibilities judgment – takes up an important part in Nussbaum’s project. Nussbaum seems to suggest that this judgment of proper concern and compassion is heavily influenced by our access to the humanistic education. She is a vocal advocate for the need and protection of human sciences in education systems as a way for good citizenship.²¹¹ We shall not engage in that

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 424-425.

²¹⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 425. Here Nussbaum is inspired by the argument found in Eva F. Kittay, *Love’s Labor: Essays on Women, Equality, and Dependency* (New York and London: Routledge, 1999).

²¹¹ The idea that the humanities serve good citizenship is rather salient in Nussbaum’s works. She is convinced that the humanities promote imaginative experiences of the other and allow people to participate in other people’s lives – be they joyous or full of suffering. This, Nussbaum argues, educates the judgment of proper concern, which is a part of compassion. This journey of moral learning starts already at an early age when young children are introduced to fairy tales, fables, and songs. These usually make the distant objects close to a child’s imagination, opening his/her scope and awakening his/her curiosity for the world and its objects. The story has more psychological force and triggers our imaginations in the ways that mere learning of facts simply cannot. Stories of other people’s experiences present their plights in a vivid manner and make the reader a part of that experience. Gradually, one becomes ready to be introduced to various human calamities in a form of more complex literary works. Nussbaum, as we have seen from our account, is convinced that this helps to educate compassion, which also serves a political purpose as people become responsible and caring citizens. Nussbaum elaborates her argument on defense of humanities in her work *Not for Profit. Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* (New Jersey/ Oxfordshire: Princeton University Press, 2010). We will address this topic further in Chapter IV, section 3.3.1 *Nussbaum on Cultivation of Emotions* where we will present our interpretation of Nussbaum’s vision of education of human emotions in a nutshell.

discussion largely because this is a large topic in itself, but we will touch upon two didactic tools, which Nussbaum holds as essential to formation of compassion. Nussbaum suggests that we should take a closer look at the Greek model of education and proposes that genres of tragedy and comedy can be good didactic tools, which can activate, inform, and educate our psychological mechanisms.

4.3.2 *Tragedy*

In her views on education of compassion through tragedy Nussbaum comes back to her ancient philosophy roots and holds that the Greek model of education can, indeed, be useful today. Utilizing primarily examples of the classical Greek tragic dramas Nussbaum argues that they serve not only aesthetical function, but they play an important role in moral education. Tragedy in Nussbaum's account has a revealing character because it discloses something very important about life itself. The elements of life's fragility, unpredictability and the force of human suffering that can cut deeply into human agency are very salient in Nussbaum's thought; they are greatly inspired by the Greek tragedies. Nussbaum is convinced that those elements are the core characteristics of life and one should go back to the tragic dramas to rediscover them.

4.3.2.1 *Tragedy and Education of the Eudaimonistic Judgment*

How do tragic dramas teach us? The same mechanism used to inform the *eudaimonistic* judgment by situating people close to each other is at work here. Tragic drama also enables us to see the plights of other people. Nussbaum, hence, discovers two salient elements in tragic dramas that might be helpful for moral education – the values they convey and the context of proximity they create. In the process of tragic drama spectatorship (in ancient Greece it was this genre, nowadays the elements of genre can be transferred through its modern equivalents) one learns to feel compassion. “By inviting the spectator to become intensely concerned for the fate of the tragic hero,” Nussbaum states, “and at the same time portraying the hero as a worthy person, whose distress does not stem from his own deliberate wickedness, the drama sets up compassion; an attentive spectator will, in apprehending it, have that emotion.”²¹² Tragic drama in its nature requires extension of sympathy. Nussbaum asserts that tragedy requires the spectator to shift through very wide scopes of landscapes and undermine the barriers of national belonging and gender. The tragic Greek dramas went from Greece to Troy, from male citizens to females who both were the victims of wars, just to recognize the common humanity in all.²¹³

Nussbaum is convinced that “argument cannot function well without imagination.”²¹⁴ Tragic dramas serve the purpose of civic reflection and do it in a way that raises our

²¹² Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 428.

²¹³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 429-430.

²¹⁴ Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 260. We move to this source because *Political Emotions* presents an expanded argument about the role of tragedy in moral education. It employs a direct encounter, Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, to lay the case of how tragedy through the experience of common bodily vulnerability can teach the sense of compassion in us.

emotional awareness. It aids at deliberating about the lives of others, but it does it in a way that their reality becomes also real to us.²¹⁵

4.3.2.2 *Tragedy and Education of the Judgment of Seriousness*

Tragic drama, Nussbaum argues, also speaks to our judgment of seriousness. First of all, it encapsulates something she calls ‘a democratic experience,’ the “one that acknowledges the equal frailty of all human beings and their fully equal need for the goods of life that Philoctetes [the tragic hero] so conspicuously lacks: food, shelter, relief of pain, conversation, nondeceptive friendship, political voice.”²¹⁶ In viewing tragic drama, the audience recognizes the need for these goods and feels compassion for the heroes deprived of them. Tragic drama exposes the thoughts that constitute compassion and gives spectators “a map of compassion,”²¹⁷ enabling them to see what happens when one has no access to basic goods.

Sophocles’ *Philoctetes*²¹⁸ portrays the drastic consequences of human suffering and physical pain. This clearly “affects the mental life itself, poisoning speech and thought.”²¹⁹ Moreover, “pain infantilizes.”²²⁰ Nussbaum’s aim is to show repeatedly that human suffering should not be romanticized, but it should be addressed seriously. Tragedy, Nussbaum discloses, points out that human suffering and pain matter, and moreover, it should matter to all of us.²²¹

Nussbaum furthers that the play *Philoctetes* portrays a life of an outcast, who has been stigmatized abandoned, and considered not fully human anymore.²²² Yet the play takes up the role to convince the spectators by convincing the other characters within it of the full and equal humanity of Philoctetes. Nussbaum is convinced that tragedy works in a unique way: it juxtaposes very sensitive social questions and aesthetic tools to convey its message. This helps the audience to step into the lives of the characters they might fear, might find disgusting but without initial fear of real-life situations. Tragedy opens a veil of broken lives, but allows the spectator to access them securely through mediums of poetry and melody. To put it in Nussbaum’s words: “By addressing such a scenario, but without the sensory qualities that elicit disgust and without the real-life involvement that could arouse fear, tragedy undermines exclusion.”²²³

Nussbaum is also convinced that tragedy conveys universal values – ultimately they always address common human plights. Nussbaum asserts that tragedy has “an outward or universalizing movement that tends to correct the narrowing focus [...] all too prevalent in compassion.”²²⁴ This is a particularly important point, as the goal of Nussbaum’s project is

²¹⁵ Cf. Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 260.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 262.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 263.

²¹⁸ The play was written by Sophocles and debuted in 409 BCE. It depicts the Trojan War period and tells the story of efforts of Neoptolemus and Odysseus to bring the disabled Philoctetes (a former glorious archer) with them to Troy.

²¹⁹ Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 263.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 264.

²²¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 264.

²²² Cf. *Ibid.*, 264.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 264.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 265.

to suggest an approach to ethics where emotion and principle can meet to sustain and inspire each other – tragedy seems to show that emotion can already have “a bridge towards [the] universal.”²²⁵

4.3.2.3 *Tragedy and Value Conflict*

Tragedies, moreover, speak of value conflict. This aspect is essential to ethics and the ongoing discussions we have. Tragedy refuses the simplification of our moral lives, it speaks about a plural society, about its different members and their aspirations. Most importantly they open the mindset of living the questions. In this regard Nussbaum guides us to the setting of Indian epic *Mahabharata*.²²⁶ Nussbaum presents us with the moral dilemma of Arjuna who has to choose between his family members fighting for the throne: one party led by his brother, the rightful heirs, and another led by his cousin and friends who have wrongfully usurped the throne.²²⁷ Nussbaum suggests taking a closer look at this story: in fact, it confronts us with two kinds of questions. The first question is the obvious question, Nussbaum states, and it asks what ought to be done?²²⁸ The answer to this question, however, is not obvious. One will always have to deliberate, to choose the most appropriate methods to arrive at an answer. “What is not difficult, however,” states Nussbaum, “is to see that it is a question that has to be answered, since some action must be taken, and even inaction is, in such a situation, a kind of action.”²²⁹ This is why Nussbaum calls the question of what ought to be done obvious. But there is something more at stake in moral dilemmas of any kind and Nussbaum calls it the tragic question. To put it simply, this question can be avoided, if we just look to the several alternatives and see the conflict between duty and other moral sentiments. But the tragic question asks whether any answers to the first question are morally acceptable after all. “The tragic question registers,” Nussbaum continues, “not the difficulty of solving the obvious question, but a distinct difficulty: the fact that all the possible answers to the obvious question, including the best one, are bad, involving serious moral wrongdoing. In that sense, there is no ‘right answer.’”²³⁰

Nussbaum directs her reader to see that the tragic clash of values poses the tragic question.²³¹ These situations occur not that often in life and usually indicate extreme moments in societies (war time for example), and making one choice or the other, even

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 265.

²²⁶ It dates to the 3rd century BCE and is one of the two major Sanskrit epics. Traditionally, the authorship is attributed to Vyasa. The story centers around the Kurukshetra War and the fates of the Kaurava and the Pandava princes.

²²⁷ “Arjuna saw his closest kinsmen, related to him as father or grandfather, uncle or brother, son or grandson, preceptor as well as companion and friend, on both sides. Overcome by this site, he said in sorrow and compassion, ‘O Krishna, when I see my own people ready to fight and eager to battle, my limbs shudder, my mouth is dry, my body shivers, and my hair stands on end. Furthermore, I see evil portents, and I can see no good in killing my own kinsmen. It is not right and proper that we should kill our own kith and kin, the Kauravas. How can we be happy if we slay our own people?’” Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 266 quoting *Mahabharata* trans. Chakravarthi V. Narasimhan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), Book 6, ch. 23.

²²⁸ Cf. Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 267.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 267.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 267-268.

²³¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 268.

avoiding it has very painful consequences. Yet the tragic question, if we do not omit it, reminds us that ‘we have dirty hands’ no matter what decision we will make. Nussbaum is convinced that asking whether any alternatives in extreme clashes of values is moral helps the participants of the situation and the viewers of it to be reminded of the moral commitments that ought not to be abandoned and should be reinforced.

To sum up, for Nussbaum tragic dramas have political implications for a good civic life. Firstly, they disclose the basic entitlements of persons and the tragic consequences when people are deprived of them. Tragedies convey their values through the mediums of music and poetry, by this reaching out to our emotional attentiveness and directing it to common human plights. In this process they are able to shape human compassion. Secondly, “through the emotionally difficult experience of tragic dilemmas, citizens learn that some costs, some losses, have a distinctive nature: they are bad in a distinctive way. No citizen should have to bear them.”²³² Nussbaum is convinced that tragic spectatorship can trigger citizens to imagine the world without tragic conflicts, or at least the world where they would appear as least as possible and “[s]uch a cast of mind is itself progress.”²³³

4.3.3 Comedy

While the didactic worth of tragedy is rather prominent throughout Nussbaum’s works,²³⁴ in her latest writings the element of the spirit of laughter appears. Comedy appears as a second important element of moral education next to the tragic drama. These two poles now seem to balance each other out and offer a fuller perspective on our moral lives. Furthermore, in the later thought of Nussbaum the tragic and comic spectatorship is connected to the human body. The tragic spectatorship seems to evoke the awareness of shared human possibilities through our common bodily vulnerability.²³⁵ While comedy looks at the other side of the same coin and finds the human body worthy of celebration. Tragic drama focuses on development of compassion, while comic drama addresses disgust (a dangerous societal emotion for Nussbaum, which tends to narrate others as worthy of exclusion) and seeds the spirit of fellowship.²³⁶

²³² *Ibid.*, 271.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 272.

²³⁴ The tragic sense, the idea that we cannot control life fully is present in Nussbaum’s writings despite the varying discussions she tackles, be it compassion (its cognitive content, remember, is inspired by Aristotle who in his own right is influenced by Greek tragedy) in the *Upheavals of Thought* Chapter 6 *Compassion: Tragic Predicaments*, 297-236; the discussion about education of compassion in *Political Emotions* chapter 9 *Tragic and Comic Festivals: Shaping Compassion, Transcending Disgust*; or, speaking broadly, any discussion on the ethical value of emotions and the unpredictability of life they register, for instance, discussion on disgust and shame in law in *Hiding From Humanity. Disgust, Shame and the Law* (Princeton University Press: Princeton and Oxford, 2004) or the compilation of her essays found in *Love’s Knowledge*, essays *Introduction: Form and Content, Philosophy and Literature*, 3-53 and *Transcending Humanity* 365-392 among others. Finally, Nussbaum addresses tragedy directly in one of her early works *The Fragility of Goodness. Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1986). The intuitions of this book are also observed in all the aforementioned works.

²³⁵ Cf. Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 258.,

²³⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, 261.

Nussbaum directs our look to the classical piece of Aristophanes *The Acharnians*²³⁷ and its two characters – Lamachus the tragic hero and Dikaiopolis the comic hero. Lamachus is the heroic general, who comes from the battle severely injured and weeping from pain. Dikaiopolis is a rural obscene farmer, who has opposed the war. Both of them represent different sets of values. Lamachus represents the intuitions we have presented in the above section, describing the didactical worth of tragic drama. In him we recognize our common human vulnerability which can raise our emotional awareness. While Dikaiopolis, with his obscene lifestyle, represents the simple joys of life. In the dialogues between the two we can discover something very essential about life itself – the human life ultimately consists of both – the tragic events that hurt us deeply and simple everyday joys that keep us going. Nussbaum brilliantly describes this dynamics in the following quote: “As each tragic utterance is comically answered, the very excess and shamefulness of the comic hero look like a kind of healing: normal life, and the pleasures that all human beings love, rather than the cruel depredations of war, such as bed for pleasure, rather than bed for wounds.”²³⁸ The tragic hero represents human dignity, the comic hero violating all the norms of dignified conduct²³⁹ “stands for the messy, smelly, uncomfortable body, and the delights it can bring.”²⁴⁰

We could say that Nussbaum highlights two elements in comedy which she finds important for moral and civic deliberation. Comedies, among other things, promote the already mentioned joy of body and peace. When it comes to reflection on the human body comedy takes the fragility of human body, the same element, which was highlighted by tragedy and sees it differently. Comedy takes the bodily fragility, common human activities which are usually veiled as not existing, and invites people to celebrate it, to revel in their bodies. Nussbaum explains this in the following way:

Excretion, sex, and sweat are shown as signs of great vulnerability – many of the jokes in Aristophanes turn on the way and an ambitious plan is derailed by the need to take a shit, or by the embarrassment of having farted at the wrong time, or by an unwelcome erection. But the vulnerability is embraced as common to all, as just a part of being alive, connected to life’s joy. And the comedies celebrate that fragile joy – while repudiating the all-too-common pretense that one is invulnerable.²⁴¹

Nussbaum draws our attention to the fact that the bodily joys that comedy presents can be enjoyed only during the period of peace and here we encounter the second important element of comedies. In the *Acharnians* Dikaiopolis, a rural farmer and representative of bodily joys, comes to the assembly to argue for peace. He loves “democratic politics, tragic poetry, peace, the countryside.”²⁴² The spirit of the comedy

²³⁷ The play is dated 425 BCE and it tells a story of Dikaiopolis who obtains a private peace treaty with Spartans during the Peloponnesian War (the work illustrates the benefits of peace and appeals to end the war).

²³⁸ Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 259.

²³⁹ Everything about the comic hero indicated this: starting from the shapeless costume, public eating, defecation, farting, perpetual erection that ought to embarrass the spectator. See Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 271.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 272.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 272.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, 272.

promotes these goods through political arguments rooted in bodily functions. Those kinds of arguments are attentive to bodily needs, peace and welfare. It serves a good public life by always keeping an eye on the ordinary citizens and their basic needs. “Peace [...] is imagined, as always in Aristophanes, as a time of sensory delight: food, drink, sex, religious and poetic celebration.”²⁴³ It seems, Nussbaum furthers, that this spirit of play with its focus on the bodily delight promotes stability of our societies and peace.²⁴⁴

Nussbaum argues that the underlying experience of the comedy, which is the experience of the love of the human body “can carry us forward.”²⁴⁵ This is a message of inclusion – we tend to label the aspects of our bodily life “as forbidden territory, telling ourselves that what makes us uncomfortable is outside and ‘other.’”²⁴⁶ But, Nussbaum asserts, “if we learn to love and celebrate what is noisy, messy, tumultuous – including, prominently, our own messy sexuality – then we will be less likely to hate and oppress the others.”²⁴⁷ This is the core of the comic spirit according to Nussbaum – to take a light, loving look at ourselves and our bodies, to see it as a commonality with others, and to actually enjoy it. Good ethical principles infused by the insights of the comic spirit will not cease “to bind citizens to what they love”²⁴⁸ and “laughter, while remaining lighthearted and earthy – indeed, precisely because it is [...] – can surmount disgust and promote common good.”²⁴⁹

4.3.4 Concluding Remarks

Nussbaum presents us with some valuable insights about the tragic and comic dramas. But the times of the ancient Greek festivals are long gone. How ought we to utilize the achievements found in these literature pieces? Should classical Greek literature be a compulsory read in high schools? Even in that case we would need experts in the genre to deliver the message powerfully to his/her pupils. Or does Nussbaum ask us to become experts in literature? This might strike us as an idealistically elitist aim. Nussbaum, however, claims that her goal is not to suggest artistic erudition, but to point out the role of artistic endeavors.²⁵⁰ Tragedy and comedy (and the other forms of arts, not only literary) give us not only aesthetic experience, they are powerful didactical tools which are able to influence our moral growth. Moreover, ultimately they have political consequences for a good citizenship. Nussbaum is aware that contemporary societies cannot replicate the Greek model of civic and moral education, yet “they can try to understand their political role and find their own analogues – using political rhetoric, publicly sponsored visual art, the design of public parks and monuments, public book discussions, and the choice and content of public holidays and celebrations.”²⁵¹

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 274.

²⁴⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, 275.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 296.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 296-297.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 296.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 313.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 313.

²⁵⁰ Cf. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 432.

²⁵¹ Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 261.

Furthermore, Nussbaum points out at a very prominent element of her thought – childhood development. Most of our education starts there, the tragic spectatorship not being an exception. Children go through a wide range of emotional experiences through stories they hear – Nussbaum reminds us of such recognizable characters as Bambi or Hayao Miyazaki’s film *My Neighbor Totoro*.²⁵² These stories confront children with such grief-filled experiences as a loss of a mother or children in difficult social settings. Well-composed children stories are also good didactical tools – they are the first window (if the family situation is not a proximate first experience of suffering) to see human fragility and the consequences of human suffering, and in this regard they are also one of the first things to inform children’s compassion. Nussbaum’s argument moves further to promotion of good artistry from elementary schools to freedom for talented artists to create and inspire societies. The analysis of these elements fall short of the scope of our research – as our goal is to collect the main insights that tragedy and comedy can offer to our moral education and growth.

In her argumentation Nussbaum suggests looking at worthy artistic pieces and let them inspire us. Tragedy gives birth to compassion and at the same time corrects some judgments inherent to the emotion. Comedy, a younger element in Nussbaum’s thought, suggests that human vulnerability is also a *locus* of celebration. The simple everyday joys have a healing power over our fragile, weak bodies, and minds taunted by worries and anxieties. The tragic spectatorship, without a doubt, evokes and teaches our compassion. It teaches us to care beyond our own and to reach out to the far ‘others.’ Comic spectatorship twists the coin for a moment, takes a look at the fragile human body susceptible with all the ills, and smiles at it. The common human bodily experiences are the sources of fun and are worthy of revel. Nussbaum seems to suggest that we should feel compassion for the suffering other, but we should also, indeed, take pleasure in bodily joys, because those are truly celebrated in periods of peace, periods that are a dream of all aspiring people and societies.

Yet we can still ask ourselves, are the values promoted by the tragic and comic dramas and the deliberation they inspire only accessible through artistic mediums? Any meaningful and adequate discussion has to be fortified by data, Nussbaum answers.²⁵³ But a story, more than a detached way of describing a situation, has a sense of immediacy. Stories can forcefully bring the reader or the listener to the life of a portrayed person, he/she understands the power of the actor’s plight and in this process makes the hero part of his/her *eudaimonistic* circle of concern. Furthermore, “the compassion such a work inspires is in principle highly pertinent to helping behavior.”²⁵⁴

4.3.5 Education of Compassion: Realist Novel, the Role of Media, and Political Leaders

With regards to the education of compassion we would like to draw attention to some less salient, but important aspects of it. Nussbaum notes that the realist social novel might be a helpful tool in educating compassion and helping its judgments go beyond specific social barriers. This, as well as the tragic drama, shows concrete circumstances of various social

²⁵² Cf. *Ibid.*, 276.

²⁵³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 295.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 295.

groups and enables one to encounter them. “In this way,” Nussbaum claims, “it 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.”²⁵⁵ At the same time Nussbaum urges that education of compassionate citizenship should also be multicultural.²⁵⁶ In this way people can learn about the diversity of circumstances in which others are trying to flourish.

Nussbaum also reminds us of the role of media in education of compassion as it is a great source conveying information to a large amount of people. The media has power to influence the judgment of similar possibilities – “its choices of images and roles, in news stories, advertising, and drama, will have important consequences for citizens’ moral abilities, for better or worse.”²⁵⁷ Nussbaum is aware that citizens can be confronted with these issues in the educational environment – yet the media is pressured to convey their contents in accordance with market pressures (not to say that schools and universities are free from it, yet the pressure is less in terms of choosing the teaching material). Nussbaum asserts that in this regard “a number of solutions suggest themselves, ranging from the corporate grants that already underwrite some risky public programming, to informal guidelines and standards for the industry, mandatory public interest programming, and subsidies for national broadcasting.”²⁵⁸

Nussbaum takes up yet another point that can inform our compassion, namely, the role of political leaders. In this regard we could say that Nussbaum draws our attention to the visionaries of the society, broadly speaking, and the power of their compassionate outlook to inspire other citizens. “If Candace Clark’s study is valid,” Nussbaum opines, “Americans are highly responsive to ‘sympathy entrepreneurs’ who define for the general public norms of appropriateness in the areas of seriousness, responsibility, and extent of concern. Although such entrepreneurs come in many forms – journalists, civic awareness groups, artists and musicians – political leaders are such entrepreneurs inevitably.”²⁵⁹ To build her case more convincingly, Nussbaum utilizes the image of the ideal leader developed by Walt Whitman. In his poems Whitman promoted democratic values and articulated that the imagination of poets can hold democracy together (in this case one can look at his *By Blue Ontario’s Shore*, one of his central works). The poetic imagination of the leader can pierce through the lives of the people and finally he/she becomes the barrier of those lives showing compassion “for all the nation’s classes, ages, and races.”²⁶⁰ Thus Nussbaum concludes that “we should demand political leaders who display the abilities involved in a reasonable and appropriate compassion – who show not just mastery of pertinent facts about their society and its history, but also the ability to take on in imagination the lives of the various diverse groups whom they propose to lead.”²⁶¹

4.4 THE SPIRIT OF LOVE

²⁵⁵ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 431.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 432.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 434.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 435.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 438. Here Nussbaum utilizes the outcomes of Clark’s study once again. See her *Misery and Company*, 84-93.

²⁶⁰ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 436.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 435.

We encountered the didactical tools Nussbaum considers to be very important in education of compassion. Next to it, Nussbaum points out that it is very important to connect our ethical endeavors, even the moral emotion of compassion to a spirit of love. That is coming back to the very root of it (as we remember, for Nussbaum love is at the root of every emotion).²⁶² To look at this issue more in depth we will have once again to come back to the story of child's development.²⁶³ Nussbaum is convinced that the spirit of love makes the moral rules and norms meaningful, full of life. The key to understanding the roots of the spirit of love and its work lies in an infant's development, according to Nussbaum. In this regard she again turns to the works of Donald Winnicott.

Nussbaum considers love as a way to relate to the other, a relationship and it involves "a delighted recognition of the other as valuable, special, and fascinating; a drive to understand the point of view of the other; fun and reciprocal play; exchange, and what Winnicott calls 'subtle interplay;' gratitude for affectionate treatment, and guilt at one's own aggressive wishes or actions; and finally and centrally, trust and a suspension of anxious demands of control."²⁶⁴ Only through trust in the world we cannot control can one find a way out of narcissism. This trust does not grow out of nothing, it has its roots in the infant's developmental circumstances. And it is made possible by "the lovable behavior of the parent – combined with the wonder, love, and creativity of the child, which has its ultimate roots in the child's wonder at the light, its erotic outward-moving curiosity."²⁶⁵ Nussbaum emphasizes that this is ultimately the idea behind her project and quoting Mozart and Da Ponte she adds: "this day of torment, of craziness, of foolishness – only love can make it end in happiness and joy."²⁶⁶

It seems that Nussbaum is convinced that 'all we need is love' which animates our relationships and our ethical conduct. Furthermore, the absence of love at a young age makes children incapable of managing their aggressive wishes and later on they do not become capable of endowing rules of conduct with inner life.²⁶⁷ Nussbaum understands that stable concern has to be safeguarded by ethical norms and respect, but she is convinced that "morality cannot survive in a world where anxiety is unrelieved by trust and love; that genuine concern for others rests on a capacity for empathetic understanding and the sense that the other's perspective matters; and, finally, that genuine concern requires confidence in one's own ability to give, an attitude that is deeply imperiled by both shame

²⁶² In Chapter I, section 1.5 *Nussbaum's Judaism* we explored her view on love.

²⁶³ We have analyzed Nussbaum's account of childhood development in Chapter I, section 2.4. *Roots of Emotional Experience in Infancy*. There we have already encountered that Nussbaum extensively utilizes Winnicott's works, see section 2.4.5 *Facilitating Environment and 'Mature Interdependence:' From Families to Political Institutions*.

²⁶⁴ Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 175-176. This idea is present also in *Upheavals of Thought* when Nussbaum presents the general structure of emotions, especially their development and roots in infancy. She extensively uses the works of Winnicott, whose concept of 'subtle interplay' she seems to value greatly. See chapter 4 *Emotions and Infancy*, 174-238, of which the first part *Need and Recognition* of *Upheavals* is dedicated to this topic.

²⁶⁵ Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 176.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 176. Nussbaum using the quotation from Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Lorenzo Da Ponte, *Le Nozze di Figaro* (1786).

²⁶⁷ Cf. Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 176.

at helplessness and the awareness of one's own aggressive wishes."²⁶⁸ Nussbaum is convinced that the moment of generosity in life, the 'yes' toward the other becomes possible through the spirit of love and in fact is this spirit: "There has to be moments of generosity, in which one is willing to be at the mercy of another who is mysterious, and approachable only in a spirit of play and wonder."²⁶⁹

We might wonder why an ethical project (and in Nussbaum's case, also a political project) needs to take into account these personal matters? Nussbaum's answer remains the same – if we take a critical look at who we are and our own development, if we utilize adequate sources to investigate and understand it, we can find resources necessary for a good emotional and ethical functioning. Ethics needs to "tap these sources of early trust and generosity, the erotic outward movement of the mind and heart toward the lovable."²⁷⁰ The attempt to discover and work with the deeper motivations and the existential meaning of ethical conduct can aid at sustaining our institutions "against the ongoing pressure exerted by egoism, greed, and anxious aggression."²⁷¹

4.4.1 Ethics, Compassion, and Play

Ethics seems a serious matter, and rightfully so. Yet Nussbaum, inspired by Winnicott's account draws our attention to a very important aspect of any ethical project – a sense of playfulness in it. "Play, for Winnicott," Nussbaum claims, "in its most general sense, is an imaginative activity in which one occupies a 'potential space,' a realm of unreality that is peopled with stories that enact hypothetical possibilities. In this realm children do exercise a greater measure of control than in the world of reality, since they write the script."²⁷² Nussbaum is convinced that Winnicott's definition of play is very close to what Aristotle ascribes to tragic drama – that we confront in it things that are not personally painful, so we can learn the general structure of life there.²⁷³

Play as such facilitates very important primary experiences and it is a space where children learn to explore their emotions. A key term in understanding play in Winnicottian terms is a 'transitional object.'²⁷⁴ Young infants are eased only by the presence of an actual person. Older infants learn to comfort themselves through certain things (a toy, a blanket) to which they ascribe security-giving characteristics. Through the transitional objects infants learn to calm themselves and they explore all sorts of feelings and emotions in connection to it. Children experience anxiety when they lose the toy and joy when they rediscover it; they also channel their emotions through that toy. This very investment in the external object presupposes surrender. This is the moment where a child learns "to play

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 176-177.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 177.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 177.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 177.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 178.

²⁷³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 178.

²⁷⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, 178-179. Nussbaum uses arguments found in Donald W. Winnicott, "Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena," in *Playing and Reality* (Abingdon: Routledge, (1971) 2005a), 7.

alone in the presence of its mother”²⁷⁵ and in this world “others may go their own way and there is no need to subordinate them constantly to the child’s own anxious projects.”²⁷⁶

Nussbaum’s aim in presenting these concepts of Winnicott is to argue that all good human relationships contain the qualities of play: “The capacity to be alone in the presence of the other (not constantly demanding slavish attention); trust in the other and the willingness to relax the demand for complete control in the presence of the other; the capacity to respond to subtle cues with an appropriate reaction; the ability to imagine what the other intends and feels.”²⁷⁷ For Winnicott all love is a form of this ‘subtle interplay’ and no flourishing human relationship can be imagined without it.

Play is something that oversteps the desire for omnipotence, for subordination. Thus Nussbaum, together with Winnicott, is convinced that human development is a never ending process “and it needs the resources of play and imagination at every stage in order to reinforce trust, reciprocity, and respect for the separate world of others.”²⁷⁸ But how do people play in later life? Well, we already discovered the answer – Winnicott is convinced that love is one of the ways; moreover, the most successful human relationships contain an aspect of this subtle interplay.

In this regard we have to note that play is also experienced in adult age through art and culture. Here people can experience various emotions without real life stress and create a ‘potential space.’ Winnicott states that “this intermediate area, rich in enjoyment, is in direct continuity with the play area of the small child who is ‘lost’ in play.”²⁷⁹ And he adds:

It will be observed that I am looking at the highly sophisticated adult’s enjoyment of living or of beauty or of abstract human contrivance, and at the same time at the creative gesture of a baby who reaches out for his? mother’s mouth and feels her teeth, and at the same time looks into her eyes, seeing her creativity. For me, playing leads on naturally to cultural experience and indeed forms its foundation.²⁸⁰

Nussbaum agrees with Winnicott that much of our life we live in “a ‘potential space’ of imaginative possibilities”²⁸¹ and this space essentially is in continuity with childhood experiences and adult participation in culture. For Nussbaum then the outlet of the spirit of play in cultural and artistic experiences have the same qualities as a child’s play (such as trust and reciprocity) and it can aid at transcending our narcissism, where the solitary I is imagining to be the owner of everything around him or her.

Essentially love is an answer to the problem of radical evil we encountered in previous sections.²⁸² Radical evil, as we have seen, is entrenched in the very structure of human life. For Nussbaum radical evil is not an outcome of any particular culture, it is the

²⁷⁵ Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 179. Nussbaum here quotes Winnicott, “Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena,” 7.

²⁷⁶ Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 179.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 179-180.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 180.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 181. Nussbaum quoting Donald Winnicott, “Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena,” 18.

²⁸⁰ Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 181. Here referring to Donald W. Winnicott, “The Place Where We Live,” *In Playing and Reality* (Abingdon: Routledge (1971) 2005b), 143.

²⁸¹ Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 181.

²⁸² See section 3.1 *Radical Evil* of this chapter.

fruit of the human developmental story, a fruit of human bodily weakness and high cognitive abilities which gives birth to narcissism, which wants to subordinate others entirely to our needs. At the very fundamental and inherent level love comes to aid in this situation. At the same early stage of development the outward curiosity and wonder presents the world as lovable. This trust helps to transcend the egoistic narcissism. In later developmental stages young infants through play learn to tame their persisting narcissism and the need for omnipotence. This reciprocal phenomenon of subtle interplay is something much needed not only for the early stages of human life, but throughout all life stages, really. Human development is an ongoing process and the dynamics which make love necessary do not fade away; thus love needs to always be there to safeguard adult relationships and actions so that they would not lapse into egoistic narcissism.

4.4.2 Concluding Remarks

When we discussed Nussbaum's ethical project we discovered the pillars of the good human life, the intuitions re-emerging in her major works, such as practical reason, compassion, love, subtle interplay, to highlight a few. Those are also the intuitions we can encounter in Western culture when one reflects on the nature of human beings and it seems that Nussbaum aims to ground them philosophically. To achieve this goal, she takes us to a journey through various landscapes ranging from evolutionary insights of human development and morality, psychological accounts of the same issue, insights of the ancient and modern philosophers, the values of the tragic and comic dramas and literary works. The discussion ranges from defining emotions and their possible meaning in human life, to defining the constitutional principles of liberal democracies – and this wide scope of discussion is aimed to illustrate that various aspects of life are always interconnected and that emotions can be a thread that holds the social fabric of societies strongly together.

We have seen that Nussbaum does not advocate trusting emotions only – that is a sure recipe for going astray – we need well-grounded ethical theories and norms, adequate procedures, in-depth knowledge of our subject matter, to consult various disciplines to have a well-informed opinion. But ultimately Nussbaum seems to suggest that all of that rests on the relational aforementioned pillars to reach its full flourishing. We have noted that Nussbaum presented us with a complex picture of the human person who has a long evolutionary history, is defined in multiple ways by the circumstances he/she was born in, having various inherent emotional dispositions – and yet for Nussbaum this person ultimately has a power of self-definition through capacity of practical reasoning which can take information from the various faculties (intellectual, emotional, appetitive) and see the connection between them and give meaning to it all. The emotive knowledge of compassion and love in this case come to show the best way things can be – we can be moved by the situation of the other and feel the active need to help and we can also move beyond frozen inner states and see life and people around as full of wonder and worthy of trust.

5. NUSSBAUM ON COMPASSION: A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

As we have discovered Nussbaum's views on compassion and allowed the author to lay her case down, it is time to take a look at the critical discussion surrounding this topic. Our approach to the discussion remains the same – in the beginning we allowed Nussbaum to talk on her own terms, appreciating and trying to grasp her argument without initial predisposition to rebuke it. This way, we believe, allowed us to get to know her argument intimately and helped to dwell on it in more depth. As we have obtained the knowledge of her line of thinking we turn to its reception.

Starting with our own theological interest we will engage with ideas of ethicist Diana Fritz Cates. Cates primarily works in the Aristotelian-Thomistic moral tradition and is particularly keen to research emotions, including concrete emotions such as love and compassion (in her thought those are ultimately conceived as virtues, to be sure), anger and hatred. Cates' ideas are interesting because she can help us to bridge gaps between the authors that are primary to our research – Nussbaum and Thomas Aquinas, as she offers comments on both of them. In our current discussion on Nussbaum's views on compassion, Cates' thought is relevant because she offers criticism of Nussbaum's views which stems from the same Aristotelian tradition, but appropriated with Christian thought. Furthermore, Cates has also worked out a Christian account on compassion and it is in our interest to compare it with Nussbaum's secular account of the same emotion. In the upcoming sections we will assess Cates' criticism of Nussbaum's conception of compassion, especially, the way we become aware we are experiencing compassion, the elements of pain and the desire to help intrinsic to this emotion, the thought of nondesert in compassion, and Nussbaum's idea that life could be described as unpredictable. Subsequently, we will move to a presentation of Cates' account of Christian compassion which is conceived as compassion for friends. In this section we will offer a presentation of Cates' key terms of virtue, infused virtue, friendship and compassion; we will also offer a presentation of her views of compassion best understood as virtue rather than only emotion. While presenting Cates' views at the same time, we will draw a comparison with Nussbaum's views on compassion, in this way comparing Christian and secular views on this phenomena.

After presenting Cates' case, we will move to question the influences of Judaism in Nussbaum's thought together with Martin Kavka, a professor of Judaism studies and philosophy. We will explore whether there is a place for theology in Nussbaum's ethics and if we could find a way to speak of external transcendence claims without making them superfluous. Kavka will suggest that emotions of love and compassion might be a gateway to a meaningful theological language.

We will close this chapter with insights of Amia Srinivasan, a professor of philosophy. Together with her we will challenge Nussbaum's idea that compassion is the only basic social emotion we owe to each other. In fact, Srinivasan seems to suggest that compassion promoted by a state might be dangerous, as we have seen in a short introduction of views on anger.²⁸³ We will look at compassion from the sides of the ones experiencing compassion for the victims and, then, victims being encouraged to feel compassion by the state. We will conclude this discussion on looking at anger and

²⁸³ See section 4.1.1.4 *The Case of Anger* of this chapter.

compassion, as we move a step closer to our next chapters on Thomas Aquinas and his view on the passions and the case study of anger.

5.1 CATES' THEOLOGICAL CRITIQUE OF NUSSBAUM'S CONCEPTION OF COMPASSION

5.1.1 How Do We Know That We Experience Compassion?

Cates acknowledges that Nussbaum uses a very Aristotelian definition of compassion as composed of three value judgments. She is, however, suspicious of the way we come to acknowledge we are having an emotion of compassion in real life experiences. Cates claims "she argues, however, that when one fails to acknowledge fully the relevant compassion beliefs, one fails to experience compassion."²⁸⁴ Cates hence worries – how do we distinguish between the full acknowledgement sufficient for compassion and one that is not full, insufficient for the occurrence of emotion?²⁸⁵ This argument of Cates, unfortunately, does not refer us to the page number in Nussbaum's own work where she requires the 'full acknowledgment' of the three thoughts to have compassion.

Based on our own reading of Nussbaum, we judge that the presence of the three thoughts is necessary for the emotion to appear because they are the cognitive elements of which the emotion consists. Once we judge a certain situation to have these three characteristics, for Nussbaum, it is sufficient to say one is compassionate about it – the upheaval itself being an unnecessary element. If we comprehend the situation in that way we are compassionate. If emotions are equivalent to thoughts, Nussbaum presupposes, we are aware of what we think. In some cases the emotion can be delayed because people "simply haven't yet taken in what has happened"²⁸⁶ and this means "that the belief itself has not become a part of my cognitive repertory, in such a way that it will affect the pattern of my other beliefs and actions."²⁸⁷ Nussbaum further advocates that there is also a possibility for an unconscious compassion – "for surely it is possible to have compassion and not be aware of it – if one is not reflecting on one's own emotions, or if one has been led to suppose that real men don't have such soft sentiments. Then one could well have and be motivated by the thoughts, without being in any noticeable phenomenological state."²⁸⁸ Nussbaum thus seems to imply that as much as we are aware and reflective about our thoughts and inner life, we are also aware of our emotions and their meaning.

5.1.2 The Elements of Pain and Helping Behavior in Compassion

Cates is also hesitant about other provocative elements of Nussbaum's approach to compassion (and in this regard we could say to her theory altogether since those elements

²⁸⁴ Diana Fritz Cates, "Conceiving Emotions: Martha C. Nussbaum's 'Upheavals of Thought,'" *The Journal of Religious Ethics* Vol. 31, No. 2 (2003): 335.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 335.

²⁸⁶ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 324.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 324.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 326.

are inherent to all the emotions according to Nussbaum). Cates points out that Nussbaum excludes pain and helping behavior from the nature of compassion.²⁸⁹

Even physiological pain seems to be very closely related to this emotion, in fact, it is often described as a particular type of pain. Yet Nussbaum keeps on asking about the nature of this pain and her answer we met already²⁹⁰ – the pain is something “closely linked to the thoughts that we might call it the affective dimension of the thought, a pain ‘at the thought of’ the bad things, as Aristotle puts it.”²⁹¹ The pain hence is a consequence of the thought and no matter how close it is related to the emotion, it is not a constituent part of it. Nussbaum seems to suggest that the emotion is an outcome of our complex world of values, the moment of recognizing that value is represented by our emotions. The subsequent physiological experiences are related to the force of this thought, but they vary, so it seems not wise to include any particular type of physiological response into the definition itself. The psychological literature on emotion repeatedly tells us that there is no one definition of emotion that researchers widely agree upon, but most of them seem to consider the physiological aspect a very important, constituent part of emotion. Cates follows the mainstream psychology and experiential wisdom in this regard and considers the physiological element as part of the emotion of compassion.

She also links compassion to behavioral expressions of help. Nussbaum seems to suggest that if one undergoes the experience of compassion, this experience can lead one to helping behavior where an “available course of action suggests itself.”²⁹² Cates thus concludes that “the motive, in any case, is caused by compassion, but it is not itself a component for compassion.”²⁹³ Cates conceives the concern for the other as an inherent part of compassion and more than the three judgments:

‘[C]oncern’ is also soothing more than these three beliefs plus some additional beliefs, such as the belief that ‘it is good for me to help.’ A compassionate person is (among other things) captivated by and drawn toward the person who is in pain, and she wants to alleviate (at least some dimension of) the other’s pain and/or suffering, commonly by removing one or more of its causes (which could be anything from ignorance, to a physical cause, to the fear of being alone in one’s pain).²⁹⁴

In this regard, Nico H. Frijda, a professor of psychology, once again reaffirms that the definition of emotion is ‘a perennial problem’ in the field of emotion. He, together with Cates, suggests that the physiological element should be considered a part of emotional experience. Frijda also notes that the phenomena of emotions signify that “people, objects, and events, and the feelings they evoke, moreover, do not leave one cold. They affect one’s body and one’s cognitive functioning. One may tremble, become confused, or believe what one knows to be untrue. The psychologists’ point of view thus points to a domain of phenomena of feelings, behaviors, and bodily reactions.”²⁹⁵ Nussbaum is suggesting not a

²⁸⁹ Cates, “Conceiving Emotions,” 335-336.

²⁹⁰ See section 2.2.7 *Emotions as Upheavals of Thought* of Chapter I.

²⁹¹ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 325.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 335.

²⁹³ Cates, “Conceiving Emotions,” 335-336.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 336, footnote 8.

²⁹⁵ Nico H. Frijdja, “The Psychologist’s Point of View,” in *Handbook of Emotions*, eds. Michael Lewis, Jeannette M. Haviland-Jones, Lisa Feldman Barrett (The Guilford Press: New York London, 2008), 68-69.

psychological, but philosophical account on the nature and meaning of emotion, yet she always asserts the force of experiential evidence and respect for the reality suggested by research. One may consider that her commitment to analytical philosophy's respect for logical and consistent argument, does not allow her to incorporate physiological change in the definition of emotion if it is perceived as a thought. The cognitive element becomes central and the physiological change it brings about is linked to the reason as dynamic and able to move us, but that element is not part of the thought that emotion is. While we consider Nussbaum's thought on the emotions insightful and philosophically compelling, we wonder whether she remains faithful to her own commitment to present emotions from an experiential point of view by disregarding the bodily aspect of them.

5.1.3 Do We Feel Compassion Only for Those Who Experience an Undeserved Predicament?

Cates acknowledges the conceptual differences between the two accounts in such striking ways that she wonders if they still discuss the same phenomenon. She thus attempts to highlight yet another feature which divides her and Nussbaum's thought and which she finds particularly provocative, namely, the thought of nondesert in Nussbaum's way of conceiving compassion. We remember that Nussbaum argues that compassion comes to being, if we think that the person did not bring the suffering upon himself/herself willingly,²⁹⁶ and in the case of the thought that the person came to the predicament due to his/her fault we "blame and reproach, rather than having compassion."²⁹⁷ Cates urges us to see that this point is far from obvious and she argues that "it is possible to make a moral judgment concerning someone's action or character, to hold him fully responsible for a serious failure, and to feel compassion for him at the same time."²⁹⁸ Cates draws our attention to the fact that the element of blameworthiness is also conceived rather differently in religious traditions such as Buddhism and Christianity. Buddhists, for instance, believe that everyone is in a state of suffering due to ignorant desire, to put it simply. This suffering does not imply that one is blame-free, yet Buddhists advocate universal compassion.

Christian tradition that takes Jesus as a moral exemplar sees him "as someone who exercised unconditional compassion toward the people who crossed his path, even as he judged some people's actions to be wrong and their hearts to be deformed, and urged them to change their ways."²⁹⁹ Christianity perceives exemplary divine compassion as 'unmerited and extravagant'³⁰⁰ (Cates refers to the parable of the prodigal son as a good example of it). We may remember that while arguing for a judgment of nondesert Nussbaum argues for a legal system inhabited by compassionate judges (not merciful, note, which would imply that the wrongdoing is there but I choose to recognize the obstacles on the way to becoming morally good). Why is it so? Nussbaum seems to argue that we should not assume too quickly that someone is substantially at fault and that his/her

²⁹⁶ See section 2. *Compassion and its Cognitive Content* of this chapter.

²⁹⁷ Cates, "Conceiving Emotions," 336. Here she quotes Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 331.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 336.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 337.

³⁰⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 337.

social/material/emotional circumstances are not accidental to the person's choices and acts, but is an inherent part of them, enabling people to choose in one way or the other (for better or worse in this case). Cates still remains hesitant about this aspect of Nussbaum's thought and wonders should non-fault form the definition of compassion because "the recognition that making a judgment of this kind is a serious matter, and that it must be made only after a careful consideration of all relevant details of a person's case, is likely to forestall compassion indefinitely."³⁰¹

Cates argument implies that if we encounter a person in distress, experiencing any predicament we should be compassionate even without assessing the question of fault and scrutinizing the backstory of the person. Nussbaum's view considers the judgment of nondesert as a part of compassion's nature, but it seems to be conceived in a way that people's, even criminals' actions that bring predicaments upon them are deeply embedded into their story and contexts. This means that the question of guilt and responsibility is not an obvious one, but requires careful deliberation. Cates, on the other hand, suggests that compassion should be an immediate response to human suffering, independent from how much they earned it themselves. Nussbaum sees compassion as a good guide for our political communities and so suggests a more procedural account of it, where compassion is not unmerited and extravagant, but is offered to victims. Nussbaum's concept of compassion, however, does not seem to offer just an empty shell; it implies a real concern for the other and his/her predicament. Nonetheless, we believe that Cates suggests a relevant argument pointing out the question of guilt in compassion and compassion as a personal, immediate response to the other who is undergoing a serious predicament whether it is deserved or not.

5.1.4 Compassion and Religion

Cates asserts that emotions for Nussbaum register truths about life, but what are these truths?³⁰² Cates, however, argues that this conception of emotion might be influenced by Nussbaum's own religious views and she refers us to the quotation we have already discovered in our presentation of Nussbaum's ethics.³⁰³

To put my cards on the table, then, what I say henceforth is said from the point of view of someone who has converted from Christianity to Judaism, and whose understanding of Judaism gives the moral sphere considerable autonomy and centrality, seeing the concern of God for man as essentially moral and political, focused on this-worldly concerns and actions, and intelligible from the point of view of a this-worldly use of intelligence.³⁰⁴

This quotation, to be fair, is taken from the third part of the *Upheavals of Thought* – each part represents related, but independent reflections with the last concerned with erotic love and its possible ascents. But Nussbaum's insistence that any argument should always appeal and hold criticism of a contemporary critical rationale and that what happens to people here and now is our ultimate concern is very true to her philosophical works

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 338.

³⁰² Cf. *Ibid.*, 339.

³⁰³ See Chapter I, section 1.5 *Nussbaum's Judaism*.

³⁰⁴ Cates, "Conceiving Emotions," 339. Here Cates quotes Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 549.

altogether. The appeal to the other-worldly desire and gratification is alarming to Nussbaum because it can encourage quietism and take real suffering of the people as irrelevant. These are important and significant elements that theological reflections should take seriously, we argue, if they attempt to become equal partners in any discussion. Yet Cates initiates an interesting question: how much might our own perception of the world and religious convictions, for that matter, influence our theoretical outcomes. Emotions are very closely linked to this matter, if we believe that our stipulation that they deal with moral value is correct. Because of this reason Cates wants to think of compassion as a virtue and we will offer some of her reflections here and in later sections we will come back to the question of Judaism in Nussbaum's thought and its possible influence in her own conception of compassion. Yet beforehand we would like to assert that we do not agree with Cates' stipulation that Nussbaum's views on emotions or compassion is formed by her religious conviction in the way that Cates wants to see it. Nussbaum perceives her Jewish affiliation as a rational choice – she chose to convert from Christianity to Judaism at a mature adult age. Moreover, as our analysis of her theory of emotions in general and of compassion in particular has shown – Nussbaum attempts to access her subject matter in ethical terms only. Thus she does not offer a religious appropriation of emotion in a way that we will encounter Cates doing in her Christian appropriation of compassion. As we mentioned above, if emotions have to do with value judgments, they will indeed be nurtured and influenced by the images of the religious affiliation one has, in a similar way that literature and imagination will affect its content, as we have seen from Nussbaum's works.³⁰⁵ Yet we would not go as far as to state that religious imagination using metaphysical arguments have produced Nussbaum's conception of emotions and compassion – they are concepts molded by the appropriation of ancient philosophy, the Greek tragic dramas, and the psychoanalytic psychology's stream of object relation theory, to name the biggest influences. Thus together with Martin Kavka we would much more see Judaism as forming a landscape of Nussbaum's approach to ethics and much less directly influencing her main concepts.

5.2 CATES' CONCEPTION OF COMPASSION: IS COMPASSION EMOTION OR VIRTUE?

Cates' critical assessment of Nussbaum's conception of compassion can be better fleshed out in light of her own work. Coincidentally, Cates has worked out her own account of compassion as a good way to live in the presence of so much suffering present in the world. Her work aims to be “partly an effort to uncover, elucidate, and celebrate, a moral excellence that is all too frequently dismissed as a mark of weakness.”³⁰⁶ We believe that a short introduction of the Christian account of compassion can clarify some questions that can be posed to Nussbaum's account from a Christian perspective (and Cates, indeed, poses them). It will also illustrate why in certain cases we judge Nussbaum to have a stronger and better developed argument to defend her case. After this section we will come back to the discussion on Judaic influences for Nussbaum's thought – this discussion will

³⁰⁵ See again section 4.3.1 *Humanities at the Aid of the Eudaimonistic Judgment: Tragedy and Comedy as Didactical Tools* for this question.

³⁰⁶ Diana Fritz Cates, *Choosing to Feel. Virtue, Friendship, and Compassion for Friends* (Notre Dame: The University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 1.

help to bind all the strings together and hopefully will help to understand what kind of ethics we are defending in our project.

Cates, to put it simply, defends a Christian account of compassion where she chooses to present it as a virtue exercised for friends (as she judges that this way of presentation might aid to imaginatively capture the nature of this emotion). Her account is held together by the works of Aristotle and Aquinas when it comes to defining virtue, friendship, and the role of practical wisdom in ethical deliberation (thus, also the role of perception and emotion/passion in moral judgment). Compassion itself is conceived in the context of Nel Noddings' care ethics³⁰⁷ (where the weak parts are attempted to be corrected by Cates) and the context of Christian compassion is worked out by resting on the work *Compassion: A Reflection on Christian Life* by Donald McNeil, Douglas Morrison, and Henri Nouwen,³⁰⁸ (Cates broadens and redefines it where needed). In the upcoming reflection we will encounter a few elements that are very similar to Nussbaum's thought due to the same source of Aristotle, but the way it is fleshed out differs considerably. But first of all, let us define the key terms in Cates' account and in doing so let us look at the differences and similarities with Nussbaum.

5.2.1 Defining Key Terms

5.2.1.1 Virtue

Cates conceives virtue in classical Aristotelian terms as a habitual disposition concerned with choosing both to act and feel in accordance with the mean.³⁰⁹ "In other words," Cates asserts, "it is a deeply rooted, stable disposition to act and to feel in light of rational deliberation – where rational deliberation is guided by desires for goods that we judge reasonably and with keen perception to be productive or constitutive of *eudaimonia*."³¹⁰ Aristotelian virtue is a matter of steering between excess and deficiency, it is a matter of acting and feeling "at the right times, with reference to the right objects, towards the right people with the right motive, and in the right way."³¹¹ Deliberative process is always particular and contextually related (instead of applying universal rules to the particular) and it is essentially a delicate interplay between desire, belief, and perception:

The deliberative process that terminates in choice can be represented in the form of a particular syllogism, which is an argument composed of two premises and a conclusion. The major premise of the practical syllogism is a *desire* for a given end. The minor premise is a *belief* or a *perception* regarding what in the present situation best contributes to the desired end. The conclusion combines desire, belief, and perception. It is an *action* or the *intention to act* (when the time is appropriate) in a way that best contributes to the desired end.³¹²

³⁰⁷ She primarily utilizes Nel Noddings, *Caring. A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

³⁰⁸ She primarily uses one work by these authors. See Donald McNeil, Douglas Morrison, and Henri Nouwen, *Compassion: A Reflection on Christian Life* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1983).

³⁰⁹ The first chapter of *Choosing to Feel* deals with it (pages 5-15), Cates breaks the definition in the segments and gives her interpretation of them.

³¹⁰ Cates, *Choosing to Feel*, 15.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 14. Here Cates quotes Aristotle 1106b20.

³¹² Cates, *Choosing to Feel*, 8.

Cates consults Nussbaum's analysis of Aristotelian discernment and argues that it is a matter of imaginative and passionate perception.³¹³ This discernment is an imaginative perception where one is aware of the particularity of the situation, but at the same time is attentive to the prior well-deliberated desires for the good (the latter is done as *phronimos* would choose – a person of practical wisdom, as teaching that communities' most exemplary moral teachers would choose (1140a26)). There is no thumb rule to moral life; there is a particular situation and moral wisdom habituated by virtue that leads us through the improvisation of life with a commitment to become “finely aware and richly responsible”³¹⁴ moral agents (or to word it differently, virtuous people).

5.2.1.2 Infused Virtue

Cates constructs her approach to the virtue of compassion by using the works of Aristotle and Aquinas, but she turns to the latter to search for the understanding of the acquired moral virtue as a transformed Christian experience. For Aquinas there is a two-fold rule to measure human action – natural law and eternal law. The acquired moral virtue is in accordance with the first and infused virtue has to do with the second, as it is concerned with grace. We will not dwell too long on these questions as we will return to them in our discussion on Aquinas. At this stage we attempt to present Cates' terminology to make her argument clear. Theological virtues, understood traditionally, and, indeed, formulated in that way by Aquinas “are habits that are infused by God, ‘entirely from without,’ and cannot be acquired by means of deliberate human action (I-II 62.1, 63.1).”³¹⁵ Infused virtue leads a human to supernatural happiness that is proportionate to human merit only and insofar as he/she is a participant of divine creation. The exercise of infused virtue can lead us to the experiences of ultimate meaning and significance of human reality.³¹⁶ Moreover, “infused virtue, for Thomas, does not overcome or oppose acquired virtue, but perfects and elevates it. The infusion of habitual grace, in its many forms, enables us to assent with certainty to revealed truths that we cannot completely comprehend.”³¹⁷

Cates finishes her reflection on infused virtue with the following thought: “It is, I think, this understanding of openness to Mystery and the ways in which this openness alters the experienced content and interaction of belief, perception, and desire in the moral life that makes Christian ethical accounts of good human living and of compassion, in particular so provocative.”³¹⁸ The openness to M/mystery of life, the intuition and hope that there is something beyond what the eye meets and that something is worth our trusting fall because ultimately there will be the hand to catch us. This is an intuition inherent to Christian ethical projects. We judge it legitimate and thought and debate provoking. Yet

³¹³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 9. Here Cates refers to Aristotle 1109b13-24, 1126a33-1126b5, 1143b2-6. She also utilizes Nussbaum's interpretation of Aristotle's views on perception. See Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*, 308-309.

³¹⁴ Cates quotes Martha C. Nussbaum's “Finely Aware and Richly Responsible: Moral Attention and the Moral Task of Literature,” *Journal of Philosophy* Vol. 82, No. 10 (1985): 516.

³¹⁵ Cates, *Choosing to Feel*, 32.

³¹⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, 48.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 48.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 48.

the mystery is something that ultimately escapes our definitions and we can only attempt to describe our experiential glimpses of it. An adequate theological ethics project, in our judgment, should indeed be open to a sense of mystery, the mystery of unpredictable and uncontrollable life and the ultimate Mystery, but its premises should always start from this world (thus not supernatural) argument. To keep our language based on rational arguments and yet being open to M/mystery is not an easy task, to be sure. Yet it may be a good way in suggesting that theological ethics can indeed be a legitimate partner in ethical discussions which are respectful to secular and other religious traditions' conceptions and achievements and comes to the discussion not as an all-consuming ultimate narrative, but as an equal partner ready to share the highlights of its long tradition of reflection on the meaning of human life and at the same time be able to listen truly openly to other opinions which might be radically different. In that way we can only hope that ethical projects will reach their ultimate end – inspire people for a good life. Christian ethical projects in their regard should be able to define and re-define (which is a never ending process as long as human history does not stop) themselves in terms of reflection on human action, inspired by Christian sources and beliefs.

5.2.1.3 Friendship

Cates plugs in the notion of friendship in her discussion because she wants to explore “the relational context within which virtue is exercised.”³¹⁹ She furthers that “Aristotle defines friendship (*philia*) as a relationship between separate beings (1161b28) consisting in affection and well-wishing (1155b29), where this affection and well-wishing are reciprocal (1155a33, 1155b29) and mutually known (1156a5), and where each friend wishes the other well ‘for his own sake’ (1155b31).”³²⁰ Aquinas appropriates this notion of friendship and plugs in a possibility of friendship with God. Hence:

In Thomas’s view, friendship with God gives a believer a new orientation toward a new end, and it gives her special resources to pursue the new end in intimate relationship with others – others who have their goodness in their own irreplaceably unique pursuits of the same end. Friendship with God pursued in friendship with others gives a believer the unforgettable impression that all human beings have a share in the divine Life, that all human beings by virtue of our participation in the same life are embedded in each other’s lives, that the genuine good of each of us includes inescapably the good of every other, and that finally we will flourish – or wither – together.³²¹

What Cates attempts to do is to construct a relational model of the self and in this model the self and the ‘other self’ or a friend engages in a co-construction of a shared moral agency.³²² It appears that this relational selfhood seems like an adequate house to construct the account of compassion. Cates’ final goal is to think of the virtue of compassion in the following context of friendship: “Our concern will be to plumb for an understanding of what it might mean for a Christian who shares a life with God to exercise

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 49.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, 50.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, 130

³²² Cf. *Ibid.*, 89.

virtue in friendship with God and in friendship with those whom God has befriended or wishes to befriend.”³²³

5.2.2 Defining Compassion

Cates argues that she began to construe her account on compassion starting with a certain western understanding of compassion as a suffering-with. She uses the quotation of a philosophy professor Lawrence Blum to illustrate her starting intuition:

Compassion is...a complex emotional attitude toward another, characteristically involving imaginative dwelling on the [painful] condition of the other person, an active regard for his good, a view of him as a fellow human being, and emotional responses of a certain degree of intensity...Characteristically,...compassion [also] requires the disposition to perform beneficent action, and to perform them because the agent has had a certain sort of imaginative reconstruction of someone’s condition and has a concern for this good.³²⁴

Though Cates finds this definition true to some extent, it also leaves her dissatisfied as most of the reflections in philosophical literature on the phenomenon of compassion. Cates claims that they fail to capture “what is most profound, puzzling, and precious about compassion.”³²⁵ Her own views on compassion consist of a three-fold argument:

First, compassion is not, strictly speaking, a passion, although it has a great deal to do with passion. It is, instead, a virtue, i.e. a habitual disposition concerned with choosing both to act and to feel in accordance with a certain rule. Second, compassion is a virtue that human being can, do, and should learn to exercise within the context of certain relationships, most notably relationships in which friends are attracted and attached to each other on the basis of each other’s moral character. Third, compassion is a virtue that human beings can, do, and should learn, within the context of character-friendships, to extend toward those whom we would not ordinarily regard as friends.³²⁶

Cates, as mentioned before, construes her account of compassion in the Aristotelian-Thomist framework of understanding virtue and friendship. To define compassion, however, she relies on Nel Noddings’ *Caring* as both Aristotle and Thomas do not have elaborate accounts of compassion (Aquinas, indeed, speaks very little of compassion and Aristotle on his behalf describes it in the cognitive content way we have met in Nussbaum.³²⁷ Cates seems to be after more phenomenological-experiential descriptions. She chose an author who attempts to describe human cares from that perspective). The weakness of Noddings’ account in certain philosophical ideas is discussed by Cates herself (and also noted by Nussbaum and Martin Kavka whose ideas we will discover in the upcoming section).³²⁸ Cates utilizes Noddings’ work to define the concept of care and thus

³²³ *Ibid.*, 48.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, 3. Cates here quotes Lawrence Blum, “Compassion,” in *Explaining Emotions*, ed. Amelie Oksenberg Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 509.

³²⁵ Cates, *Choosing to Feel*, 4.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

³²⁷ See section 1.2 *Definition of Compassion and its Philosophical Roots* of this chapter.

³²⁸ Martin Kavka argues that Nel Noddings presents an underdeveloped view of motherhood and the subsequent emotions stemming from it. Noddings presents care as spontaneous fusing with the other and selfless giving, while Kavka inspired by Nussbaum asserts that even motherly care emotions should always

the element of complacency in compassion, but she moves beyond that account to include what it means to care for the other who's in pain. Noddings describes caring as perception of the other's reality as a possibility for one's own reality – and in this way it evokes a double 'I must.' The first element of this imperative is a movement to help the other for his/her own sake, to enhance his/her well-being. The second element has to do with me seeking to be my best ethical self, so I help the other also for my own sake.³²⁹ This mechanism is analogous for compassion's complacency.

5.2.2.1 *Compassion's Complacency: Pain*

Pain is a very important element in Cates' account of experience of compassion. Let us remember that Cates' starting point is compassion for friends, for our 'extended selves.' Through the metaphor of a shared body Cates wants to present her argument for a co-experienced physical and passional pain with a friend/the other self who suffers. She's pressing on the argument for an interbodily connectedness where in compassion's complacency we can actually share others' sensation:

That is to say, it is rare in our compassion for friends that we experience in our own bodies a physical sensation that we would describe in exactly the same way that our friends would describe their own sensation. Most of time when we co-feel bodily pain with our friends, we seem to co-feel some of the physical agitation that is part and parcel of the passional component of their pain – an agitation that tends to be much less intense, localized, and focused than the original sensation. But it does sometimes happen, I think, that we experience with our 'other selves,' if only in a flash, something of the original physical component of their pain.³³⁰

Cates, then, advocates an understanding of human relationality where our physical and emotional boundaries are rather flexible. For Cates a life of friendship is a life of sharing – with our friends we share visions, perceptions, desires, joys and pains – they create an extended body of experience.³³¹ Cates offers an example of her own daughter falling and skinning her knees and argues that in experience of this fall she does not experience herself as a separate person imaginatively bridging her own and the separate person's experiences: "My experience is that we are one extended self, skinning our knees together. There is no distance between us to overcome, no chasm to bridge, only the immediate, shared sensation of knees scraping pavement: my knees, her knees, where these seem for the moment to be the same."³³² We can already see why Cates is critical of Nussbaum's account of compassion – the element of shared pain is essential to it. Cates account is much more based on describing the experiential elements of compassion and

fall under scrutiny – there will always be a separation between the two subjects (the caregiver and the receiver), in addition, heedless caring is dangerous in a world with malign forces. See Martin Kavka, "Judaism and Theology in Martha Nussbaum's Ethics," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* Vol. 31, No. 2 (2003): 356. Here Kavka uses Nussbaum's argument found in Martha C. Nussbaum, "The Feminist Critique of Liberalism," in *Sex and Social Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

³²⁹ Cf. Cates, *Choosing to Feel*, 133. Cates here summarizes Noddings' argument found in *Caring*, 14, 16, 23, 49-51.

³³⁰ Cates, *Choosing to Feel*, 140.

³³¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 141.

³³² *Ibid.*, 140.

including what is happening cognitively and physiologically in the experience of this phenomenon. Nussbaum's focus in describing any emotion is its intentional cognitive content – the very moment of the value recognition is emotion, all the rest being just closely linked to it. Her choice to go through this path of explanation is again the universal focus of her project – we believe that Nussbaum does not want to tie particular people to any universal account of what an experience of compassion should feel like. The recognition of the tragic predicament of compassion is the core of the emotion, not the painful co-suffering described by Cates (though in many cases it will be, yet Nussbaum does not compel anyone to go through an experience of compassion in *that particular way*).

We might have also noticed that Cates and Nussbaum's starting point of experience of compassion is somewhat similar – both start with a more particular context of experiencing compassion for the ones close to us and then expand it. Nussbaum, however, starts with immediate parent-children experience as a first, biologically (and evolutionary) grounded seed of emotion and Cates starts with the concept of friends (friendship in the common usage of the word is the main case, but it also includes parent-children and intimate relationships). We argue that the movement from particular to universal seems to be a good starting point, especially having in mind adequate moral education where we already can plug ethical notions into existing experiences and try to work to extend them. Yet we also think that Cates starting point of friendship is less self evident. The first school of emotional experiences in the immediate family ties relationships seems to be a more evident (and interdisciplinary based, in that regard) approach, while friendship, as conceived by Cates seems to represent a second concentric circle of care.³³³ Furthermore, the conception of friendship Cates describes resembles more of an ethical ideal and something to constantly attain in our friendships. If we say that compassion appears in this context of the experience of extended self in friendships – do we really give it a right home to start building our reflections about this phenomenon? We argue that Nussbaum chooses a more realistic starting point.

5.2.2.2 *Compassion's Desire*

Cates, like Nussbaum, constructs compassion as having a cognitive element (in Nussbaum compassion is entirely a cognitive phenomenon, to be sure). Cates chooses to focus on the process of deliberation which, according to her, is central to the exercise of compassion. She tackles this task in a form of Aristotelian deliberation which, as we have seen before, is presented in a form of practical syllogism – the major premise being desire for a particular good, the minor premise representing a belief or perception of what in a current situation can help to attain that good, and a conclusion representing an action or intention to act in a way that is perceived to help to contribute to the desired end.

Cates' compassion as a major premise has different layers of desire. In the first place, Cates argues “although in any given process of decision making we begin our deliberations with a desire for a good that is specific to the circumstance at hand, such a desire cannot be

³³³ Look at this chapter's section 2.3.4 *The Limits of Compassion: The Problem of Bias* where we discuss how Nussbaum appropriates Hierocles' image of concentric circles to grasp compassion better.

separated completely from more general desires regarding the kinds of people we want to be and the kind of world we want to inhabit.”³³⁴ The moment of someone’s predicament is seen as an opportunity to enhance the observer ethically (at this point Cates comes back to Noddings’ analysis of what care means). The object of this ethical caring is three-fold. First of all, it’s a desire for my own *eudaimonia*; here Cates makes a relational argument where as relational human beings we flourish by giving and receiving care. Secondly, the object of care is *eudaimonia* of the person in predicament. Lastly, through caring behavior we desire to contribute “to the formation and maintenance of a flourishing human community.”³³⁵

Cates describes the general desire of compassion as care for the flourishing of the self, the other, and the larger community, then. Compassion’s desire, according to Cates, also has a layer of context-specific particular goods. This particular desire of compassion is brought up in a dynamics of the relationship between you-me (the compassionate person and the person in predicament) and so the intentional content of caring ideally should be a composition of my own understanding of good and a genuine attempt to respect the other’s understanding of the good. And so Cates argues: “It is when the other’s wanting becomes partly our own that we are most likely to have the other’s interests, rather than our mere projections of his interests, at heart in our deliberations.”³³⁶ As we have already encountered, Cates’ compassion is a phenomenon which is born in a context of friendship, where “our unique and separate selves have been knit together into a single, extended self.”³³⁷ So for Cates compassion’s desire for good is sort of a dynamic movement between my and your understanding of it. Cates thus argues that in compassion we can find a double wanting *for* and *with* the other.

When I want something *for* you (in the case where I want something for you that you do not want for yourself or you can want it but I do it on behalf of my own desires) – “I experience myself to be separate from you in my wanting.”³³⁸ In the experience of compassion one also wants things *with* the other (in both cases when I want something that I would not want naturally but you want it and when I would want it anyway and I want it on behalf of our common loves, we experience a shared desire). And so Cates furthers that “I experience myself as me-you, and I experience the center of myself to be moving back and forth between me and you, such that is sometimes closer to the me-pole and sometimes closer to you-pole.”³³⁹ The ultimate want of compassion is my desire to ‘save’ the other:

We might say that, at bottom, what I want in compassion is to ‘save’ you, but I want to save you in the sense of empowering you by means of enlarging and expanding you, by means of adding myself – my presence and my power – to you and thus eliciting within you an uncanny sense that this life of yours, which might seem to you in your pain to be so puny and insignificant, so expendable, is actually a component part of something larger. It is minimum a part of my life.³⁴⁰

³³⁴ Cates, *Choosing to Feel*, 155.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 157.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, 160.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 161.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 162.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, 162.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 166.

Cates articulates a picture of compassion which is born out of an intimate interpersonal relationship and thus presupposes it. It also speaks in terms of the ‘extended self’ where compassion and its desire move in a continuum of separateness and unity – and Cates very clearly wants to make compassion an existential commitment thus Nussbaum’s more procedural account of it seems to her a thin understanding of the richness the notion of compassion can bear. Cates asserts that “the effort to define compassion is itself a normative enterprise. It is implicitly a way of indicating how people ought to receive and respond to those who are suffering.”³⁴¹

There is certain truth in her claim, to be sure, but it also seems that Cates’ and Nussbaum’s accounts might serve different purposes of the academic discussion. We believe that Nussbaum targets a larger audience by choosing a more universally applicable language to depict compassion as an adequate response to human suffering. Cates seems to target a Christian audience where she is concerned with a rich descriptive account of compassion where experience of compassion starts from a not so self-evident notion of friendship and reaches its heights in friendship with God and the people who are his friends (thus Christian community) and the people who He wants to befriend, as we shall see later in our exposé.

In addition, we could say that the focus of the two authors is different in other aspects too. When dissecting compassion Nussbaum seems to focus on the *nature* of the emotion *itself*. Thus she is preoccupied with defining the cognitive structure of it in the terms she finds suitable and true, leaving the experiential aspects of emotion out of the definition (the content of the emotion is universal, thus, not the expression). Cates in her own right seems to focus on what is happening to the *person who experiences* compassion. She engages in descriptions of the you-I movement in a desire of compassion by stating that this experience is normative to what true compassion is. We argue that vivid descriptions of experience of compassion are needed and very useful – as they do disclose what compassion is (and can contribute to more adequate definitions, thus). They also seem very useful for educating compassion after we have already recognized the ethical worth of it, which is not a self evident fact in a pluralist contemporary society.

5.2.2.3 Compassion’s Belief and Perception

Let us now look at the element of belief or perception in Cates’ account of compassion. We have seen that in Cates’ compassion we desire something for and with our friends and “it is because (and only because) we feel bound by this bundle of desires that we are moved to initiate a deliberative process aimed at assisting our ‘other selves’ in their painful predicaments.”³⁴² Central to this discernment of particulars (in compassions’ case – the discernment of the predicament and the most appropriate ways to respond to it) is perception (stated by Aristotle and affirmed by Aquinas). Thus Cates wishes to take a closer look at perception that contributes to compassion and subsequent decisions that show compassion.

³⁴¹ Cates, “Conceiving Emotions,” 338.

³⁴² Cates, *Choosing to Feel*, 172.

Cates' goal in this section is to show that our desires, perceptions, and thinking are always intertwined. She wants to leave the dichotomy of rational and emotional behind (thus, seeing one as containing no emotional element whatsoever and the other as having no cognitive achievement) and to look at what is really happening in our moral deliberations. Thus Cates declares:

[A] great deal of our deliberative activity concerning what is going on, what is at stake, whether and how it matters, and whether and how we are able and willing to assist our friends, is accomplished in our integrative wanting, perceiving, and believing. It is a mistake to suggest that I can or should put my feeling and my perceiving on hold in order to reason 'objectively' about what is *really* going on. What is really going on is that I am deeply attached to your well-being, I am intensely desirous of meeting your immediate needs, I am afraid that I might not be able to meet some of these needs, and I want to meet whatever needs I can in a way that has a positive and lasting impact on our relationship.³⁴³

Cates, thus inspired by the same source as Nussbaum (Aristotle) comes to the conclusion that our moral deliberation is a complex phenomenon where various faculties work together and the knowledge that emotions bring to it deserves not only our attention, in fact, it has an integral role in our deliberations. By ignoring it practically (thus when we engage in moral decision-making), we choose not to engage in moral deliberation in its full force because we choose to ignore part of the information available to us. By ignoring it in our academic discussions we choose to omit a part of moral discernment that plays a legitimate part in who we are as moral agents. In addition, acknowledged or not, our desire, perception, and thought is intertwined and if we attempt to suggest ethical reflections that are attentive to it we might hope that they will have certain force as they will be able to reflect the actual experience of people in it and so be appealing.

Cates' account is certainly attentive to this element and trying to advocate ethics which would have some experiential force. Together with Nussbaum she recognizes the intentional element of desire which enables one to see things about the person in predicament that would otherwise be absent ("it is only because I treasure you that I notice how helpless you are"³⁴⁴). Our desires are not the clear cut notions we can easily access, though. We know that experientially, we have seen that Nussbaum calls our emotions 'messy.'³⁴⁵ Cates suggests in line with Nussbaum that our goal should not be to extricate our desire (and it is an impossible aim, ultimately). "Rather," Cates argues, "the thing to do is to *feel* the range of our desires and to reflect upon them honestly in light of a well-deliberated vision of the good and an abiding desire for its realization."³⁴⁶

5.2.3 Compassion's Act or Intention to Act: Compassion as Virtue - Choosing to Feel Compassion in the Right Way

Cates defines compassion understood as virtue in the following way:

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 173-174.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 174.

³⁴⁵ See Chapter I, section 2.2.2 *Emotions Are Eudaimonistic*.

³⁴⁶ Cates, *Choosing to Feel*, 174.

Qua virtue, compassion is a habitual disposition concerned with choosing both to act and to feel (passion) in the way that we deem to be best on the basis of our deliberations. It is a habitual disposition concerned with choosing both to act and to feel in accordance with the mean, where the mean just is the best action-passion possible (i.e., the ‘right’ action-passion) in a given circumstance.³⁴⁷

Cates argues that we can choose whether and how to feel compassion’s complacency. Furthermore, she argues in Aristotelian spirit “that the best choices rest with well-educated, impassioned perception.”³⁴⁸ The choice to opt for compassion when we do not feel it spontaneously is an exercise of practical wisdom and thus it requires prudent movement of the mind and heart between various extremes. Cates claims that balance can be a good key term in exercising our compassion prudently: “Achieving balance in our overall pattern of decision making requires achieving balance in our character, which requires living reflectively with others in the pursuit of a life that we take, with good reason, to be good.”³⁴⁹ The adequate mean of compassion can aim at “targets” like these: “remaining *attentive* to multiple particulars, yet *focused* on those that are most significant; remaining *vulnerable* to being moved by the desires of others, yet *centered* within context of our own desiderative awareness; remaining *open* to feeling with and for any human being in particular, yet *decisive* with respect to how we will expend our finite human resources.”³⁵⁰

5.2.3.1 Exercising the Virtue of Compassion as a Christian

Cates concludes her analysis of compassion in discussion of it as a virtue conceived in Christian terms. She attempts to demonstrate how friendship with God can alter the way we stand in the relationship with friends who are in pain and how we can extend our compassion to people who we would not ordinarily see as friends. At this point her Aristotelian-Thomistic framework, infused by Noddings’ understanding of care is grounded in a Christian context by utilizing the work of Donald McNeil, Douglas Morrison, and Henri Nouwen called *Compassion: A Reflection on Christian Life*, the work Cates chooses to use because it was one of the few religious, ethical works dedicated to the analysis of compassion.

In Cates’ analysis Christian compassion represents an ‘elevated’ response to human suffering because we become elevated moral agents participating in God’s vision of the good. We become the carriers of the divine compassion, “participants in God’s desire to accomplish this good, participants in God’s belief and perception of how this good could best be accomplished in a given situation, and participants in the action-passion with which God seeks to accomplish this good.”³⁵¹

For McNeill, Morrison, Nouwen, and Cates divine compassion does not refer to an abstract conception, but the concrete experience of who Jesus was, found in the Scripture: “We will never really know God as a compassionate God if we do not understand with our

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 177-178.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 206.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 206.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 207.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 208-209.

heart and mind that '[God] lived among us' (Jn 1:14).³⁵² This essentially means that God has entered human life in its fullness – he “has chosen to enter with us into the depths of human uncertainty and vulnerability.”³⁵³ This recognition of vulnerability (and in certain sense brokenness of human condition) is also found in Nussbaum’s analysis. Cates, however, makes it directly linked to the divine incarnation and our trust that God took all human experiences into his compassionate embrace. Through our faith, then, we are reborn from ‘the womb of God’s compassion’³⁵⁴ and we are ready to receive our elevated moral agencies as participants of the divine vision. When we receive our new selves from God, we can also see a change in our perception: “Encountering with Christ the reality of our own brokenness, we are able to encounter the brokenness of other human beings, and we are able to perceive their brokenness, not as something that makes them different from us, but rather as something that makes them like us.”³⁵⁵ The movement of compassion as a recognition of our common humanity with others and especially through experiences (or witnessing) vulnerability is also prominent in Nussbaum’s works. What Cates seems to argue implicitly is that we can fully understand the meaning of compassion when it is infused with the Christian faith that trusts that God also suffered with us. Divine suffering gives the ultimate meaning to ours and it also gives Christians somewhat superior moral agency (the term ‘elevated’ which is often employed by Cates refers to raise something to a higher position, after all).

While Cates tries to access the heart of compassion with a full existential force – compassion should move one deeply and personally till one almost becomes the sufferer – it leaves us with a question – Can only Christians, then, access the full meaning of compassion? Cates chooses to devote the final chapter of her analysis of compassion to a Christian account of it and this might imply that she sees it as an ultimate expression of compassion. We will see later on that Nussbaum chooses to see a Jewish account of love and compassion as most convincing – yet this analysis appears as an independent third part of the *Upheavals of Thought*, discussing ways of purifying erotic love. Nussbaum suggests reversing the ladder to ideal and argues that only our attentiveness to the real, to the phenomena of daily life will restore our loves for the ideal. Nussbaum’s issue with Cates’ account might be precisely Cates’ decision to stop at the ideal where only the fact that Jesus took up the human nature and plunged into our brokenness and elevated it, makes one able to experience and understand what compassion truly is. Our suggestion would resemble Nussbaum’s in this regard – theological ethical reflections on the ethical accomplishment of compassion should focus on the more universal aspects of it so we would not risk stripping non-Christian participants of society of the possibility of being truly compassionate. Yet we also argue that Christian theologians have a legitimate right to suggest their vision of what Christian faith can offer to common human compassion, especially by connecting it with the divine compassion and the images found in numerous writings of tradition and the Scripture. These images can nurture our understanding of compassion and sustain it in a similar way that Nussbaum suggests the art and literary works can.

³⁵² Cates quoting McNeil, Morrison, and Nouwen, *Compassion*, 15.

³⁵³ Cates, *Choosing to Feel*, 209.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 210.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 210.

5.2.3.2 Christian Faith and Charity Altering Compassion's Complacency

Now let us continue together with Cates to look at her suggested ascent of compassion. We have already pointed out that compassion infused by Christian faith and charity is changed and becomes a somewhat elevated moral response to the suffering. It makes us aware of our own humanity and vulnerability and by this makes us also aware and comfortable in the presence of the other human being who is similar to us.

Christian compassion is ultimately a gift (thus it is understood in terms of an infused virtue) and it is "not a result of systematic study or effort."³⁵⁶ Nonetheless, Cates suggests together with McNeil, Morrison, and Nouwen that there are, indeed, certain practical steps that can enhance our openness to Christian compassion's complacency. The first one is a practice of voluntary displacement. This, to put it simply, refers to displacing ourselves from situations of seeming comfort and control to places where ambiguity and powerlessness rule, to the places where human hurt appears. Those can be geographical, work and attitude related displacements.³⁵⁷

The strength and patience to sustain ourselves in these displacements come from the cultivation of the life of prayer because it aids at coming into 'a deep solidarity' with the other:

To pray for others means to make them part of ourselves. To pray for others means to allow their pains and sufferings, their anxieties and loneliness, their confusion and fears to resound in our inmost selves. To pray, therefore is to become those for whom we pray, to become the sick child, the fearful mother, the distressed father, the nervous teenager, the angry student, the frustrated striker. To pray is to enter a deep inner solidarity with our fellow human beings so that in and through us they can be touched by the healing power of God's Spirit.³⁵⁸

Christian community through a common practice of prayer forms an extended moral agency with partly shared deliberations and commitments and can enjoy an intimacy of 'mutual indwelling.'³⁵⁹

5.2.3.3 Christian Faith and Charity Altering Compassion's Desire

We should keep in the back of our heads that Cates analyses compassion in terms of practical syllogism where desire represents a major premise, perception and belief a minor premise of compassion and the conclusion is compassion's choice for action-passion (intention to act and to feel when it is appropriate). Christian faith and charity in this regard comes to aid at our conceptions of the parts of compassion's structure.

Cates argues that a Christian wants to want what is good and "she believes that God's desire is determinative of what is good, and she therefore wants more than anything to want what God wants as a participant in God's own wanting."³⁶⁰ This wanting is

³⁵⁶ Cates quoting McNeil, Morrison, and Nouwen, *Compassion*, 90.

³⁵⁷ Cf. Cates, *Choosing to Feel*, 214.

³⁵⁸ Cates quoting McNeil, Morrison, and Nouwen, *Compassion*, 110.

³⁵⁹ Cf. Cates, *Choosing to Feel*, 217-218.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 220.

educated in a prayerful and ongoing conversation with a Friend whose nature is to desire good and in a relationship with friends who have an interest in moral growth. By these means we can specify further the intentional content of the Christian compassion's desire. This changed desire can aid us in seeing ourselves as relational beings "who have a personal stake in the flourishing of every other human being." Cates seems to argue that choosing to feel compassion in the right way for a Christian and non-Christian remains a task of appropriating the intentional content of what it means to suffer *with* and *for* the other; these deliberations are born in the critical conversations in the context of friendship. The desire itself should arise and be habituated according to the best vision of good and love available to the person. Christians, however, seek the education of desire in the explicit friendship with God and the other friends of God (and in this context we not only form our desire, we allow it to be formed):

She seeks the education of her desires for *eudaimonia* and the goods that contribute to *eudaimonia* partly by appropriating prayerfully Biblical and other narratives about the compassion (and the other excellences) of God, Jesus, and the followers of Jesus, i.e., by listening to, reflecting upon, conversing about, critiquing, reading, reciting, studying, singing, and enacting in ritual a variety of stories that disclose the compassionate God's engagement with human beings.³⁶¹

5.2.3.4 Christian Faith and Charity Altering Compassion's Belief and Perception

At this stage Cates enters yet another delicate issue prone to spark some debate and controversy. The main question is how our friendship with God can condition the perception and belief constituting compassion? McNeil, Morrison, and Nouwen argue that in the encounter with the suffering others Christians always keep their attention focused on God. And they claim "what they seek is not misery and pain but the God whose compassion they have felt in their own lives. Their eyes do not focus on poverty and misery, but on the face of the loving God"³⁶² and though Christians reach out for those in need they always give "full undivided attention to the voice of the beloved Father."³⁶³ This would raise Nussbaum's critical question (and so would ours) does a Christian ultimately reduce the suffering person to the God he/she dearly loves and so takes away an authentic experience of the real, particular person in his/her predicament? This was indeed one of the reasons why Nussbaum refuses Augustine's ascent of Christian love – for her it does ultimately consume the particularity of the other in a name of one's love for God.³⁶⁴

The second, important issue is the suggestion of McNeil, Morrison, and Nouwen that 'Christian eyes do not focus on poverty and misery' – this point is yet another delicate issue to highlight. Does this mean that a Christian does not take suffering seriously and sees the love for God and otherworldly promise as an ultimate refuge? For Nussbaum pain should never not be taken seriously or be romanticized, we may remember that through her works she constantly stresses that pain infantilizes human agency and can ultimately strike

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 224-225.

³⁶² Cates quoting McNeil, Morrison, and Nouwen, *Compassion*, 32.

³⁶³ Cates quoting McNeil, Morrison, and Nouwen, *Compassion*, 39.

³⁶⁴ Cf. Nussbaum devotes pages 527-556 of *Upheavals of Thought* to Augustinian contemplative ascent of erotic love.

the very human agency stripping one of the possibility to engage in it fully.³⁶⁵ The way chosen by McNeil, Morrison, and Nouwen seems to suggest that temporary suffering is not that urgent compared to the hope of an eternal beatitude.

Cates does not address the question about the way McNeil, Morrison, and Nouwen conceive human suffering, yet she comments on their insistence that the focus of our compassion is God alone. She insists that the perception of compassion is focused on a particular person, his/her suffering and possible means of alleviating that pain. “To make God,” she furthers, “the focus (i.e., the object) of compassion is to reduce compassion to the love of God.”³⁶⁶ Cates argues that a Christian can see the suffering person as God-related and thus to see the ways of helping him/her with reference to his/her God-relatedness. But she concludes: “If the Christian does not, in a given situation, have the alleviation of *this* (God-related) person’s (God-related) pain at the center of her (God-related) attention, then what she is feeling is not properly characterized as compassion.”³⁶⁷ And though Cates attempts to find a balance in the object of Christian compassion – it is the suffering person primarily – we wonder how much helpful is her God-related nuance that she chooses to leave in brackets. What is the meaning of this God-relatedness in compassion? This in a way seems to resemble Nussbaum’s conception of similar possibilities and *eudaimonistic* judgment (thus intentional content) of compassion.³⁶⁸ In Cates’ thought, Christians seem by the virtue of common creaturely nature to extend their compassion to others and the God-relatedness which implicates relationality makes your flourishing part of my own.

5.2.3.5 Christian Faith and Charity Altering Compassion’s Choice to Act

Finally, Cates concludes her analysis on the reflection of compassion’s choice to act and feel when the situation is appropriate. This reflection wants to inquire into the question of how our friendship with God can alter a Christian’s decision to judge who is a proper object of compassion. Thus Cates wants to discuss the possibility of extension of our cares (we may remember that her concept of compassion is exercised within a context of friendship with people with whom we share similar moral character, thus in her framework these friendships also seem to be situated primarily within a Christian community).

Cates constructed friends as ‘the other selves’ with whom we share very intimate connection and thus compassion is in no way a strange moral response to their predicament, but in what sense can we be compassionate to complete strangers and even our enemies, then?

Cates tries to construct compassion to strangers and even enemies as an act of befriending. This seems a logical move in an account where compassion is seen as “a disposition deliberately to receive and respond to persons in pain *as if* they were persons with whom we share our lives.”³⁶⁹ Extending compassion to people other than our friends does not turn the sufferer into our friend (friendship is always a mutually recognized

³⁶⁵ Cf. Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 263-264.

³⁶⁶ Cates, *Choosing to Feel*, 226.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 226.

³⁶⁸ See section 2.1 *Altering the Judgment of Similarity: Eudaimonistic Judgment* of this chapter.

³⁶⁹ Cates, *Choosing to Feel*, 231.

benevolent relationship), but it is an initial recognition of likeness (thus, be attentive, this is a recognition of common humanity found also in Nussbaum). Cates hence furthers:

We do not need to spend our days with a particular stranger or enemy to presume with good reason and passion that he is like us in the way that he experiences certain pains: he, too, has life plans that he wishes to accomplish; he, too, fears the frustration of these plans; he, too, feels vulnerable when his plans are frustrated by awareness-consuming sensations of pain; he, too, is afraid of being abandoned in his pain; he, too, is afraid to abandon those who are depending upon him to stay well; he, too, gets tired of life's struggle, yet he, too, is afraid of dying.³⁷⁰

Here Cates does not appeal to Christian faith to make this recognition, yet Christian faith can be a catalyst in actually being able to see the other as a fellow human being. The act of befriending is an extension of affection we usually feel for friends – a one-sided act of making a far away one our own. “It is a preparedness,” Cates argues, “to allow our broader patterns of wanting, thinking, and perceiving to be altered by the other, such that the other really does become (and remains) an integral part of us.”³⁷¹ Cates very clearly wants to make compassion not a moral sentiment of a broad sort, but a strong, particular emotion which moves *me* very deeply and personally to *you* – I recognize you as you are, a person, even though I might not be linked to you more than through the recognition that we both are human beings and so we share similar hopes and woes.

Of course, constructing compassion and its extension in such terms have minuses. One can presuppose that if we take a notion like befriending and place it closely to the definition of compassion – our compassion for the far other might imply that we seek a long-term relationship with him/her, which is clearly untrue in a lot of cases. The notion of befriending might also have negative effects for the concept of friendship itself – Cates construes it as a deep intimacy, after all. If we see extension of our compassion to those who are not our friends at the moment as an act of befriending, this can water down the meaning of a true friendship because we will be using the term to describe a phenomena that does not hold the characteristics of it.

Cates recognizes these possible disadvantages, but she argues that her concept of befriending has a strong point, a point that she considers to be essential to what compassion is, in fact. And so Cates argues:

[T]o construe an act of compassion for a stranger or an enemy as an act of befriending is to suggest that compassion is not something that we do-feel for people ‘in general.’ That is something that we must do-feel for them in ‘particular.’ That is, it requires encountering persons in pain *in* their particularity, feeling attracted to them, wanting to be with them, and wanting to benefit them *as* the unique persons that they are.³⁷²

Cates argues that defining compassion descriptively is already a normative enterprise – it always implies how we think compassion should be exercised. Thus she employs rich descriptions not to ‘water down’ the meaning and experience of compassion. This definition, Cates argues, applies to a Christian and non-Christian audience. A Christian

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 231.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 231.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, 233.

extending compassion to a stranger or an enemy will go cognitively and emotionally through the same mechanisms as a non-Christian, the difference between the believer and non-believer being Christian imagery forming the imagination and thus perception of the former. Cates thus furthers that in this regard a Christian virtuous character is formed in accordance with the Word: “*You shall* be disposed to regard and to treat every person in pain, in her particularity, as ‘another yourself.’”³⁷³

This imperative is an opening gate to make others’ flourishing important to my own because this brings me closer to God who is the ultimate flourishing. This is a starting point of being sensitive and open to the other’s pain and this does not give ready-made solutions of how to practice compassion in particular cases or how to balance our immediate and less proximate cares. That is ultimately the task of practical wisdom (the same Aristotelian concept that manages our ethical decisions also in Nussbaum’s thought). Practical wisdom is cultivated through a long life span, through our experiences and critical reflection upon our lives that aim at mutual flourishing. Our perception is, indeed, aimed at being one with God’s but as long as it is separate, (and we always keep the separateness even in unity with God in Catholic doctrine) a Christian – “will have to make decisions about how to construe what she perceives and how to act-feel on the basis of those construals – decisions that emanate from the aspect of her extended moral agency which she has learned to recognize as most intimately, irreducibly, and continuously ‘her own.’”³⁷⁴

5.2.4 Concluding Remarks

After reading Cates’ concerns we see the validity of them, we could also say that her Christian appropriation of compassion and Nussbaum’s philosophical concepts of compassion can, in fact, strike as different notions. Christianity advocates a particular and ‘extravagant’ conception of compassion which is infused with religious imagery that speaks to the adherents of this tradition (just think of the parable of the prodigal son as a perfect example of unmerited and extravagant compassion found in the Scripture).

Nussbaum’s scope is different altogether – she wants to access the value of emotions from an ethical point of view, suggesting that they are also important for our political arrangements. She envisions a liberal democracy where the knowledge conveyed by emotions can be utilized in a rational and institutionalized way. Her compassion has a fixed cognitive content that can be educated. It is also promoted by a political regime for the citizens of various religious backgrounds. This context causes her to search for universal ways to define compassion and defend its utility. Cates doubts if Christian compassion and the phenomenon Nussbaum defends is the same thing and it indeed has some evident conceptual differences. What Nussbaum attempts to do, however, is to find something universally communicable in this phenomenon as she is convinced that it can provide some strong elements in strengthening the social fabric. What is common in various conceptions of compassion, we argue, is the recognition of the other as a fellow human being and that his/her predicaments can in fact move me.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, 233.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 236.

Christian compassion, inspired by a metaphorical language of the Scripture, can indeed form our treatment of others and Nussbaum seemingly would not argue against it. Yet, if one proclaims compassion as a leading social and political sentiment and argues for its constitutional and legal implementations (like Nussbaum does through her advocacy of the capabilities approach) one cannot argue for an ‘extravagant’ and more arbitrary use of it. If we value one tradition’s wisdom (or even hold it true to that extent) in arguing what compassion truly is, we cannot utilize it in a totalitarian way and undermine the freedom of the people who cannot agree with the religious premise of it. One cannot compel liberal contemporary societies to a Christian compassion. As theological ethicists we can learn from Nussbaum’s sensitivities in defining what we hold good and truthful, yet without dragooning people against their will to it. We also argue that the creation and argumentation for a compassionate society requires building bridges. Thus Christian theology can find an ally in Nussbaum’s philosophy of emotion and a stimulus to construct a thought through argument if it wants to contribute to wider academic and societal reflections on questions addressing fundamental issues of human nature.

Finally, one could hardly deny Nussbaum’s hesitation about one writing a normative ethical project from a particular conviction, especially if we have in mind a religious reflection that presupposes external transcendence (thus, writing from the premise that we know something about God as it is and making subsequent normative claims stemming from it).³⁷⁵ We can understand Nussbaum’s hesitation in this regard, but we also cannot agree that theological ethics cannot make any legitimate normative claims. Inspired and moved forward by Nussbaum’s critique we will attempt to find a balanced way to express our religious convictions in theological ethics in a non-totalizing, but universal and respectful manner. Cates’ account on Christian compassion can be an example of a good starting point with rich experiential descriptions of compassion, yet we do think in certain areas, we have highlighted in our presentation, it lacks universal communicability.

In our upcoming section we want to turn to Nussbaum’s own religious conviction and suggested by Cates take a look at how much it influences her own ethical project. This exercise, we hope, can shed more light on a way an adequate ethical project discussing the most fundamental human motivations should be constructed.

5.3 JUDAISM IN NUSSBAUM’S ETHICS

Nussbaum’s relationship with Judaism might be the key in understanding why she chooses to construct compassion in the form of three rational thoughts and does not entertain talking about it as a virtue as Cates does. The very core of this reasoning, namely, the this-worldly focus, is acknowledged by Nussbaum herself and pointed out by Cates. But let us take a closer look at Judaism in Nussbaum’s ethics.

³⁷⁵ Carlo Leget in his “Martha Nussbaum and Thomas Aquinas on Emotions” points out that Nussbaum is critiqued for marginalizing people who write from their particular commitment (be it Christianity, Judaism, feminism). Though, he also argues that gradually her works changed perspective and we can see it in her writings on human development that usually tightly discuss females in their particular context (mainly India) and her confession of the sympathy for Judaism in the *Upheavals of Thought*. See Leget, “Martha Nussbaum and Thomas Aquinas on Emotions,” 568. Here Leget refers us to a critique of Nussbaum by L. Gregory Jones found in “The Love Which *Love’s Knowledge* Knows Not: Nussbaum’s Evasion of Christianity,” *The Thomist* 56 (1992): 323-337.

Martin Kavka, a professor of Judaism studies and philosophy, reaffirms that *Upheavals of Thought* associates Judaism with carnality and vulnerability.³⁷⁶ Kavka, in fact, reaffirms our suggested insight that the dynamics between the perfect and the real can be a key point in understanding her ethics. For him all of Nussbaum's publications can be seen as extensions of her basic claim "human limits structure the human excellences, and give excellent action its significance."³⁷⁷ Moreover, "whether treating legal, literary, social, or political matters, she has consistently argued that any comprehensive ideology that claims to understand the good and the perfect leads to hatred and disgust unless it is accompanied (but not replaced) by a love for that which is finite, incomplete, and imperfect in humanity."³⁷⁸

5.3.1 External Transcendence Claims in Theological Ethics

Kavka also helps us to situate Nussbaum's ethics in a relationship to transcendental claims. Her ethics suggest a wave like motion between internal transcendence and real life circumstances and so Kavka argues:

While accepting the human impulse to seek to transcend the limits of a mortal life, Nussbaum has criticized any account of 'external transcendence' which takes this impulse to such an extreme that it ends up devaluing the mortal and the human in favor of the immortal and divine, and has instead offered an account of 'internal transcendence' which struggles to create a more excellent world through a never-ending negotiation and renegotiation of the external heterogeneity of our personal and political relationships.³⁷⁹

We believe that this is a very true and insightful explanation of Nussbaum's ethics, but this inevitably poses some problems to theological ethics which aspires to make any normative claims utilizing 'external transcendence' claims.

Nussbaum's views on external transcendence claims are influenced by her liberal/Enlightenment Judaic views. Nussbaum proclaims herself an 'Enlightenment Jew' and associates herself with Kantian rationalism of German reform thinkers and the passion for social justice that this position entails.³⁸⁰

Nussbaum claims, then, that any normative theorizing about the good is always theorizing about the human good with no reference to transcendent good as existing and making any claims. And thus Kavka sums up her position:

³⁷⁶ Martin Kavka, "Judaism and Theology," 343.

³⁷⁷ Kavka quoting Nussbaum's, "Transcending Humanity," in *Love's Knowledge. Essays on Philosophy and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 378.

³⁷⁸ Kavka, "Judaism and Theology," 343.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 343-344.

³⁸⁰ In this instance Kavka refers us to Nussbaum, "Judaism and the Love of Reason." Kavka continues that Nussbaum identifies Reform Judaism with a return of the religion to its original Biblical heart (in a sense that the struggle for justice is found more easily in the writings of the Biblical prophets than in the Talmud). He agrees with this insight in so far that we also remember that the heart and the core of Judaism is the covenant between God and the people of Israel at Mount Sinai where the unmerited presence of God in the history of his people is affirmed and the performance of *mitzvot* is understood as a mediation between the mundane and the sacred. Kavka, "Judaism and Theology," 346. Kavka shares Nussbaum's loves for Kantian rationalism of Reform Judaism and the social justice it seeks, yet he refuses to tie Judaism to a dichotomy, where on one side we have the heteronomy of rabbinic legalism and the autonomy of Reform Judaism, on the other.

The model for the good that this theological ethics would offer is a human model, rooted in the contingencies and particularities of mortal life, in which the divine conveniently happens to share. Nussbaum's account of internal transcendence allows for religious ethics as a descriptive enterprise that seeks to answer the question of how various religious traditions and figures have adapted an understanding of human limitations in theology, and also allows for religious ethics as a narrative enterprise that uses stories to become more finely aware of how to apply universal moral ideas to specific cases. But it would not allow for a constructive project in which ethics would be grounded in the incursion of the divine – *as* the divine, transcendent and external – into the human.³⁸¹

We agree with Nussbaum's approach to ethics and confirm the idea that questions about the good are always questions about the human good (Kavka also confirms this line of thought), but we question together with Kavka whether there is a way to speak of the divine in theological ethics without making those claims superfluous. Kavka argues that it is precisely in human experiences of compassion and love that we can find this way – these experiences of vulnerability and passivity in the presence of the other is disclosing “that we cannot aim at the targets for flourishing which we have set for ourselves.”³⁸² “Rather,” he continues, “at certain moments of sensing the claims that others have over us, the agency that is making the claims on us and briefly foiling our intentions is non-natural, although it enters into nature in the act of claiming.”³⁸³

Kavka refers us to the foundational document of the Reform Judaism movement in America, namely, the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885 which is grounded in a belief of “the indwelling of God in man.”³⁸⁴ This reaffirms Nussbaum's intuitions that God dwells in me and places my modern autonomous voice over the rain of heteronomous rabbinic conceptions of Judaism.³⁸⁵ Yet it also reaffirms “that God dwells in – or, perhaps more felicitously, speaks indirectly through – humans who are *not* me, who pull me toward them, and thereby simultaneously toward the human good and its foundation, the good that is beyond the human.”³⁸⁶

5.3.2 Carnality, Aristotle, and Perception

But for a moment let us come back to Nussbaum's conception of God's indwelling as an absolutely this-worldly experience. We have already affirmed that the material aspect, the reformed Judaism's concern, this this-world justice influences the landscape of Nussbaum's ethics. In this regard we should expand the discussion on the element of carnality – the element where Nussbaum's reformed Judaism and her Aristotelian affiliation come together.

³⁸¹ Kavka, “Judaism and Theology,” 344.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, 344. Kavka affirms that this argument is clearly linked with Emmanuel Levinas' argument of an “other who provokes [an] ethical movement in conscious.” See Emmanuel Levinas, *Basic Philosophical Writings*, eds. Adriaan T. Peperzak, Simon Critchley, and Robert Bernasconi (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 19.

³⁸³ Kavka, “Judaism and Theology,” 345.

³⁸⁴ Here Kavka refers us to Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in The Modern World: A Documentary History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 468.

³⁸⁵ Kavka refers us to Nussbaum, “Judaism and the Love of Reason,” 20.

³⁸⁶ Kavka, “Judaism and Theology,” 346.

Nussbaum conceives perception in Aristotle in the following way – “the psychological activities of living beings, such as perceiving, desiring, and imagining, are realized or constituted in matter, are in fact the activities of some suitable matter.”³⁸⁷ “Thus, for Nussbaum, ‘Jewishness’ in Aristotle can begin to be defined by carnality.”³⁸⁸ Nussbaum clearly associates the element of carnality or materiality with reformed Judaism and she finds the same affirmation in Aristotle’s conception of perception. This meeting point allows Kavka to synthesize the very important element of Nussbaum’s ethics:

For to speak about carnality or materiality as the necessary substrate for any portrait of human perception, when transferred from psychology to ethics, is to speak about the importance of the perception of the particular in making right decisions. If Aristotle is right in claiming that human acts are realized in matter – or, at the very least, something other than completely rational and disembodied awareness – then right practical reasoning will pay attention to this material substratum of human act. One gains the right to bring into ethics those elements that evaporate in the alleged clarity of the general dogmas of reason: emotions, history, the particular capabilities of other people, and the concrete circumstances of a narrative that remind us that ethics can be agnostic. [...] Perception says something not simply about what is perceived, but about the judgments of the perceiver. It refers not only to the subject-matter of the percept, but also the ‘matter’ of the perceiving subject, the situation from which one perceives and makes decisions.³⁸⁹

This lengthy quotation captures Nussbaum’s views on the importance of the material aspect in ethics and the implications if we consider it seriously. It changes the landscape of ethics in dramatic ways including new elements that need further reflection and appropriation. Perception “is a process of loving conversation between rules and concrete responses, general conceptions and unique cases, in which the general articulates the particular and is in turn further articulated by it.”³⁹⁰ We believe that Christian theological ethics from time to time tends to forget the meaning of the loving conversation (meaning, a respectful and attentive to each other discussion between general norms and concrete life

³⁸⁷ Kavka here refers us to Martha C. Nussbaum and Hilary Putnam, “Changing Aristotle’s Mind,” in *Essays on Aristotle’s De Anima*, eds. Martha C. Nussbaum and Amélie Oksenberg Rorty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995): 33.

³⁸⁸ Kavka, “Judaism and Theology,” 347.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 348. Kavka continues this argument to the landscape of religion and ritual. In respect of the first element he writes: “In terms of religion, this back-and-forth between the subject and a tradition means that the narratives of authoritative texts can be lived in different manners by groups of people who perceive the canon from different contexts. However, this is not an argument for relativism. Rather, it is to say that the ability to perceive – both actual situations and imagines or desired futures – is at the basis of what it means to be human.” *Ibid.*, 348-349. What is then the role of particular narratives and rituals that embody them? “The answer,” Kavka states, “appears to be in line with Nussbaum’s understanding of Aristotelian perception: the backdrop of narrative and ritual serves as the necessary material basis for the motivation and expression of the moral will.” *Ibid.*, 349. In this regard Kavka refers us to Nussbaum’s text acknowledging the importance of ritual observance and its essential value: “I believe that ritual observance is extremely important for many people who seek to live a moral life, and especially important for children, to connect abstract moral truths to particular musical and emotional memories. Nor do I believe that ritual is only instrumental. I think that the acts of imagination and emotion that one performs when one participates in a ritual well are intrinsically valuable human acts, acts expressive of moral dedication, of fellowship, of longing for justice. Music and poetic language can frequently inspire us to express ourselves morally in a more adequate and focused way, and those expressions themselves have worth, in addition to their worth in motivating us to act.” Nussbaum, “Judaism and the Love of Reason,” 27-28.

³⁹⁰ Kavka quoting Nussbaum’s, “The Discernment of Perception,” 95.

circumstances) and its aim and gets lost in the dichotomous debates between traditionalist and revisionist conceptions of the good life (the point which is somewhat similar to Kavka's mentioned simplistic focus on dichotomy between rabbinic legalistic and reformed Judaism).

5.3.3 Nussbaum's Carnal Ethics Challenge for Christian Otherworldliness

Every argument leading to this point already revealed the intimate relationship between some core ideas of Nussbaum's ethics and reformed Judaism. We may remember the image from James Joyce *Ulysses* we have presented in the general introduction of Nussbaum's theory of emotions.³⁹¹ The image so inherent to Nussbaum's conception of ethics speaks of climbing the upside down ladder for the perfect and yet from time to time looking at a real person "in bed or on the chamber pot."³⁹² The Jewish figure of Leopold Bloom in *Ulysses* is a "cosmopolitan conception of a common humanity"³⁹³ and Kavka furthers that this stems from Joyce's focus on the themes of embodiment and erotic desire – "showing that this absence of boundaries is grounded in the absence of a bounded, self-sufficient, contemplative identity."³⁹⁴ Thus for Nussbaum "one cannot affirm a cosmopolitan rational ethic without also affirming materiality, eros, and the vulnerability of our erotic striving, without 'saying yes to all in life that defies control.'"³⁹⁵ The element of carnality, the embrace of what is imperfect to truly seek the good, which Nussbaum ascribes to the Jewish figures in her texts, implicates that for her Judaism is a good way to seek a flourishing human life. Furthermore, ethics inspired by these values seem to seek the human good in the most adequate way.

The lack of the carnal/material element in a substantial amount of Christian ethics is something that raises Nussbaum's critical assessment.³⁹⁶ In the *Upheavals of Thought* Nussbaum looks to Augustine's and Dante's Christians and finds them guilty of disregarding the real, material, present in the name of immaterial, otherworldly and behind history. While those two figures cannot be held as representatives of Christian theology as such (Nussbaum always speaks of Augustine's and Dante's Christian avoiding generalizations, though), they without a doubt represent some of the issues inherent in the tradition.

We may remember that for Nussbaum the landscape of human life without the upheaval of emotions lacks "mystery and depth, a tremendous power that can make us wonder, at least, whether a life that forgoes this passion would be impoverished, a life without radiance."³⁹⁷ Nussbaum's defended 'internal transcendence' in principle is not at odds with the Christian narrative (think of the kenotic aspect of it). What Nussbaum seems

³⁹¹ See section 5.3.5 *Concluding Remarks* of the Chapter I.

³⁹² Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 713.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, 708.

³⁹⁴ Kavka, "Judaism and Theology," 353.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 353. Kavka here quotes the *Upheavals of Thought*, 709.

³⁹⁶ You can read Nussbaum's critical views on Christian ascent of love in *Upheavals of Thought*, 527-577, where she offers her interpretation of Augustine's and Dante's views on purification of desire. We also discussed it in Chapter I, section 1.5 *Nussbaum's Judaism*.

³⁹⁷ Kavka, "Judaism and Theology," 350. Here Kavka quotes Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 468; In this passage Nussbaum presents Proust's account of erotic passion, the values of which she greatly supports.

to suggest, however, is that “the teleology of Christian praxis is at odds with the values embodied in its foundational narrative.”³⁹⁸ What she seems to miss is precisely a true appreciation of emotive experiences captured in the aforementioned Proust’s conception of erotic love. Nussbaum seems to assume that a good deal of Christian ethics omits the ‘mystery and depth’ and the wondrous aspect of life by neglecting emotional experiences. We also remember that Nussbaum’s conception of care for others is rooted in childhood emotional experiences which later are broadened to care for distant others (and sustained by good ethical principles). This element Nussbaum finds entirely absent in the classical conceptions of Christian ethics.

In this light Nussbaum perceives all Christian cares for the real, tangible lives of others (which is always connected to the real suffering of this world, to its uncertainty, to the mortality) as ultimately consumed by the otherworldly desire and love for God. This makes, she claims, all Christian concerns instrumental and not authentic in a sense that ultimately we care and love God, but not the real person in front of us and his/her life is not an “intrinsic source of value for our lives.”³⁹⁹ And so Kavka continues “the emotional maelstrom of the Christian’s longing for God is so all-encompassing and otherworldly in its orientation that it becomes impossible for the Augustinian Christian to love others as ends in themselves. Other people become instruments for the self’s love of God, and the emphasis on the universally sinful nature of humankind leads to a compassion that ‘is committed to denying the importance of the worldly losses and injustices to which my neighbor may attach importance, in order to assert the primacy of the need for God and the potential for grace.’”⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁸ Kavka, “Judaism and Theology,” 350.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 350.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 351. Kavka here quotes *Upheavals of Thought*, 552. Kavka also points out that Nussbaum is suspicious of Christian compassion, and any cares generally, also due to Christian eschatological doctrine. Thus she writes “the image of Heaven as a place of self-sufficiency, and a place of beatitude...cannot ultimately be reconciled with the idea of ongoing compassion for human life.” Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 351. The idea of the ultimate security which is more than any securities of this world for Nussbaum implies quietism in the face of injustice (what is happening is not of final worth in any case) and abandonment of true, non-instrumental cares, they are again consumed by the ultimate security that lies beyond history. She opposes this to the Judaic eschatological vision and argues: “We can now note that in Jewish eschatology the afterlife is not a bright, but a shadowy, place, rather like the Homeric underworld. And Judaism draws close to Romanticism in its insistence on finding the worth and meaning of a life within history, in its choices and striving in this life. It seems not too bold to see here, then, a distinctively Jewish picture of the afterlife as in itself shadowy and uncertain, to be given light only by the achievements of the person within this life.” Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 641. Kavka rushes to point out that Nussbaum is surely correct to describe the Biblical *Sheol* as similar to Homeric Hades, yet Jewish eschatology does not consist of homogeneous interpretations. Some of the rabbis also offer immaterial, spiritual interpretations of the afterlife (for example B. Berakhot) and even Nussbaum’s appreciated tradition of reformed Judaism is not univocal. Herman Cohen whose work is characterized by attention to the ethical action in this life wrote that death is the spirit’s ‘return home to God.’ Kavka, “Judaism and Theology,” 352. With this explanation Kavka wants to point out that it is very difficult to offer a picture of Jewish eschatology as such and Nussbaum’s argument does not dwell in the complexity of the theological arguments but attempts to oppose it to the dangerous picture of Christian eschatology. In the same vein we could add that Nussbaum points out areas of Christian doctrine that should be wisely challenged so that ongoing reflections would not offer easy answers out of delicate problems. Yet when she utilizes terms of Christian eschatology in general we can always ask – whose eschatology? Christian theological debates also do not offer monolithic accepted-by-all interpretations of life after death and its connection to the ethical action here and now.

This poses some real questions to theological ethics inspired by Christian narrative – is there a way to suggest universal ethics meeting the standards of contemporary academic (and social-political) discourse, attentive to concrete material circumstances of people and also making claims referring back to that narrative which are not superfluous (thus not appealing to the rationale of the otherworldly premise as having a right to consume the other conceptions of the good as less)? We believe that any attempt to perceive Christian ethics as having a right to make a totalitarian move towards other ethical conceptions defeats not only its contemporary credibility, but also its Christian nature as such. Nussbaum claims that Christian ethics tends to dismiss real, non-instrumental cares of humans, outgrowths of emotional experiences. Furthermore, we also agree with Nussbaum’s conception of emotions as playing an important role in ethics as disclosing value. It is our hope that our careful examination of Aquinas’s thoughts on the value of passions in human morality can prove that Christian tradition did not always dismiss this aspect of the flourishing life (which, indeed, has an element of passivity which is so important for Nussbaum in countering the illusion of omnipotence). It is also our hope that the rediscovery of the role of emotions in the landscape of our moral lives can enrich the discourse of theological ethics opening the window to the world of meaning, where we can truly care for others and in the same life not abandon the longing for God.

5.3.4 Is There a Place for Theology in Nussbaum’s Ethics?

Kavka accompanied us through the journey of understanding the influence of Judaism in Nussbaum’s ethics. We have seen Nussbaum’s rejection of any external transcendence claims in our ethical reflections, as the premise of ethics is conceptions of the human good which entirely corresponds to the modern autonomous reason. But is there a way to make any comprehensive theological claims at all which would refer to external transcendence claims? Kavka already gave his answer – the experiences of compassion and love – he wants to see these claims as the claims of the external transcendence mediated by others. Thus it seems that the emotion can be a gateway to speak meaningfully of the external transcendence claims. And thus Kavka continues “this mysterious non-natural origin of emotional judgment can be found in parts of Nussbaum’s work, most clearly in the opening description of *Upheavals of Thought* of feeling ‘invaded by the world’ after learning of her mother’s death.”⁴⁰¹ Emotions understood in the Aristotelian perception sense triggered by the experience of material disclose something supernatural to Kavka (and Nussbaum’s conception of emotions seems to make this theological extension valid).

Let us follow his argument closely to understand its full force. For this, once again, we will have to take a look at Joyce’s Leopold Bloom and the intuitions it discloses. Kavka refers us to the moment in *Ulysses* where Bloom rediscovers the items of his late father and as a consequence is captured by memories and emotions. This experience brings out two salient elements. First of all, Bloom rediscovers Judaism, but in a unique way. Joyce’s language is anti-metaphysical suggesting that Judaism is no more or less rational than other practices and beliefs (including democratic practice) – “this may imply that he does not perceive democracy or revealed religion as foundational truths, but as practices in which

⁴⁰¹ Kavka, “Judaism and Theology,” 355. Kavka here quotes *Upheavals of Thought*, 19.

we acknowledge those uncontrollable forces in the world that makes our autonomous judgments possible.”⁴⁰² From Nussbaum’s own interpretation we remember that Bloom’s figure represents democratic values and cosmopolitan universal ethics and the newly experienced remorse over his dismissal of his father’s belief in revelation, Kavka claims “that a joy in the contingency of the material world and a traditional Jewish theology do not have to contradict each other.”⁴⁰³

More than that – these two elements might be linked. As Bloom goes through the drawer with his father’s possessions:

The objects found in the drawer serve as signs of larger truths about the way in which Bloom cannot control life – he cannot control his father’s pain, his father’s suicide, and most importantly, his own reaction to them. Bloom does not *decide* to feel remorse (indeed, the absence of such a decision seems to be what distinguishes remorse from regret). The remorse is the result of the memories that had been involuntarily evoked by the sight of these possessions. Bloom is passive in the face of his emotions, and it is this passivity that leads him ways from the autonomous judgment of what is and is not Judaism, past and appreciation of ritual action as a vehicle for becoming conscious of moral truths, and towards the real possibility of the truth of the supernatural origin of the Torah.⁴⁰⁴

We can see that neither Joyce nor Kavka implies that Bloom change his ways to that one of an orthodox Jew. His *metanoia*, his different conception of what might be true or what might count as a valid belief comes to being through the material medium – the items that belonged to his grandfather and father suddenly become “imbued with a power that goes far beyond their natural capacity.”⁴⁰⁵ And thus for Kavka “mysteriously, that which is beyond nature has participated in natural objects, and perhaps it is this manifestation that leads Bloom respond to these objects in his appreciation for the possibility that revelation is irreducible to reason.”⁴⁰⁶

The figure of Leopold Bloom is one of the ways to illustrate Kavka’s conception of value judgment. His aim fundamentally is to draw our attention to the nature and origin of our emotional experiences and its connection to value judgments we make. For Kavka there is a moment of passivity, of being moved that precedes judgments we make or have made already.⁴⁰⁷ The shifts of our concern that are evoked and claimed by external agencies and the force before which we are passive “cannot be defined in any natural terms, but only affirmed as numinous, transcendent, sublime, and worthy of awe.”⁴⁰⁸ For Kavka, this split second recognition of the possibility of transcendence is a legitimate reason to engage in theological reflection: “And in the desire to explore exactly what we might be able validly to say about this dazzling sublimity and how it leads us to apprehend

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*, 354.

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*, 354.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 354-355.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 355.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 355.

⁴⁰⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 356.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 356. Kavka goes as far as claiming that “instead, this situation has disclosed something that other situations have occluded, that there is a moment of passivity that is the matrix out of which all autonomous judgments arise, a passivity in the face of some exteriority that transcends one’s own arena of self-sufficiency.” *Ibid.*, 357.

the humanly good, it will claim that the theological enterprise is valid.”⁴⁰⁹ This leads Kavka to conclude that the theological enterprise which is inspired by the moment of passivity and its awareness seeks to bring together Aristotle and rabbis, philosophy and the Jewish tradition (thus essentially, philosophical and theological enterprises together), the intellectual and the carnal and “that which transcends externally and internally.”⁴¹⁰ “But in the mysterious pacts we make with others,” Kavka continues, “in our acts of compassion and love it will also see echoes of the covenantal basis of Judaism.”⁴¹¹ Thus for Kavka there is something normative in our emotional experiences – they refer us to the intuition of how things should be. Our emotional experiences are also, then, windows through which external transcendence makes its claims and leads us to the divine vision of good. We believe that Kavka offered some very insightful comments of the ‘Jewishness’ of Nussbaum’s ethics.

5.3.5 Concluding Remarks

We also believe that his insertion of the space for theology in the reflection of emotions is valid; moreover, it has some direct links to Aquinas’s conceptions of the passions as passivity through which God works, but these we will discuss in the upcoming chapter.

Kavka’s analysis also offered some points where we can see similarities between Nussbaum’s and Cates’ conceptions of ethics and the role of emotions in it. As we have highlighted before both thinkers are influenced by Aristotle and his conception of perception which is always perception of particulars. This is prominent in the works of both thinkers. This conception of perceptions opens the landscape of ethics to new elements – and we have seen that Nussbaum’s ethics and Cates’ religious ethics incorporate emotions as valid elements of our ethical reflections. Both of them also see the process of ethical decision making as a complex dynamics between our perception, desires, emotions and cognitive capacities. This decision-making and self-definition is guided by practical reason which in both cases is understood as a conversation between our experiences and tradition(s), universal rules and concrete circumstances.

Cates’ claim that Nussbaum’s own religious affiliation influences her conception seems to be correct. Yet Nussbaum’s conception of Judaism does not stand at odds with an autonomous reason and her interest in justice that can be achieved (or at least strived for) here and now.

The struggle of our own project is not only to re-discover the role of emotions in theological ethics, we also attempt to find a way to talk about emotional experiences in theological terms without making them superfluous. Kavka seems to suggest that through our emotions something very important is disclosed to us, and this something is even more than the disclosing of value found in Nussbaum; it is, indeed, the glimpse to the divine vision of the good. Our own challenge is, then, to find a balance in expressing the hope that transcends this life, but without undermining what is happening here and now and our dues to fellow human beings.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 357.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 357.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*, 357-358.

5.4 IS COMPASSION THE ONLY POLITICAL EMOTION WE OWE TO OTHERS?

We seem to refer to our second main thinker more and more, but before we enter into the world of Thomas Aquinas let us try to build another bridge and question Nussbaum a little further – is compassion the only emotion that contributes the best for the building of just societies? For this question we turn to Amia Srinivasan. In her thought Srinivasan proposes a tragic approach to epistemology, ethics and metaphilosophy – this entails that our knowledge is hostage to powers beyond our own control (the intuition, without a doubt, is very much at home in Nussbaum’s thought). We will look into Srinivasan’s thoughts on Nussbaum’s compassion and we will highlight some important critical thoughts she raises to question Nussbaum’s claim that only compassion and love contribute to the building of aspiring liberal democracies. Srinivasan makes a plea to anger, as one of the possible responses in the face of injustice, and so we judge that her assessment of Nussbaum’s thought can be a good bridge to enter the world of Aquinas and his views on the passions and particularly the ethical worth of anger.⁴¹²

Srinivasan offers a rather positive view on Nussbaum’s work on compassion and argues that her disagreement with Nussbaum might not be a disagreement after all – she agrees with Nussbaum’s stipulation that aspiring liberal societies with good institutions need love and compassion to sustain themselves, yet Srinivasan cannot see these societies and just or almost-just institutions that inhabits them as currently present.⁴¹³ Srinivasan argues that Nussbaum sees the US as founded on correct foundational principles and having more or less adequate institutions. In this case, what one needs “is a renewed commitment to those principles, and in particular renewed commitment to social welfare programmes that ensure that no one is too badly off, and that everyone has equal opportunities for living a worthwhile human life.”⁴¹⁴ And, indeed, we can find a confirmation in *Political Emotions* that Nussbaum thinks that way. “My question,” Nussbaum confirms, “is how to render political principles and institutions stable, and thus the inquiry presupposes that basically good institutions exist, or can be rather shortly realized, albeit in a form that will require ongoing work to improve and perfect.”⁴¹⁵ Thus compassion and love comes as good motives in perfecting something that is already there.

Srinivasan agrees with this claim, but as mentioned before she cannot see examples of such countries. She views the US and the UK (the alleged examples of Western liberal democratic states) as countries that systematically enact violence against their worst off citizens through state sponsored policies of discrimination (here she invites us to think of

⁴¹² We will continue the conversation with Srinivasan on the emotion of anger in Chapter IV, see section 2.2 *Contemporary Thinkers on Anger: Anger as a Moral Response to an Imperfect World*.

⁴¹³ Amia Srinivasan was one of the key speakers at a workshop on Nussbaum’s *Political Emotions* organized by the Institute for Human Rights at the University College London. The title of the workshop is Why Love Matters for Justice: Workshop on Martha Nussbaum’s *Political Emotions* (31st May, 2014). <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-rights/ihr-events-past/2014/martha-nussbaum-political-emotions> [accessed 12 November, 2014]. The text of the presentation can be found following the link to http://users.ox.ac.uk/~corp1468/Welcome_files/Nussbaum%20-%20political%20emotions.pdf [accessed 12 November, 2014].

⁴¹⁴ Amia Srinivasan, “Comments on Martha Nussbaum’s *Political Emotions* (May, 2014),” 8. http://users.ox.ac.uk/~corp1468/Welcome_files/Nussbaum%20-%20political%20emotions.pdf [accessed November 12, 2014].

⁴¹⁵ Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 23.

black Americans who after being emancipated from slavery suffered from exclusionary Jim Crow Laws or in other words segregation laws, were systematically put into ghettos by the Federal Housing Administration, were excluded from the benefits of the Roosevelt's New Deal, just to mention a few cases out of many). Having that in mind Srinivasan worries that there is something "morally inappropriate and ethically off-key"⁴¹⁶ to incorporate compassion as a right response to the wide spread injustice which for her is a key characteristic of the aspiring liberal democracies.

5.4.1 Looking at the Suffering Other: Do We Owe Him/Her Something More Than Only Compassion?

Srinivasan offers a two-fold outlook to compassion as a response to the predicament of others – she wants to draw our attention to the position of the observer of the predicament and the position of the victim. We will start with the short comment on Srinivasan's ideas about the position of the observer when he/she encounters a fellow citizen in a predicament. We have discovered in Nussbaum's works that she does not see compassion as merely instrumental to liberal societies – there is something good as such about a compassionate human life. This point seems to leave Srinivasan restless when she imagines fellow citizens undergoing unjust predicaments; (this is a classical case for compassion in Nussbaum's thought as it falls beautifully into the three judgments that make compassion) and that the only emotion we can offer is compassion. And what is missing is the role of me in what is happening – "For I should also feel that distinctive sting of shame and self-indictment that is the proper response to my complicity in the political structures that have caused and perpetuate this suffering, that I have bought my privilege at the expense of this suffering."⁴¹⁷ Srinivasan argues that pain is indeed part of the experience of witnessing predicament but that pain is not only due to the pain of the other, it is also the pain of my own complicity with the unjust institutions that continue to perpetuate the institutionalized injustice. Nussbaum makes compassion a *eudaimonistic* emotion stressing that the suffering of others should fall in our own circle of concern, so what happens to you touches and matters to me deeply and personally. Srinivasan seems to suggest that this is not enough and compassion is not the only moral emotion that we owe to our fellow human beings, especially if we stand on a privileged position and benefit from the government's choices to exclude some groups for our own prosperity. Compassion alone cannot work fully as a good response to the suffering caused by injustice, the sense of self-indictment. The sense that I personally cause your pain seems a more just path to Srinivasan. Srinivasan argues that compassion seems like a good response to natural causes predicaments such as death and illness, but as a response of citizens to injustice and moreover being encouraged by the political regime, indeed this is Nussbaum's argument, might be a misleading paradigm. Srinivasan sees compassion as "too distanced, too un-self-implicating, and too naïve to be the emotion appropriate to our current political realities."⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁶ Srinivasan, "Comments on Martha Nussbaum's Political Emotions," 1.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

5.4.2 *Being a Victim of Political Injustice: Is Compassion an Appropriate Response When We Suffer Injustice?*

Srinivasan wants to twist a coin of her argumentation and look at the other side of it and thus she questions – is it right for political regimes to teach their citizens compassion, even when those citizens are actually victims of political suffering? She draws our attention to the fact that Nussbaum employs examples of Martin Luther King and Gandhi as exemplary political leaders.⁴¹⁹ Srinivasan argues that a liberal state can indeed ask citizens to respect its foundational principles and its laws – but can it ask them to love them? “But can the liberal state,” Srinivasan continues, “also ask of its marginalized and disenfranchised citizens that they *love* those principles, and feel *compassion* towards those who, under the cloak of those principles, oppress them?”⁴²⁰

For Srinivasan there is something clearly coercive about this line of thought. Nussbaum, we might remember, suggests that people should be invited to emote in a particular way, but never be forced to it – thus, she speaks about the strong protection of disagreement and dissent.⁴²¹ But for Srinivasan the protection of disagreement and dissent seems not to be enough as “we should be suspicious of any top-down programme that encourages those who have greatest reason to be angry to transform that anger into compassionate love.”⁴²² Srinivasan does not imply that there is nothing deeply admirable about King and Gandhi, quite on the contrary (there is something very powerful about the image of people from the oppressed community showing love and compassion). The compassion encouraged by the state, for her, tips too dangerously into social control and should be met with high suspicion by those who the state has the most interest of controlling.

Srinivasan also offers some interesting comments on the nature of anger. Anger can be seen as a form of moral insight, as a means to disclose what is really going on. Anger and the way to deal with it is ambivalent, yet anger can offer experiences of disclosing something essential, especially in the face of injustice. “Anger can call us into a new existence,” declares Srinivasan.⁴²³ In anger we can discover who we are and see that the labels given to us by others (think of the names given to people of color, to homosexuals, to opinionated women and many others) are designed to prevent us from being recognized as equal in our humanity.

Anger is an emotion that is often dismissed especially when it comes from the people within the wronged community. Srinivasan invites us to consider the, image of an angry black man haunting the public image of Barack Obama, for instance, or the image of an angry Arab, ‘hot-blooded, death-seeking and impervious to reason;’ or even the image older than these two – an image of an angry woman.⁴²⁴ For Srinivasan, these images are weapons of control and so she continues: “To dismiss someone as angry is to say that she is governed by emotion rather than reason – that she is uncivilized, not fully human – and

⁴¹⁹ Cf. section V. History: Washington, Lincoln, King, Gandhi, Nehru of Nussbaum’s *Political Emotions*, 225-239.

⁴²⁰ Srinivasan, “Comments on Martha Nussbaum’s *Political Emotions*,” 7.

⁴²¹ Cf. section V. Content and Freedom of Nussbaum’s *Political Emotions*, 388-390.

⁴²² Srinivasan, “Comments on Martha Nussbaum’s *Political Emotions*,” 7.

⁴²³ Srinivasan, “In defense of Anger,” 3.

⁴²⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, 2.

so not worthy of serious engagement. To dismiss someone as angry is to say that she herself is the problem – not whatever it is that she is angry about.”⁴²⁵ The images of control obscure the fact that sometimes anger is a reasonable response to a world which is unreasonable.

Even though discerning, anger has its limitation, just as any other moral emotion. Anger in its raw form has few chances to be listened to; sometimes to get heard we need to calm down. Eloquent anger has more opportunities to be heard.⁴²⁶ Sometimes the call to get calm is not an attempt to control, but to genuinely help. But to constantly remind the victim of political suffering that anger is counter-productive is morally dubious at best. Srinivasan argues that from this perspective everyone can continue to act morally wrong, but the wronged one has to police his/her natural reaction to injustice.

Anger is not always useful, notes Srinivasan, but it does not have to be justified by its utility only. For her, anger can be justified when it responds to the moral failing in our societies – “anger, at its best, is a way of *seeing clearly*, a form of emotional insight into the world.”⁴²⁷ And Srinivasan continues “for if anger is a form of moral seeing, then telling the powerless not to get angry is an exhortation to blindness.”⁴²⁸ Finally, though she never mentions Nussbaum explicitly, Srinivasan inspired by her earlier comments on *Political Emotions* states that the powerless should always be suspicious when the powerful tell them just to calm down. Anger is a powerful weapon in the hands of the suffering – it broadcasts the injustice, it attracts attention, it frightens. And it is never welcomed by those who want to keep the *status quo* and those who comply in explicit and implicit ways by benefiting from unjust privileges. Thus Srinivasan concludes: “And we should ask ourselves what might happen if *we* were angrier: about the privatisation of public goods and the erosion of the private sphere; about austerity in an age of massive inequality; about the demise of social security and the rise of corporate subsidy.”⁴²⁹

5.4.3 *Balancing Between Compassion and Anger*

Srinivasan, as mentioned before, does not dismiss Nussbaum’s view on compassion in societies where justice is already present in some form, her aim is to note that we are not there yet. In the present state of affairs, Srinivasan argues, compassion might not be the only emotion we owe to each other when we observe or experience suffering. We think that Srinivasan offers some insightful comments on Nussbaum’s proposal and highlights the possible dangers if we were too optimistic about the current state of history we are in. We also highlight together with Srinivasan that compassion and self-implicating anger of compliance and anger when one undergoes injustice are not mutually self-excluding. Anger, though also discerning, is a more morally ambiguous emotion that should not be the final stop of our political communities and relationships. We would point out that Nussbaum’s insistence on compassion as an adequate moral emotion sustaining and advancing our societies is also born out of her concern about the practical goal and

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴²⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

achievement of ethics. Anger can be a moment of revelation that there is something incredibly morally wrong about some particular situation, but compassion is an emotion that builds bridges and seeks a long run sustainment. We believe that Nussbaum crafts her philosophy of emotion with this goal in the back of her head. This is also recognized by Srinivasan and so she argues “that as a matter of human psychology, simple compassion – compassion without a sting – is probably a better motivation for getting privileged people to do things like pay their taxes and support welfare programmes. People don’t like feeling the sting of shame.”⁴³⁰ Thus to try to achieve some positive outcomes it seems to be better to tap into people’s desire to be good and help others. The self-indictment, Srinivasan notes herself, might be psychologically weakening the work which she wants to build. Srinivasan suggests that if this is really the case that maybe ultimately there is a tragic conflict between the pragmatic philosophical proposals and the emotions that are beneficial for it and the emotions that justice might demand. And thus she concludes that “for the aspiring liberal societies I do know, a proper emotional reckoning with our fellow citizens must involve a confrontation with our own bloody hands.”⁴³¹

The balance is indeed difficult to achieve, but to think of questions of guilt, complicity and anger in our societies is certainly important. Nussbaum might see compassion as a most universally communicable emotion that appeals to the goodness of people and encourages them to act positively to relieve the pain of suffering. By the appeal to create safe spaces for a good emotional functioning in her capabilities approach and by insistence of practical wisdom as guiding our ethical lives, Nussbaum might hope that once we are in a sphere of recognizing each other as fellow human beings whose happiness and wellbeing are interrelated, we can tackle the questions of guilt and self-compliance to the system that oppresses; but that is a second step. We judge that she would not omit these questions, but they would fall under the sphere of personal moral psychology and tackling the questions of particular moral communities. To start with finger pointing and guilt might be not the most proactive step, but to omit it as to omit the right to anger for people who suffer injustice would be unethical. Nussbaum finds a place for a justified transitional anger in the capability of emotional functioning while being very critical to every other instance of anger.⁴³² Yet to wrestle with the right balance between what compassion and anger owes to justice is an open ended and never explicit task, but a task to which our own project wants to contribute.⁴³³

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴³² See this chapter’s subsections *4.1.1.3 Capabilities Approach and the Relevance of Emotions* and *4.1.1.4 The Case of Anger*.

⁴³³ We will continue the discussion on anger in Chapter IV, see section 2. *Continuing the Case of Anger* with all its subsections.

CHAPTER III. AQUINAS ON THE PASSIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

In the upcoming pages we will encounter our second main interlocutor – Thomas Aquinas. We will unlock Aquinas’s account on the passions¹ with the help of three authors, namely, Robert Miner, Nicholas Lombardo, O.P, and Diana Fritz Cates, all of whom have developed contemporary interpretations of Aquinas’s thought on the nature of the passions. We should note that the accounts of these thinkers are similar in their positive retrieval of Aquinas’s views on the passions and such is, indeed, our own perspective.² These authors,

¹ We are convinced that Nussbaum and Aquinas attempt to describe the same psychological phenomenon that today is broadly called ‘emotion.’ But as we have seen from the discussion in Chapter I, section 3. *Thinking of Nussbaum’s Account of Emotions: Some Critical Reflections* with all its subsections, even today the debate about what exactly falls into the category of emotions is an ongoing struggle. Though some authors choose to utilize Thomistic *passiones* as emotion (See, for example Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions* or Robert C. Roberts, “Thomas Aquinas on the Morality of Emotions,” *History of Philosophy Quarterly* Vol. 9, No. 3 (1992): 287-305), we prefer to use the term passion which does not suggest that the contemporary ‘emotion’ is a direct descendent of the scholastic *passiones*. Our task is not a historical discernment of the terms, yet being attentive to historical differences between the terms seems a good way to precede our investigation of Aquinas’s views on the passions. Thomas Dixon, a historian of philosophy, science, medicine, and religion, with particular expertise in the history of emotions, suggests that “[i]t may be helpful, in order to clarify what I mean by saying that ‘emotions’ are not the same things as ‘passions’ to make a distinction between the extensions and intensions of these terms. Modern-day uses of ‘emotions’ have different extensions and different intensions from older uses of ‘passions.’ Of course neither term has ever had a fixed meaning or a fixed extension, but there have been general tendencies, and some degree of consensus. The extension of ‘emotions’ (the items included in the category), for example, tends to include many feelings that might previously have been categorised not as passions but as appetites (e.g. lust), or affections (e.g. religious feelings), or sentiments (e.g. sympathy)...The intension of ‘emotion’ (the definition of the term) has differed very significantly from the intension of ‘passion:’ the former has tended to be defined in an amoral way as an autonomous physical or mental state characterised by vivid feeling and physical agitation, the latter has been defined in more morally and theologically engaged ways as a disobedient and morally dangerous movement of the soul (as well as often being used in a vague and general way to refer to a variety of lively mental states.” Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions. The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 18. When it comes to the Christian conceptions of the passions Dixon wants to clear some shadows traditionally cast on it: “It is particularly important, then, to realise that – contrary to popular opinion – classical Christian views about reason and the passions were equivalent neither to the view that reason and the ‘emotions’ are inevitably at war, nor to the idea that ‘emotions’ overpower us against our will. Appetites, passions and affections, on the classical Christian view, were all movements of different parts of the will, and the affections, at least were potentially informed by reason.” Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions*, 22. Early secular conceptions of emotions did not have the theological connotations of the passions and the elements close to them as connected or guided by reason. “The most important text was Thomas Brown’s *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (1820) in which ‘emotions’ was the term adopted for all those feelings that were neither sensations nor intellectual states. Brown developed a new terminology and classification of mental states, motivated by a desire to break away from tradition faculty psychology, and to create a de-Christianised and scientific alternative. ‘Emotions’ included a wide variety of states that had previously been differentiated, and many of which had been considered active powers of the soul. The term ‘emotions’ was baptized in a way that suggested these mental states were passive and non-cognitive.” Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions*, 22-23. From this perspective an English translation of passion seems to stand closer to Aquinas’s *passiones* and to avoid any misunderstandings we will utilize this term.

² A telling example of contrary views could be Leonard D. G. Ferry’s position that the positive retrieval of Aquinas’s views on the passions is inadequate. In his article written *vis-à-vis* Miner’s position in *Aquinas on the Passions*. Ferry argues that Aquinas devotes so much attention to the passions precisely because they *are* dangerous and disruptive and they can threaten the human good by undermining the resources that rationality

however, suggest positive interpretations on the nature of the passions from slightly different perspectives: Miner provides us with a philosophical exposition; Lombardo's project is theological thus it also inquires into that aspect of Aquinas's theory; Cates's account is written from an ethical perspective and is aimed not only at conceptual clarity, but also at providing a possibility for self-understanding for its readers. These different angles of looking at the Thomistic passions complement each other by creating a fuller perspective. Where the discussion requires it, we will turn to other sources of specialized literature to search for some elements that are further developed there, but, generally speaking, we will read Aquinas's thought on the passions together with Miner, Lombardo, and Cates.

The chapter itself consists of two main parts – the general introduction of Aquinas's ethical thought and the presentation of his account of the passions. Because Aquinas's ethics is such a vast subject in itself, our presentation will use large strokes to present a general picture of it and we will present only those concepts and terms that bear direct relevance in order to better understand the passions. We will start by briefly indicating the context of Aquinas's thought and some of his epistemological premises. We will move on to the presentation of his ethics as an ethics of happiness which stands on two major pillars – natural law and virtue. Much of this discussion will help us to understand in what context Aquinas's account on the passions appears. It will also, additionally facilitate the discussion in our last chapter where we will build bridges between the ethical thought of Aquinas and Nussbaum. We will proceed, then, to discuss the concept of the appetite in general as an important aspect of Aquinas's writings indicating the dynamic nature of the creation and will show how it is related to the notions of good and evil.

The discussion on the passions themselves will largely follow the structure of the so-called *Treatise on the Passions*, inquiring together with Aquinas into the nature of the passions. This, indeed, is the prime interest of this chapter; to discover what the passions are according to Aquinas and subsequently to inquire into their moral character. We will start with the definition of the passions, moving on to the presentation of their activation mechanisms. This discussion is important to understand the way Aquinas relates our cognitive and emotional capacities. Among our main interlocutors, there are contrasting views regarding interpretations of this subject, and as the discussion progresses we will support one position over the other. This discussion will be followed by the consideration of the sense appetite as a movement contributing to achieving our final *telos* and a bodily movement. The next major section will discuss the structure of the sense appetite, namely, its division in the concupiscible and the irascible passions. Here we will encounter a detailed discussion, yet, we consider, it is necessary to understand Aquinas's vision on the passions (it will also be helpful to precipitate the discussion on anger which will be dealt with in the upcoming chapter), and to explore the texture of his account – that is, to see how he portrays the passions as interconnected inner movements in relation to their intentional objects. At this point we will, again, encounter differences in interpretation and we will explore at greater length how we should think of love as a passion in Aquinas's thought. The last substantial section will discuss the passions in their connection to reason

can bring to our practical-decision making. See Leonard D. G. Ferry, "Passionalist or Rationalist? The Emotions in Aquinas' Moral Theory," *New Blackfriars* 93.1045 (2012): 308.

and will (here we will also discuss the category of the affections of the will). We will inquire into the questions of mutual influence among reason, will, and the passions and will explore whether we can speak meaningfully about affective knowledge in the context of Aquinas's thought, arguing that, indeed, the knowledge we gain through the passion of love seems to provide such a possibility. We will further our discussion into the questions of morality, normativity, and responsibility of the passions arguing that Aquinas suggests original ideas in these areas which can be nurturing to contemporary ethical projects. The final sections will touch explicitly on the theological aspects of the Thomistic passions and will discuss them in connection with habit, virtue, sin, and grace. At this point of our discussion we will suggest that Aquinas speaks of the possibility of the transformation of our affectivity through our Christian faith. But we now start at the beginning of this story – the general contours of Aquinas's thought.

1.1 SITUATING THE THOUGHT OF THOMAS AQUINAS

As mentioned above, our main interest is the *Treatise on the Passions* which is found in *Summa theologiae*, the most renowned work of Aquinas. The *Summa* is composed of three major parts, each devoted to a major theological theme: the first part is concerned with God and His creation; the second part inquires into human acts by which we return to our Creator, the *Treatise* is located in this part (in the first part of it); the third second part explores the figure of Christ and the sacraments. Moral theologian Stephen Pope notes that “[t]his overarching structure represents Aquinas's creative adoption of the Neoplatonic emanation and return (*exitus-reditus*) motif within his Christian depiction of the emergence of all creatures from God the Creator and the return of creatures of God the Redeemer.”³

Aquinas's ethics is renowned for multiple distinct interpretations and this may be attributed to the different philosophical premises guiding the research of the scholars, as well as the various influences traceable in Aquinas's writings. Fergus Kerr, O.P., a prominent scholar of Aquinas's thought, notes that “by the time he was 20, Thomas had been exposed to two radically different cultures: the age-old tradition of Latin monasticism, richly indebted to Augustine and Christian neo-Platonism, and, on the other hand, the pagan philosophy of Aristotle, brought to the West by Jewish and especially Muslim scholars. The tension between what seemed at the time two apparently incommensurable traditions was to dominate Thomas's intellectual work.”⁴

While traditionally Aquinas is considered ‘Aristotelian’ in the light of contemporary

³ Stephen J. Pope, “Overview of the Ethics of Thomas Aquinas,” in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen J. Pope (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 30. As we will shortly discover, the *exitus-reditus* structure also defines the nature of human appetite. Wayne J. Hankey also refers to the Neoplatonic structure holding the architecture of the *Summa*. Aquinas conceived that created beings are separated entities from the First Principle and this “requires that we are simultaneously looking at reality in a human way, and regarding our place in the cosmos from the divine perspective. The capacity to look at ourselves from beyond ourselves is consequent on our participation in the higher knowing of separate substances, a characteristically Neoplatonic reworking of a reconciled Aristotle and Plato.” Wayne J. Hankey, “Aquinas, Plato, and Neoplatonism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, eds. Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 62.

⁴ Fergus Kerr, O.P., *After Aquinas: Versions of Thomism* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 4.

research, many scholars now nuance this claim.⁵ The discussion is complex and multifaceted, but what truly holds Aristotle and Aquinas together, research suggests, is their epistemology and this, we think, is an essential point to present to get a full grasp of Aquinas's thought. On the level of epistemology Aquinas's and Aristotle's worlds meet:

Thomas is palpably at home in Aristotle's world: a world that is saturated with purposefulness, a world that is meant to be understood in the sense that it is our nature as rational beings to inquire into the world's order and to come to understand it. Our sense of the intelligibility of the world is not, for Aristotle or for Thomas, a projection of mind onto nature, as it seems to many philosophers and others nowadays. To the contrary, Aristotle's world is a projection of intelligible, teleologically ordered nature onto the human mind.⁶

That means that Aristotle and Aquinas both held that all naturally attainable

⁵ Kerr suggests this view in *After Aquinas*, 9; the essay of Joseph Owens, C.Ss.R., "Aristotle and Aquinas," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, eds., Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 38-60 is devoted to showing the distinction between Aquinas's and Aristotle's systems suggesting that while the concepts utilized are, indeed the same, one should be aware of the different meanings they entail. Owens indicates the apparent similarities: "Today a somewhat prevalent impression links Aristotle and Aquinas as though they both represented the same general type of philosophical thinking. *Prima facie* indications, it is true, may seem to point in the direction of a unitary trend in their basic philosophical procedures. Aquinas uses Aristotle's formal logic. Both of them reason in terms of actuality and potentiality; of material, formal, efficient, and final causes; and of the division of scientific thought into the theoretical and the practical and productive. Both regard intellectual contemplation as the supreme goal of human striving. Both look upon free choice as the origin of moral action. Both clearly distinguish the material from the immaterial, sensation from intellection, the temporal from the eternal, the body from the soul. Both ground all naturally attainable human knowledge on external sensible things, instead of on sensations, ideas, or language. Both look upon cognition as a way of being in which percipient and thing perceived, knower and thing known, are one and the same in the actuality of the cognition." Owens, "Aristotle and Aquinas," 38. Yet he claims that when it comes to Aquinas's and Aristotle's metaphysics the differences are essential: Aristotle considered essence and being to be identical. Aquinas, on his behalf, claimed explicitly that in all creatures there is a real distinction between essence and being. Owens furthers: "In fact, the real distinction between essence and existence could be regarded in neo-Thomistic circles as the fundamental truth of Christian philosophy, which pervaded the whole of Thomistic metaphysics. It was the nerve of the distinction between God and creatures." Owens, "Aristotle and Aquinas," 39. A whole work dedicated to the differences between Aquinas and Aristotle can be found in Mark D. Jordan, *The Alleged Aristotelianism of Thomas Aquinas*, Etienne Gilson lecture (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1992). Yet, for instance, James Doig conceives the relationship between Aquinas and Aristotle in different terms. While he acknowledges the distinct doctrine of *esse* (being) as the intrinsic principle which united with essence constitutes a thing as real, he, nonetheless, argues that: "The dependence of Aquinas's theology on the philosophy of Aristotle appears then in two forms. One is the evident application of Aristotle's doctrines or concepts; the other, not as noticeable, is the application of the method Aquinas found proper to Aristotle's metaphysician" James Doig, "Aquinas and Aristotle," in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, eds. Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 40-41. The method Doig indicates refers to 'the way of predication' found in Aristotle's works: "In contrast, in the *Metaphysics* an examination of 'the way of predication' is noted as Aristotle's procedure in comparing the diverse contents of knowledge expressed through predicates used 'denominatively,' that is, when they 'name' a subject...As it is true of every essence, its intelligibility is traced to its form...The same 'way of predication' is central to Aquinas's understanding of the clarification of 'common' concepts that constitute *Metaphysics* V. Whether the concept of 'being' or 'principle,' 'habitus' or 'act,' or any other of the more than thirty terms studied, Aquinas clarifies its meaning by noting the ways in which it is used to name something." James Doig, "Aquinas and Aristotle," 38. This makes Doig conclude that Aristotle was *the* Philosopher for Aquinas.

⁶ Fergus Kerr, O.P., *Thomas Aquinas. A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 28.

knowledge originates in external sensible thing.⁷ External things are thus epistemologically prior.

1.1.1 A Short Note on Epistemology

Before we take up the task of discussing the *Treatise on the Passions* to avoid reading and appropriating him anachronistically we should note that his writings represent a pre-Cartesian state of philosophy. Aquinas offers a different conception of the self, the relation of the mind-to-the-world from the one we are used to in modern and contemporary philosophical and theological thought (with its insistence on the subjective, reality-appropriating concept of the self and debates over whether we really can know the world outside our own minds). Our aim is not to enter a debate on how human consciousness works; our task is to highlight the nature of Aquinas's epistemology in order to engage with it in meaningful terms.

Kerr notes that a distinction between prevailing contemporary conceptions of the self and the one that Aquinas held could be demarcated as a difference between 'subjectivist-observing' and 'objective-participant' perspectives: "On the Cartesian view we think of having a mind and being a person very much in terms of the 'subject,' the 'I' as privileged and unified locus of self-consciousness, facing an array of objects out there (including other human beings) which one apprehends initially in the images, impressions, sense data, or other representations of them which we make, or they force on us. In contrast, Thomas Aquinas has a non-subject-centred conception of the self: the objects out there in the world become intelligible in the act of awakening the intellectual acts on our part which manifest our intelligence."⁸

Aquinas's epistemology hangs on his doctrine of creation which he purports human intelligence as capable of comprehending. He also opines the world as intelligible and both these ideas meet at the dimension of meaning:

Thomas sees no gap between mind and world, thought and things, that needs to be bridged, either by idealist/empiricist representations or (as with Barth) by divine intervention. His view of how our minds are related to the world is interwoven with his doctrine of God: no epistemology without theology. But his (perhaps naive) confidence that things are indeed as they seem, that there is no veil between the world and our minds, springs from, indeed is identical with, his belief in the world's belonging to God. In the end, as at the outset, unity, truth, goodness and beauty coincide, Thomas thinks, in being: in particular, *ens et verum convertuntur*: what is, is the case...And Thomas quotes Aristotle: 'the soul, in a way, is everything' – a neat paraphrase, he no doubt thought, of the doctrine of creation and, specifically, of the human being as created in the image and likeness of God (*De veritate*, 1). Our experience of things is not a confrontation with something utterly alien, but a way of absorbing, and being absorbed by, the world to which we naturally belong. The mind does not

⁷ Owens, "Aristotle and Aquinas," 53. Owens agrees that starting from the sensible things is a common epistemological ground of Aristotle and Aquinas. However, he further argues that what exactly the 'sensible things' are, are conceived differently by both thinkers: "To that extent they present a common ground upon which they may be judged. Through that ground their similarities may be explained. But in those external sensible things Aristotle sees finite form as the highest actuality. Aquinas, on the other hand, sees existence as the highest actuality. Existence of itself is not finite, since it is originally the object of a judgment and not of conceptualization." Owens, "Aristotle and Aquinas," 54.

⁸ Kerr, *After Aquinas*, 27.

primarily depict, reflect or mirror the world; rather, it assimilates the world as it is assimilated to the world.⁹

Because of its creaturely status the world is not a hostile place for Aquinas. The world is so much home for the human person that one can say “I am so much at home in the world that, in a certain way, in the event of meaning, I may be said to be the world, and the world to be in me.”¹⁰ Moreover, due to its creaturely character, the human person enters a unique kind of relationship with the things to be known. Kerr furthers, “the Thomist wants to say that knowledge is the product of a collaboration between the object known and the subject who knows: the knower enables the thing known to become intelligible, thus to enter the domain of meaning, while the thing’s becoming intelligible activates the mind’s capacities...For Thomas, meaning is the mind’s perfection, the coming to fulfillment of the human being’s intellectual powers; simultaneously, it is the world’s intelligibility being realized.”¹¹ Kerr thus argues that human beings in Aquinas’s thought are created to the image and likeness of God which means that their minds are connaturally open to the world which in fact reveals itself to us. Furthermore, the image of God is found in the human being in the way he/she is carried towards God in the acts of knowing and loving God (*ST I* 93.8).¹² And finally, Aquinas’s views on human knowing could be put in a nutshell in the following way: “Thomas’s treatise on human understanding is not only never independent of a theological interest in creation as flowing from and being drawn back into God as *principium et finis* but, in this consideration of the human being as *imago Dei*, the epistemology is always already a contribution to the doctrine of God as Trinity.”¹³

1.2 ETHICS AS AN INQUIRY TO HAPPINESS

Now if we look at the *Prima secundae* itself we notice that primarily it is an inquiry into happiness:¹⁴ it starts with the discussion about happiness/beatitude, moving to questions about action, the passions, habit, virtues, sin, vice, law, and finishes in the discussion about grace. These topics, then, are all related, important to ethics, and have a part in attaining our final goal.

Question 1 of the *Prima secundae* identifies the final goal of human life with beatitude or happiness. First of all, we should note that the English word ‘happiness’ can be understood with at least two Latin terms: *felicitas* and *beatitudo*. Though there are times Aquinas uses the words interchangeably, *felicitas* primarily refers to earthly happiness and *beatitudo* is a form of complete happiness, true fulfillment that can be reached only in our

⁹ *Ibid.*, 30-31.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹² Cf. *Ibid.*, 34.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹⁴ Miner argues: “Thomas begins the *Ia2ae* with an inquiry into happiness, considered as the ultimate end for human beings. Ethics is, above all, the study of what human beings need to know in order to attain happiness. Anything belonging to the consideration of moral matters in general that constitutes the *Ia2ae* is meant to serve this end.” Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 6.

existence after death.¹⁵ Aquinas is primarily and mostly interested in *beatitudo*, hence his notion of happiness is a heavily theologically and eschatologically loaded concept. Thus Aquinas says:

It is impossible for man's beatitude to lie in any created good. For beatitude is a perfect good that puts the appetite totally to rest – it would not be the ultimate end otherwise, i.e., if something remained to be desired. But the object of the will, which is man's appetite, is the universal good, just as the object of the intellect is universal truth. From this it is clear that nothing can put man's will to rest except the universal good. But the universal good is found only in God and not in any created good, since every creature has participated goodness. Hence, only God can satisfy man's will – this according to Psalm 102:5 ('He satisfies your desire with good things'). Therefore, it is in God alone that man's beatitude lies.¹⁶

This conclusion relies on Aquinas's assumption of the general structure of all things created. Thus human happiness defined in this way rests on Aquinas's analysis of appetite and its intrinsic connection with the good and his conviction that human beings are "first and foremost thinking animals."¹⁷ Here we can find an appeal to human rational nature and the end appropriate to it. Aquinas, then, drawing on his teleological conception of the created order sets one ultimate end for all human beings which is an attainment of an ultimate good. He argues: "For if there were no ultimate end, then nothing would be desired, no action would be terminated, and no intention of the agent's would be put to rest; and if nothing were first among the means ordered to an end, then no one would begin to do anything, and deliberation would proceed to infinity and never come to an end."¹⁸

In evaluating what human good can be conceptually Aquinas:

sees a nexus of connections binding human desire, the human end, and the human good. All humans desire their own good; that good is the end of human life; thus, all humans desire their own end. Accordingly, all humans want to function well, which is to say that all human beings want to attain the best form of life available to them as human beings.¹⁹

Robert Pasnau and Christopher Shields, both professors of philosophy, further assert that Aquinas's conception of the goodness of a certain thing is always sortal relative – "that is, judgments of goodness are always made with reference to the kind of thing whose goodness is under consideration."²⁰ Humans get a special place in the order of creation, thus the end suitable to them is also distinct:

Now it is evident that each thing has an operation that belongs to it according to its form. But the form of a human being is his soul, whose activity is life, not indeed life as mere existence of a living thing, but a special operation of life, such as understanding or feeling. Hence, happiness obviously consists in some operation of life, such as understanding or feeling (*InNE*

¹⁵ Cf. Brian Davies, "Happiness," in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, eds. Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 231-232.

¹⁶ *ST I-II* 2.8.

¹⁷ Davies, "Happiness," 229.

¹⁸ *ST I-II* 1.4.

¹⁹ Robert Pasnau and Christopher Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas* (Colorado: Westview Press, 2004), 201.

²⁰ Pasnau and Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas*, 206.

We readily know that Aquinas identifies a specific and unique human function with reason. “A human being is essentially an entity capable of reasoning, so the human function resides in the proper expression of reason. It follows, then, that the final good of a human being is just this: reasoning well.”²² Because the appetite can only rest when it reaches its perfection, Aquinas concludes that true human happiness can only be a beatific vision when in a state of grace we gaze at God:

There cannot be ultimate and perfect beatitude except in seeing God’s essence. To see this clearly, there are two points that must be taken into account: the first is that a man is not perfectly happy as long as something remains to be desired and sought after; the second is that the perfection of any given power is in accord with the nature of its object.²³

If happiness lies in a perfection of a function of a certain entity, we have already discovered that what is uniquely human is our intellect, then, our capacity for reason will reach its perfection in union with God:

Now as *De Anima* 3 says, an intellect’s object is the ‘what-ness,’ i.e., the essence, of a thing (*quod quid est, idest essentia rei*). Hence, an intellect’s perfection goes as far as does its cognition of the essence of a thing. Therefore, if some intellect has a cognition of the essence of some *effect* but cannot thereby have a cognition of that effect’s *cause* – i.e., a cognition by which the cause’s ‘what-ness’ might be known – then that intellect is not said to have attained to the cause absolutely speaking (*non dicitur attingere ad causam simpliciter*), even though it is able, through the effect, to have a cognition of the cause’s existence (*cognoscere possit de cause an sit*)... Therefore, if the human intellect, knowing the essence of some created effect, knows of God only that He exists, then the intellect’s perfection has not yet, absolutely speaking, reached the first cause; instead, there still remains in it a natural desire to make an inquiry into that cause. Hence, that intellect is not yet perfectly blessed. Therefore, what is required for perfect beatitude is that the intellect should reach the very essence of the first cause. And so it will have its perfection by being united to God as its object, and, as was explained above (q. 2, a. 8), this alone is what man’s beatitude consists in.²⁴

This causes Brian Davies, a professor of philosophy, to conclude “that Aquinas on ultimate happiness is decidedly theocentric.”²⁵ This final end in Aquinas’s thought should be embraced rather than chosen, Pasnau and Shields conclude, as it stems from our creaturely status.²⁶

1.2.1 Earthly Happiness

Human ethical activity thus is framed in a picture of happiness – the ultimate human happiness lies in the beatific vision, union with God, or in other words, direct experience

²¹ *Ibid.*, 207. Here Pasnau and Shields quote Aquinas’s *Sententia libri Ethicorum*.

²² Pasnau and Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas*, 208.

²³ *ST I-II* 3.8.

²⁴ *ST I-II* 3.8.

²⁵ Davies, “Happiness,” 233.

²⁶ Cf. Pasnau and Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas*, 198.

of God. One has to keep this larger framework in mind while discussing Aquinas's ethical views; yet as ethics is possible only here and now, Aquinas also discusses the earthly forms of happiness which paradoxically have a status of imperfect perfection.

In this regard Jean Porter, professor of moral theology, claims that, generally speaking, ancient ethics saw its goal in attainment of happiness while contemporary ethics usually speaks in terms of well-being.²⁷ She wants to draw our attention to the fact that while Aquinas, without a doubt, considers beatific vision as a perfect final end of the rational creature, we can find a gradation in his conception of happiness. Porter thus claims that we can distinguish four sorts of happiness proper to human beings in Aquinas's thought: the aforementioned beatific vision; happiness connatural to the human being which is proportionate to the virtues we can attain ourselves (I-II 5.5, 7; 62.1; 63.3); happiness which is not connatural to human beings because it entails the help of grace but which is not ultimate and complete happiness (5.3 *ad* 1; 69.1, 2); the kind of happiness which one can find in fulfillment of his/her will (5.8).²⁸

And so Porter claims that Aquinas's account of happiness is complex:

Not only does he distinguish between perfect and imperfect happiness, he also identifies more than one kind of imperfect happiness, and correlatively, he understands 'imperfect' in this context in more than one way. The happiness of those who have grace is an imperfect anticipation of happiness in the unqualified sense, and yet it has the potential to develop unto full happiness (I-II 69.1, 2); the kind of happiness that is properly connatural to us, in contrast, is not just relatively limited and incomplete, but qualitatively different from perfect happiness (62.1; 63.3). As for the fourth kind of happiness, equated with the fulfillment of one's will, Aquinas only mentions this in passing. However, it appears from the context that this kind of happiness, unlike the others, can include not only limited and imperfect but downright false kinds of happiness, since men and women do in fact seek happiness in all kinds of distorted ways (I-II 5.8; cf. II-II 23.7).²⁹

Porter wants to demonstrate that Aquinas acknowledges more than one form of supreme happiness, but even in acknowledging more forms of happiness he sees them relating to the highest form. The human being has one final end – which is supernatural happiness and the natural, earthly experiences relate to that end.³⁰ The best way of thinking of the kinds of happiness is to think of them as levels, modalities of perfection.

Porter furthers that while we think of Aquinas's conception of happiness we should

²⁷ Jean Porter, *Nature as Reason. A Thomistic Theory of the Natural Law* (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 147.

²⁸ Cf. Porter, *Nature as Reason*, 156.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 157.

³⁰ In this regard Porter sympathetically quotes Kevin Staley arguing that: "Thomas does not argue that man has two ends, the one natural and the other supernatural. Rather, he speaks of a single end which is twofold, which is realized at both a natural and a supernatural level, and which he describes in the *Summa Theologiae* as imperfect and perfect beatitude respectively." Staley, "Happiness," 227, quoted at Porter, *Nature as Reason*, 158. She is also aware that Aquinas argues so explicitly about the beatific vision as a perfect happiness (which, after all, can be achieved only after death) that some of the thinkers have argued that one cannot find a connatural form of happiness for human being considered as human being. In this regard Porter refers us to the works of Anot Pegis, "Nature and Spirit: Some Reflections on the Problems of the End of Man," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 23 (1949): 62-79; and Kevin Staley, "Happiness: The Natural End of Man?," *The Thomist* Vol. 53, No. 2 (1989): 215-234. See Porter, *Nature as Reason*, 156. Porter herself disagrees with this judgment.

always keep in mind the larger framework of this thought where everything which exists is in act and act itself is perfection. Human happiness is perfection of a rational creature or in other words – being in act in accordance to who he/she is. “The complexity of the human creature,” Porter claims, “implies that unlike other animals, we can attain perfection in diverse ways and at disparate levels, including some which go beyond our natural capacities. But no matter how perfection is understood, it will necessarily involve some degree of proper development and exercise of the capacities distinctive to us as creatures of a specific kind – that is just what perfection is.”³¹ The distinctively human operations of capabilities of knowledge and love in this sense can constitute a kind of happiness if they are genuine and leading to perfection.³²

Thus if the kinds of happiness which can be sought after in this life lie in operations of the well-functioning intellect, it is to say that essentially it lies in the life of virtue.

1.2.2 Components of Ethics of Happiness: Natural Law and Virtue

1.2.2.1 Natural Law

This leads us to a brief discussion on Aquinas’s views on natural law and virtue as two pillars upholding his ethics of happiness. Reading and interpreting Aquinas’s views on these concepts is a matter of debate, to be sure.³³ For this reason, we choose to present

³¹ Porter, *Nature as Reason*, 160.

³² Beatitude primarily lies in operations of speculative intellect, not practical – as a species get its end from an object and the object of speculative intellect is more universal compared to practical reason which is occupied with active, everyday life. Cf. *ST I-II* 3.5. When we think of our cognitive capacities as being perfect in this earthly life, we should always think of them as participating in the perfect beatitude; nonetheless, they *are* a kind of perfection known and experienced by us *here and now*: “As was explained above (a. 2), there are two types of human beatitude, the one perfect and the other imperfect. Perfect beatitude has to be thought of as attaining to the true nature of beatitude (*atingit ad veram beatitudinis rationem*), whereas imperfect beatitude has to be thought of as not attaining to the true nature of beatitude, but instead as participating in a certain particular likeness of beatitude – in the way that perfect prudence is found in man, who has reason with respect to his actions, whereas imperfect prudence exists in some brute animals in whom there are particular instincts for certain actions that are similar to acts of prudence.” *ST I-II* 3.6.

³³ One can find multiple interpretations of the concept of natural law. A significant distinction is made between the authors who argue that one cannot read Aquinas’s account on the natural law separated from his Christian theological views. Kerr’s thought is an example of this reasoning: “In sum, in the *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas presents the natural law in the context of the Torah and the New Law of the Holy Spirit, in the wider context of an account of the virtues (theological and cardinal) as the moral agent’s journey to face-to-face vision with God, all framed by the presupposition that the natural law is a participation in the eternal law which is identical with God himself.” Kerr, *After Aquinas*, 109. Anthony J. Lisska could be cited as an author arguing that Aquinas’s account on the natural law can be separated from his Christian theology. See his *Aquinas’s Theory of Natural Law: An Analytic Reconstruction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996). Another distinct path of interpretation is traced to the debate about how one should conceive of the precepts of natural law – should they be equated solely with the precepts of practical reason or natural inclinations or both? Lombardo noting the disagreement suggests that “perhaps it is best to say that, for Aquinas, the natural inclinations and the precepts of practical reason can both be called natural law, albeit in different ways. The inclinations are natural law in its relationship to appetite, and the precepts are natural law in its relationship to reason.” Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 115, footnote 95. Pasnau and Shields, in a similar fashion, flesh out Aquinas’s views on the natural law as both precepts guiding our practical reason and the natural inclinations. They also argue that despite the argument that natural law is impressed on us by God, Aquinas’s account on the natural law can be largely understood and defended in philosophical terms. We will turn to these points in our upcoming short exposé.

Pasnau's and Shields' account on natural law and virtue as it is meant to be a general introduction to Aquinas's philosophical thought and as such is not tied to a particular defended ethical framework. This does not make it entirely uncontroversial, yet this account seems a good candidate to proceed with, while attempting to present a general outline of Aquinas's views on ethics.

Pasnau and Shields assert that what is characteristic to Aquinas's views on ethics is that it

altogether lacks any sort of substantive, straightforward criterion for the rightness and wrongness of moral acts. Although he believes, as we will see, that there are ethical first principles, known to all, he sees these as too general to offer any substantive ethical guidance in particular cases...Aquinas does identify a single, ultimate goal for human life: blessedness, understood as eternal life with God in heaven. Right actions, he holds, are all and only those actions that contribute to the attainment of that end.³⁴

Pasnau and Shields further that Aquinas is aware that practically fleshing out what it means to attain that goal is not always straightforward. Thus they claim that Aquinas's account of ethics is itself complex and multifaceted, yet essentially it can "be broken into two components, a theory of natural law and a theory of virtue, each of which depends crucially on each other."³⁵

When we start to think of the natural law framework of Aquinas's ethical thought, first we should think of eternal law, which simply put refers to God's plan for the universe, his providential guidance. Or to put it in words found in the *Summa*:

Now as was established in the first part (*ST* 1, q. 14, a. 8), it is through His wisdom that God is the *creator* of the totality of things, and He is related to those things in the way a craftsman is related to his artifacts. As was likewise established in the first part (*ST* 1, q. 22, a. 2 and q. 103, a. 5), God is also the *governor* of all the acts and motions found in each creature. Hence, just as the divine wisdom's conception has the character of an *artistic conception* or *exemplar* because all things are created through it, so too the divine wisdom's conception has the character of law insofar as it moves all things to their appropriate ends. Accordingly, the eternal law is nothing other than the divine wisdom's conception insofar as it directs all acts and movements.³⁶

Every human being participates in the eternal law which is a source of all other laws through his/her rational nature at the moments of grasping truth: "However, every rational creature knows the eternal law with respect to more or less of what radiates from it. For any cognition of the truth is a sort of radiation from and participation in the eternal law, which is unchangeable truth."³⁷ Pasnau and Shields explain that for Aquinas "[s]ince God's eternal plan extends to every aspect of the universe, any truth whatsoever will count as part of that plan...In this sense, the eternal law shines forth in the created world, and we

³⁴ Pasnau and Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas*, 218.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 218. Pasnau and Shields also note that, generally speaking, Aquinas's account on ethics can be labeled eclectic as it contains multiple items normally representing different conceptions of ethics: "It is, all at once, a virtue theory and a natural law theory, with divine commands playing a role as well. It combines deontological and consequentialist aspects and in addition has a strong teleological component. All of this, Aquinas seems to think, needs to be embraced by a complete theory of human ethics." Pasnau and Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas*, 217.

³⁶ *ST* I-II 93.1.

³⁷ *ST* I-II 93.2.

grasp that law simply by observing the world around us.”³⁸ What is more, matters of grasping value instead of empirical facts for Aquinas are the clearest instances of participating in eternal law.

In the *Treatise on Law* (ST I-II 90-108), Aquinas distinguishes between human laws (imposed by governments and other institutions), divine laws (revealed truth surpassing human reason), and natural law which is central to Aquinas’s ethical theory.³⁹ Natural law is nothing else than “the light of natural reason, by which we discern what is good and what is evil. This has to do with natural law, which is nothing other than the imprint of God’s light within us. Hence, it is clear that natural law is nothing other than a participation in eternal law on the part of a rational creature.”⁴⁰ And here we should be attentive to the fact that for Aquinas, natural law refers to our capacity to discern the good from the bad, which stems from nature of our reason and not divine or governmental rule. Even though natural law is an imprint of eternal law which refers to prudential divine government – Pasnau and Shields claim that the account can be understood and defended in philosophical terms. Thus they claim, “it is much more than a crude ethical innatism: it is not that we all just know right and wrong when we see it because God has built that information into us. What is innate within us, instead, is a capacity to see the truth of certain basic ethical principles, from which it is our responsibility to develop a more comprehensive moral outlook.”⁴¹

Pasnau and Shields further that this structure of ethical theory is continuous with Aquinas’s general theory of rational thought. When it comes to theoretical knowledge Aquinas holds that it is “built up on the basis of first principles, such as the principle of noncontradiction, and that we have an innate intellectual ability to grasp such first principles through the light of agent intellect, a light that is given to us by God.”⁴² He makes precisely the same move when discussing ethical theory.

What, then, are the first ethical principles to be grasped? “Therefore, the first precept of law is that good ought to be done and pursued and that evil ought to be avoided. And all the other precepts of the law of nature are founded upon this principle – so that, namely, all the things to be done or avoided that practical reason naturally apprehends as human goods are such that they belong to the precepts of the law of nature.”⁴³ Thus Aquinas states that *good should be done and evil avoided* – at this point we should also note that above we have defined a Thomistic understanding of good in terms of desirability. Thus we know what to seek and what to avoid through our appetite – “[G]ood is the first thing to fall within the apprehension of practical reason, which is ordered toward action. For every agent acts for the sake of an end, which has the character of a good. And so the first principle in practical reasoning is what is founded on the notion of good, which is the notion (*quod fundatur supra rationem boni quae est*): *The good is what all things desire.*”⁴⁴

Pasnau and Shields argue that one cannot replace ‘good’ or ‘evil’ with just anything that turns out to be so in the analysis – we can replace ‘good’ or ‘evil’ only with

³⁸ Pasnau and Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas*, 219.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 220.

⁴⁰ ST I-II 91.2.

⁴¹ Pasnau and Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas*, 220.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 220.

⁴³ ST I-II 94.2.

⁴⁴ ST I-II 94.2.

specifications that are universally desired or despised.⁴⁵ Precisely this makes it difficult to utilize the first principle of practical reasoning as a premise for some more substantive conclusions about what should be pursued and what avoided. How can we then establish more substantive moral principles? For this step Aquinas relies on what human beings desire:

(I) [the first principle of practical reasoning] seems to be foundational in the sense that it is a kind of template for this strategy, a normative thesis established on the basis of facts about human desire...Aquinas, far from wanting to separate morality and inclination, takes the two to be tightly linked, holding that: II. 'The order of the precepts of natural law accords with the order of natural inclinations' (*ST* 1a2ae 94.2c)...As a result, he supposes that our best guide to the natural law is an analysis of our natural inclinations. The human good is to act in such a way as best to satisfy those inclinations, and the precepts of the natural law are just so many rules for how we should act in order to achieve that end. This means that, for Aquinas, normative principles are always conditional upon certain facts about what we desire. There is nothing about these principles that makes them true in the abstract, independently of facts about human nature. Instead, those acts are morally right that best allow us to achieve the various ends that human beings all desire.⁴⁶

We may then suggest that Aquinas derives ethical principles from human cares. Thus Pasnau and Shields conclude: “[g]enerally, [Aquinas’s] ethics is the product of rational deliberation about what will best achieve the ends to which human beings aspire. Presumably, this is an attractive feature of the account.”⁴⁷

1.2.2.2 *Virtue*

Now Pasnau and Shields further indicate that one may wonder why Aquinas develops an account of virtue. The natural law account already suggests an explanation of foundations of ethics and our grasp of it; our actions are evaluated on the basis of whether they are conducive to the ultimate interests which promote our flourishing as rational beings.⁴⁸ Yet Aquinas still makes a move towards an account of virtue. Why is that? To answer this question we should look at what virtue according to Aquinas is. Question 44, Article 1 of

⁴⁵ Cf. Pasnau and Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas*, 221.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 222. The natural inclinations defining Aquinas’s ethical framework are the following: “Why would Aquinas defend (II)? For him, this is just one more way in which we can see imprinted on us the influence of the eternal law. God created human beings for certain ends, and so he naturally gave us not only the ability to recognize how to pursue those ends but also the inclination to pursue them. Reason alone would be of little value unless we also had the appropriate desires. Accordingly, immediately after stating (II), Aquinas goes on to classify the different sorts of natural inclinations and the kinds of precepts they give rise to. First, is the inclination for self-preservation, which we are said to share with all substances. Second are those inclinations that we share with all animals – such as for sexual intercourse between male and female, and for the rearing of children. Last are specifically human inclinations, such as to grasp the truth about God and to live in society.” Pasnau and Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas*, 222-223. Inclinations themselves, Kerr furthers, should be understood as “something between psychology and ontology, somewhere on the range between instincts and existential orientations. When he considers the ‘content,’ or the ‘extent,’ of ‘the order of the precepts of the natural law’ he equates it with the ‘order of the natural inclinations’ – the instincts and ontological orientations of the human creature (94.2).” Kerr, *After Aquinas*, 108.

⁴⁷ Pasnau and Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas*, 223.

⁴⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 228-229.

Prima secundae indicates that virtue is “a certain perfection of power.”⁴⁹ Virtue is a habit which is always related to what is good and “since a virtue is a habit directed toward an operation (*sit habitus operativus*), the *end* of a virtue is the operation itself.”⁵⁰ Pasnau and Shields explain that this essentially means that: “In terms of Aquinas’s standard explanatory framework, a *habitus* brings its possessor part way toward actuality, in such a way that what formerly had the bare potential to act in a certain way now has the pronounced ability to do it well. Second, the moral virtues always inform a power that is either rational itself or under reason’s control; only in such powers do we find the sort of capacity for alternatives that Aquinas associates with moral responsibility.”⁵¹ We need virtuous dispositions for three things: uniformity of action (actions stabilized by dispositional inclination), to perform perfect action readily, to complete perfect action with pleasure.⁵² And thus Pasnau and Shields interpret the relationship between natural law and virtue in the following way: “The framework of the natural law is available to ground the rightness or wrongness of certain sorts of actions, but in standard cases it can remain in the background, leaving the virtues to guide an agent toward the good.”⁵³

The presentation above is aimed at engaging meaningfully with Aquinas’s thought on the passions. We wanted to demonstrate the world of Aquinas’s subject and to look more carefully at the terms which will be used frequently in the discussion. Furthermore, to touch upon the contours of Aquinas’s concept of happiness and, indeed, to frame his ethics around this concept can help us to differentiate it attentively from the contemporary ethics of flourishing or well-being (and so prepare us to engage in dialogue with Nussbaum’s ethical project). The manner in which Pasnau and Shields present Aquinas’s ethics, standing on the pillars of virtue and natural law, already indicates the role the passions might have in our ethical deliberations – if Aquinas establishes his ethical claims on the observation of human desire, the passions as manifestations of that desire, seem to offer themselves as sources of ethical reflection. Now, the upcoming pages will explore this thesis and inquire whether and in what form Aquinas suggests that the passions can contribute to human perfection.

1.3 THE APPETITE IN GENERAL

⁴⁹ *ST I-II* 55.1.

⁵⁰ *ST I-II* 55.4.

⁵¹ Pasnau and Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas*, 229.

⁵² Here Pasnau and Shields quote a lengthy passage from Aquinas’s *Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus in communi*: “[W]e need virtuous disposition for three things: 1. For uniformity of action. For what rests on the action alone changes easily if it has not been stabilized by a dispositional inclination. 2. To perform a perfect action readily. For unless there is a disposition somehow inclining the rational power in one direction, then whenever we have to take action, we will always have to take up first an inquiry into the action. This is clear in the case of someone who wants to reflect on something and hasn’t yet acquired the dispositional knowledge, and in the case of someone who wants to act virtuously and lacks the virtuous dispositions...3. To complete our perfect action pleurably, something that occurs through a disposition. Because it works in the manner of a kind of nature, it makes the action proper to it natural, in effect, and therefore pleasurable, since appropriateness causes pleasure. Accordingly, the Philosopher, in *Ethics II*, holds that pleasure in one’s action is a sign of a disposition (*QDVC* 1c).” Pasnau and Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas*, 230.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 231.

As we approach the discussion on the passions themselves, we should touch upon the notion of the appetite which is of particular importance to our research. In Question 78, Article 1 of the *Prima pars*,⁵⁴ Aquinas establishes five powers of the soul:⁵⁵ 1) the vegetative, 2) the sentient; 3) the appetitive; 4) the locomotion; and 5) the intellective.⁵⁶ The vegetative, sentient, and intellective powers are called three souls⁵⁷ and the fourth, excluding the appetitive power constitutes the ways of being alive (*modi vivendi*). The appetitive power does not constitute a separate mode of being because appetite exists in everything in which sentience exists. Furthermore, the locomotive and the appetitive powers are shared with beings that possess different kinds of soul, thus they are not ascribed a specific type of soul. The rational soul is differentiated from the vegetative and sentient because it does not need a bodily organ to function.

The powers of the soul are distinguished by virtue of their object – the more universal the object, the higher the power. The souls itself tend toward exterior being and in accord with this, the two powers of the soul are operational – appetitive and locomotion. The appetitive power in this regard signifies the soul’s relation to “an extrinsic being as to an end, which is the first thing in intention[.]”⁵⁸

In Question 5 of the *Prima pars* Aquinas defines appetite as “a sort of movement toward a thing.”⁵⁹ Miner suggests that we should be attentive to the wording ‘sort of’ (*quidam*) because it is used intentionally by Aquinas. Appetite does not refer to literal motion, rather it should be understood “[i]n its most basic sense, *appetitus* [as] a reaching forth, a stretching toward some kind of object.”⁶⁰ It has been well established that

⁵⁴ We are primarily utilizing English translations of Aquinas’s works. Following directions of Fergus Kerr we utilize authoritative translations found on Thérèse Bonin’s webpage (Kerr suggests the English translations of *Summa* in Kerr, *Thomas Aquinas*, 121): <http://www.home.duq.edu/~bonin/thomasbibliography.html>. We primarily use the translation of Alfred J. Freddoso, trans. *Summa Theologica* text at www3.nd.edu/~afreddos together with Fathers of the English Dominican Province, trans. *The Summa Theologica* 2d, rev. ed. 22 vols. London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1912–36; reprinted in 5 vols., (Westminster, Md.: Christian Classics, 1981). E-text in html at <http://dhsprory.org/thomas/summa/index.html>. All the quotations of the *Summa* in our text come from Freddoso’s translation unless indicated otherwise.

⁵⁵ Aquinas defines a human soul as an immaterial, rational principle of life: “In order to inquire into the nature of a soul, one must take for granted that what is called a ‘soul’ (*anima*) is a first principle of life in those things around us that are alive; for we say that living things are ‘ensouled’ (*animata*) and that things which lack life are ‘not ensouled’ (*inanimata*). There are two operations by which life is especially made manifest, viz., cognition and movement.” *ST I* 75.1.

⁵⁶ Here he defends Aristotelian doctrine found in *De anima* 2.1, 412a28 and 412b12. Cf. Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 13.

⁵⁷ “For certain things, e.g., plants and inanimate bodies, are inclined toward the good only through a natural disposition and without any cognition. This sort of inclination toward the good is called a *natural appetite*. Other things are inclined toward the good with some sort of cognition, not in the sense that they understand the very concept of the good (*ratio boni*), but in the sense that they know some particular good – as, for instance, the senses, which know the sweet and the white and other things of this sort. The inclination that follows upon this type of cognition is called a *sentient appetite*. Finally, certain things are inclined toward the good with a cognition by which they know the very concept of the good, and this is proper to an intellect. These things are inclined toward the good in the most perfect way – not, as it were, directed toward the good only by another, as are things that lack cognition, and not directed toward a merely particular good, as are things that have only sentient cognition, but inclined, as it were, toward the universal good itself. And this sort of inclination is called a *will*.” *ST I* 59.1.

⁵⁸ *ST I* 78.1.

⁵⁹ *ST I* 5.4.

⁶⁰ Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 16.

Aquinas's views are teleological – thus appetite conceived in this framework refers to an inclination of all creation towards the end proper to it, its completion. Vegetative, sensitive, and rational appetites are qualifications of appetite – but, generally speaking, appetite as such signifies a state of created being, it is a potency seeking its actualization. “What causes a creature to have an appetite,” Miner argues, “is nothing less than the fact of creaturehood itself.”⁶¹

Lombardo argues that the appetitive power is what gives creation its dynamism. “Without appetite,” Lombardo says, “there would not be this dynamic movement, and creation would not move toward its perfection.”⁶² The notion of appetite also refers to a certain passivity in creation as it refers to the way in which creation relates to its creator:

Appetite plays a central role in the Neoplatonic *exitus-reditus* theme of creation flowing from God and then back to him, a theme that structures Aquinas' entire theology of creation (as well as *Summa theologiae*). According to this view, first, God is the source of creation, both as its Creator and as the exemplar of all perfections found in created things, and then, creation is oriented back to God and ordered to the manifestation of God's goodness...Appetite is the engine driving the *exitus-reditus*: both in the divine *exitus*, since it flows from an act of God's will, and in the creaturely *reditus*, since appetite motivates creation to return to God.⁶³

1.3.1 The Good

The notion of the good is a cornerstone of Aquinas's thought. It is particularly important to our own inquiry as we will focus on his conception of appetite (sense appetite in particular) – the good is what the appetitive part of the human being seeks. In Question 5 of the *Prima pars* Aquinas considers the good in general. Here we can find Aquinas's explanation of the ontological structure of goodness – goodness and being are equated and goodness itself is described in terms of desirability. In the first Article Aquinas thus argues that: “*Good* and *being* are the same in reality and differ only conceptually. This is clear from the following line of reasoning: The nature of the good consists in something's being desirable; thus, in *Ethics* 1 the Philosopher says, ‘The good is what all things desire.’”⁶⁴

Goodness, then, can be understood in terms of perfection and a final end. In Question 5, Article 4 Aquinas affirms that the good has the character of a final end: “Since the good is that which everything desires, and since [being desired] has the character of an end, it is clear that *good* expresses the nature of an end.”⁶⁵ Goodness as understood by Aquinas

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 16. Potentiality is characteristic only to created order. God, in Aquinas, is defined as ‘a pure act,’ lacking in nothing. See *ST I* 3.7. The appetite in God does not contain any passivity and is defined in terms of the divine will which can be seen as intellectual appetite which inclines toward unqualified and unlimited goodness. See *ST I* 19-20, *ST I* 59.1.

⁶² Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 28. Consequently, Lombardo argues that for Aquinas all being is ecstatic. He draws his argument from G.J. McAleer, *Ecstatic Morality and Sexual Politics: A Catholic and Antitotalitarian Theory of the Body* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 13-33.

⁶³ Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 29-30. Lombardo bases the claim of the *exitus-reditus* structure of the *Summa* on Marie-Dominique Chenu, *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas*, trans. A.-M. Landry and D. Hughes (New York: Macmillan, 1968), 297-322 and Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., *Aquinas's Summa. Background, Structure, and Reception*, trans. Benedict M. Guevin, OSB (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 17-62.

⁶⁴ *ST I* 5.1.

⁶⁵ *ST I* 5.4.

“radiates; it is communicative, active, generous.”⁶⁶ Lombardo notes that the implications of this definition are ‘startling:’

Appetite is inextricably linked to being and goodness. Also, appetite is not just good in itself; appetibility, that is, desirability, is the defining characteristic of goodness. The goodness of appetite is bound up with the goodness of being. This positive evaluation permeates his appraisal of human appetite[.]⁶⁷

Furthermore, Article 6 of Question 5 divides good into three species: the pleasant (*delectabile*), the useful (*utile*), and the noble (*honestum*). This threefold division “corresponds exactly to the three kinds of friendship distinguished by Aristotle: friendship based on pleasure, usefulness, and virtue.”⁶⁸ Different powers of the soul seek different goods, with noble/honest good indicating the highest good which sought by our rational appetite. Furthermore, “Aquinas also finds the threefold division of good to inform the distinction that Aristotle makes at the beginning of the *Ethics* between three kinds of lives: the pleasurable, the civic, and the contemplative (see *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1095b15–20).”⁶⁹ Thus for Aquinas whatever good may be materially, it is always sought in the three aforementioned forms.

1.3.2 The Appetite and the Notions Good and Evil

Thus for Aquinas the notion of the appetite *always* signifies a kind of motion toward the good. In Question 19, Article 9 of the *Prima pars* discussing God’s will Aquinas argues:

Since, as was explained above (q. 5, a. 1), the nature of the good is the nature of what is desirable, whereas evil is opposed to good, it is impossible that any evil, as such, should be desired either by a natural desire or by an animal desire or by an intellectual desire, i.e., by the will. However, an evil may be desired *per accidens* to the extent that it follows upon some good. This is evident with every kind of desire. For a natural agent does not desire privation or corruption... Thus, an evil that is conjoined to one good is the privation of some other good. Therefore, evil would never be desired – not even *per accidens* – if the good that the evil is conjoined to were not desired more than the good that is undermined by the evil.⁷⁰

As good is equated with being, evil lacks ontological reality and is described as privation by Aquinas. And from the description of the nature of appetite and evil we can claim that “[t]he basic structure of *appetitus* ensures the impossibility of seeking evil *as* evil.”⁷¹ Aquinas describes the relationship of good and evil as possible objects of appetite in the following way:

Since the good is the more principal and *per se* object of will and appetite, whereas evil is the secondary and *per aliud* object, insofar as it is opposed to the good, it follows that acts of will and appetite that have to do with the good must be naturally prior to those that have to do with

⁶⁶ Servais Pinckaers, O.P., *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, translated from the third edition by Sr. Mary Thomas Noble, O.P. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 417.

⁶⁷ Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 27.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 416.

⁶⁹ Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 17.

⁷⁰ *ST I* 19.9.

⁷¹ Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 26.

evil. For instance, joy is prior to sadness, and love is prior to hate. For it is always the case that what is *per se* is prior to what is *per aliud*.⁷²

This means, Miner claims, that “[a]ppetitus names a primary tendency toward good, and a derivative inclination away from evil.”⁷³ Aquinas’s thought is embedded into a fundamental principle that creation is good and everything that is created seeks perfection (or the good). Or in other words: “Every being that is not God is a creature of God. But, as 1 Timothy 4:4 says, every creature of God is good, while God is maximally good. Therefore, every being is good.”⁷⁴ Another prominent Thomistic scholar Servais-Théodore Pinckaers, O.P, notes that the primacy of good on the level of appetite indicates that “everyone spontaneously desires what appears as good and spontaneously avoids what appears as evil; our natural tendency is to do the one and avoid the other. It is the expression of a primordial spiritual instinct, the basic sense of good and evil.”⁷⁵

2. DEFINING THE PASSIONS

Now having established the background of Aquinas’s thought we can enter the discussion on the passions themselves. As we have indicated in the introduction of this chapter – the goal of the upcoming pages is a positive retrieval of Aquinas’s views on the passions and their ethical meaning. The setting of Aquinas’s writings is very different to ours and he raises some questions that are not evident for a contemporary reader. However, we want to demonstrate that even today there are aspects of his theory of the passions that are relevant for the construction of our ethical projects and personal consultation. The claim that Aquinas’s philosophical psychology can still make a positive contribution is also the leading intuition of the works of our three main interlocutors – Miner, Lombardo, and Cates. Professor of philosophy and medieval studies, Peter King, notes that Aquinas’s faculty psychology resembles an image vast inner cathedral.⁷⁶ Aquinas believed that the inner space of a person is constituted by sub-personal mechanisms (or in other words, the faculties) which intersect and causally interact, in this way, giving rise to psychological phenomena. The inner cathedral of Aquinas is made up of three parts – vegetative, sensitive, and intellective (we will soon discover these distinctions in greater detail). Our prime interest is the sensitive part of the soul which accounts for movement and sensation and its connection to the mechanisms of assimilating and understanding our world – thus cognitive or apprehensive powers – and furthermore their connection to the mechanisms through which we engage with the world we understand – thus appetitive powers. We want to argue that Aquinas suggests illuminating thoughts on the way our cognitive and appetitive parts interact. Especially revealing is his thought that the passions represent the ways we relate to and are engaged with our surroundings. Aquinas was convinced that the passions always have an object, and moreover, that they interact with and even activate each other. Aquinas’s views, we argue, can contribute to a fuller understanding of the

⁷² ST I 20.1.

⁷³ Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 26.

⁷⁴ ST I 5.1.

⁷⁵ Pinckaers, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, 421.

⁷⁶ Cf. Peter King, “The Inner Cathedral: Mental Architecture in High Scholasticism,” *Vivarium* 46 (2008): 254.

dynamics of our inner space and the turmoil it sometimes faces. He shows that the passions are connected to the objects in our lives and that they are not entirely independent of the ways we conceive of our surroundings. We will discover in Aquinas's thought that some of the passions are caused by our cognitive capacities and so enter the domain of rational and willful. His works, furthermore, allow us to stipulate an account of responsibility for our passions. In the upcoming pages we want to demonstrate that together with Aquinas and his interpreters we can get to know and understand our inner space better and by consequence take better care of it.

Aquinas starts the *Treatise on the Passions* with Question 22 which locates the passions in the soul, judges that they are more in the sensitive than in the apprehensive power and culminates in the affirmation of the definition of the passions taken from John Damascene. When it comes to locating the passion in the soul, Aquinas points out that a passion refers to passivity, a certain kind of reception, it is a soul's ability 'to be acted upon.' He holds that there are two ways that refer to being acted upon – when we receive something (he uses the example of receiving health instead of sickness) and when we lose something (he uses the example of losing health and receiving sickness).⁷⁷ A passion should be understood as being acted upon in the latter sense.⁷⁸ At this point we should be careful and note that Aquinas further indicates that “[o]n the other hand, a passion with a loss occurs only through a bodily change (*secundum transmutationem corporalem*), and so a passion properly speaking belongs to the soul only *per accidens* – viz., insofar as the composite is acted upon.”⁷⁹ The passions, as we will see shortly, belong to the sentient appetite which needs bodily organs to function according to Aquinas (unlike thoughts and volitions), but they are not solely the acts of the body because they are shaped by the power of apprehension. This means that the actual subject of the passions is always the

⁷⁷ ST I-II 22.1.

⁷⁸ Miner suggests that we should not look at Aquinas's interpretation of the passions as a change to the worse but in the light of tension between the rational nature of a human *versus* irrational passions. He argues that this move might be Aquinas's way to explain the passions in terms of daily speech and experience: “When a person is affected by an outside force, but in a way that coincides with what he antecedently desired, his disposition is far brighter than when he is acted upon in a manner that he experiences as violent.” Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 33. The unexpected external force that diverts one from this natural course is identified more with what passion is and how it can affect our lives. Yet Miner also points out that while Aquinas distinguishes two senses of being acted upon and identifies one of them, a sense of loss, to be more proper to the nature of the passions, this identification does not champion the subsequent discussion on the passions. That means, that an identification of the passions with a loss does not bear any direct link with what Aquinas considers to be most essential about the passions. In this instance Miner quotes Eileen Sweeney: “For Aquinas begins pessimistically, taking passion in its most proper sense as the loss of what is natural and the receiving of what is not; hence sorrow is more a passion than joy. He then works through the next 24 questions to construct an account which emphasizes just the opposite, converting the reader to a vision of the passions as forces for good, moving away from seeing them as a detriment or something to be merely tolerated or controlled. (1999, p. 220)” Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 33-34 quoting Eileen Sweeney, “Restructuring Desire: Aquinas, Hobbes and Descartes on the Passions,” in Stephen F. Brown, ed., *Meeting of the Minds: The Relations between Medieval and Classical Modern European Philosophy*. Rencontres de Philosophie Médiévale, VII (Turnhout: Brepols, 1990), 220. Lombardo on his behalf also joins this interpretation of Thomistic passions. He, as Miner, quotes the same work of Sweeney and concludes that “By laying out the various meanings of passion side by side, as he does repeatedly, Aquinas stresses the possible positive connotations of passion and minimizes the negative. In the end, he locates passion's defining characteristic in receptivity rather than suffering.” Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 36-37.

⁷⁹ ST I-II 22.1.

body-soul composite.⁸⁰

Seeing a strong link between apprehension and appetite in the structure of the passion Aquinas further inquires whether passions are more in the apprehensive or appetitive part of the soul. In this regard Aquinas concludes that, even though the sense appetite is triggered by apprehension the definition of a passion shows that *a subject is drawn to an object*.⁸¹ And so “the soul is drawn toward a thing through its appetitive power rather than through its apprehensive power. For it is through its appetitive power that the soul is ordered toward the things themselves insofar as they exist in themselves (*ad ipsas res prout in seipsis sunt*).”⁸²

Miner comments that Aquinas’s inquiring into the relationship between apprehension and sense appetite in the case of passions does not break the relationship between the two powers and he concludes, be attentive to the wording – the passions are *more (magis)* in the appetitive part than in the apprehensive.⁸³ Aquinas makes this conclusion because the sense appetite is drawn to the things themselves and so its connection to the object is more tangible than that of apprehension which grasps the intentions of the objects.⁸⁴ Miner thus argues that Aquinas’s position is to construct desire as a power that puts us into a more intimate relationship with the good than our perception does.⁸⁵

After positioning the passions in the sense appetite, but keeping their connection with apprehension, Question 22 culminates in Article 3 inquiring whether, after all, the passions are more in the intellective appetite than the sensitive? Here we can finally encounter Aquinas’s affirmation of the definition John Damascene ascribes to the passions claiming that “[a] passion is a movement of the sentient appetitive power upon one’s imagining something good or bad.”⁸⁶ Because any passion, properly speaking, exists only

⁸⁰ This is a common interpretation among all our main thinkers working on the topic of Thomistic passions. Cf. Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 32; Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 62; Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 20.

⁸¹ *ST I-II 22.2*.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Cf. Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 35.

⁸⁴ In this regard Aquinas claims that “[b]y contrast, the apprehensive power is not drawn to things insofar as they exist in themselves; rather, it has cognition of a thing in accord with the thing’s intention (*secundum intentionem rei*), which it has or receives within itself in its own mode. Hence, in the same place the Philosopher says that ‘the true and the false’ – which pertain to cognition – ‘exist in the mind and not in the things.’ *ST I-II 22.2*.

⁸⁵ Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 34.

⁸⁶ *ST I-II 22.3*. This definition is not formulated directly in Aquinas’s response, but rather in the *but contrary to this* part that serves to illuminate the mistakes of the objections in the structure of any question in the *Summa*. Furthermore, Miner points out that Aquinas, if we look closer, does not provide a full definition of the passions – he indicates only the formal aspect of the passions, the movement of the sentient appetite, but leaves out what is material in it – the bodily change, and indeed for Aquinas a physiological aspect is a necessary component of any true passion. Following Ramirez he claims that a full definition of a passion would look like this: “Passion ought to be defined thus: ‘A motion of the sensitive appetite following the sensitive apprehension of sensitive good or evil with a corresponding bodily or organic transmutation (alteration).’ (1973, p. 33).” Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 31, quoting Santiago Ramirez, *De passionibus animae in i-ii Summae Theologiae divi Thomae expositio* (qq. xxii–xlviii). *Obras completas de Santiago Ramirez*, V (Instituto de Filosofía Luis Vives, Madrid, 1973), 33. Miner holds, however, that Aquinas did not accidentally leave out a piece of the definition. He sees it rather as a pedagogical move that fits his dialectical manner of argumentation. Thus Miner claims: “Rather than provide a complete definition of passion at the beginning, Aquinas employs a more subtle strategy. He desires that the reader should sift through the proposals of a range of *auctoritates* – Aristotle, Cicero, Damascene, Nemesius, and Augustine among them – so that she might arrive at a conception that includes elements of the integral tradition. This means: not

if a bodily change occurs, passion belongs more to the sensitive appetite. Intellectual appetite by contrast does not require a bodily change because it is not attached to a particular bodily organ.⁸⁷

As we have seen from Question 22, discussing the subject of the passions of the soul, the structure of a passion involves two important elements – apprehension which deals with an activation of a passion and a movement of a sentient appetite which is passion itself. Now we need to discuss these two elements separately and in more detail to better grasp Aquinas’s views on the nature of the passions and their role in the picture of human psychology.

2.1 ACTIVATION OF A PASSION: SENSE AND INTELLECTUAL APPREHENSION

Lombardo explains that we can find two kinds of cognition⁸⁸ in Aquinas’s thought – sense cognition and an intellectual cognition.⁸⁹ The first one applies to material reality while the intellectual cognition is ordered to the universal principals of that reality. What we should always bear in mind, however, is that the conceptual distinction of the two kinds of cognition does not imply that they function separately.⁹⁰ And since a kind of apprehension that forms a passion is sense apprehension,⁹¹ Lombardo urges us to see that it is also not just sheer perception: “It involves both kinds of cognition and includes shaping the perception into a coherent object from an undifferentiated blur of data, and some evaluation of the sensible object vis-à-vis the subject.”⁹²

We have seen that the appetite grasps the thing in itself, sense apprehension. Aquinas states it “is not drawn to things insofar as they exist in themselves; rather, it has cognition of a thing in accord with the thing’s intention.”⁹³ This means that a passion is elicited by an object grasped under a specific aspect. Question 78, Article 3 establishes that we receive sense data from the five external senses via the power of sense apprehension. Article 4

giving a formula that would enable her to cast the tradition aside, like a ladder that can be discarded when it is no longer useful (see Wittgenstein 1922, 6.54).” Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 31.

⁸⁷ *ST I-II* 22.3.

⁸⁸ The terms cognitive or apprehensive are used interchangeably in the literature to refer to the capacities through which we acquire and assimilate the information concerning the surrounding world.

⁸⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 21. Aquinas discusses these matters in the so-called *Treatise on the Human Nature*, questions 57-102 of the *Prima pars*; see especially questions 77-81.

⁹⁰ Both kinds of apprehensions being in close communication and participating in most, if not all, our conscious cognitions seems to be a general consensus of the scholars investigating Aquinas’s account on the passions. We will also encounter this argumentation further in the text.

⁹¹ Aquinas defines sense apprehension in the following way: “Now a sensory power is a passive power that is susceptible to being affected by an exterior sensible thing. Therefore, the exterior things that effect the changes are what a sensory power perceives *per se*, and the sensory powers are distinguished from one another in a way that corresponds to the diversity of such things. Now there are two kinds of change, *natural change (immutatio naturalis)* and *spiritual change (immutatio spiritualis)*. A change is *natural* insofar as the form of the thing that effects the change is received with its natural *esse* in the thing changed, e.g., heat in a thing that is heated. The change is *spiritual* insofar as the form of the thing that effects the change is received with spiritual *esse* in the thing changed, e.g., the form of a color in the pupil, which does not thereby become colored. And for the operation of a sensory power what is required is a spiritual change, through which an *intention* of the sensible form (*intentio formae sensibilis*) comes to exist in the organ of the sensory power. Otherwise, if a natural change were by itself sufficient for sensing, then every natural body would have sensation whenever it was altered.” *ST I* 78.3.

⁹² Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 21.

⁹³ *ST I-II* 22.2.

goes on to establish that the external senses' input is then processed by four internal senses: common sense, imagination, estimative cogitative power, and memorative power – all powers that are essential in eliciting a passion. The sense input (the external five senses together with common sense) and imagination present the most basic forms of apprehension, while estimative power, which is a power Aquinas ascribes to non-human animals, and cogitative power which is a human version of it represents more complex evaluative kinds of judgments of the object (Note, this is still a sensory judgment, but the power in virtue of which this judgment takes place is akin to the works of intellective reason as it imitates them on the sensory level). We will take a closer look at them shortly, but for now we should pause to think of the nature of the object that triggers the passions.

2.1.1 Object of the Passions

There seems to be a general consensus among the scholars interested in Aquinas's account on the passions that the passions are intentional phenomena.⁹⁴ Cates argues that the passions are irreducibly intentional. “[A]n emotion is not itself an act of sensory apprehension, but an emotion relies on an act (or process) of sensory apprehension at *all times* in order to be what it is, namely, an appetitive motion that is about something in particular[;]” Cates writes, “[o]ne could say that an emotion includes, but is not reducible

⁹⁴ By using the term ‘intentional’ we simply indicate that in Aquinas's view the passions always have an object. Lombardo briefly discusses the terminological issues and indicates that, even though, the term ‘intentionality’ has a specific meaning in contemporary phenomenology, a prominent German philosopher, Franz Brentano, who launched the contemporary discussions on intentionality derived this concept from the scholastic *intentionalitas*. Furthermore, Brentano was deeply influenced by Aristotle and Aquinas in his general framework of psychological philosophy. Lombardo guides us to the work by Dermot Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology* (London: Routledge, 2000), 43, 45, 47-54, esp. n80 for further inquiry into this topic. In addition, Lombardo notes that Mark Drost also considers that Aquinas had an idea which is similar to the contemporary idea of intentionality, see Mark P. Drost, “Intentionality in Aquinas' Theory of the Emotions,” *International Philosophical Quarterly* 31 (1991): 449-460. See Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 21 footnote 5.

Now when it comes to the topic of the objects of the passions themselves, Miner acknowledges the problem of objectless emotions, such as angst, but he argues that for Aquinas this claim would rest on fundamental confusion (a passion is elicited by apprehension thus it necessarily has an object). Miner refers us to the research of two Catholic psychologists who specialized in research on the emotions and based their works on the thought of Aquinas. They noted the problem of angst observed by Freud, but argued that: “We experience anxiety because we are, know, or believe ourselves unable to avoid the threatening evil. For example, we are unable to come to grips with the object of our fear when we suffer from repressive neurosis. This is so because the object of fear has been repressed and, though still present in the subconscious, is no longer known as clearly as before, if at all. On the other hand, we may experience anxiety, and without necessarily being neurotic, in the presence of a danger known to us (p. 12).” Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 64 quoting Anna A. Terruwe, MD, and Conrad W. Baars Conrad, MD, *Loving and Curing the Neurotic: A New Look at Emotional Illness* (New Rochelle, N. Y.: Arlington House, 1972). Thus Miner's interpretation of the objectless emotions as angst is to see them as not lacking the object of fear, but as being characterized by the presence and subsequent psychological repression of it. And so he concludes: “While the particular object causing the fear is not present to consciousness, it is hardly ineffective or non-existent.” Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 64. Another scholar interested in Aquinas's account on the passions, Peter King, also concisely notes the probable existence of objectless emotions but suggests that we see them in the following way: “This is not to say that there cannot be ‘objectless’ states of the sort that are so important to contemporary philosophy, such as angst, dread, or boredom, but that they are not to be understood as emotions: they are rather akin to moods, somatic states that influence psychological states.” Peter King, “Emotions,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, eds. Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 215.

to, an act of sensory apprehension.”⁹⁵ Without an object there would be no passion. Cates construes the ‘agent,’ the formal cause eliciting the passion as its object which has properties that are capable of being sensed.⁹⁶

Lombardo furthers that we should interpret the term intention as sense perception combined with cognitive evaluation of an object as it is relevant to the perceiver. Once a subject apprehends an object as desirable through the intention, the passion is evoked. Lombardo furthers that by consequence “[t]he dependence of the passions on the apprehension of intentions means that the passions themselves are intentional. Every passion responds to a particular intentional object, and the passions can be classified accordingly.”⁹⁷ In parallel to the logic behind distinguishing particular appetites, passions also are separated according to the kind of intentional object triggering them. He thus argues that the passions correspond to the intentional objects rather than objects in themselves. In this regard, Lombardo further explains that the concept of intention – a concept that essentially refers to perception that is colored by cognitive evaluation – is crucial in maintaining Aquinas’s object-centered account on the passions.⁹⁸ In other cases the logical conclusion would be that the same object would always elicit the same passion and this is evidently not true. It is not the perception of an object in itself that gives rise to a passion, but the perception of an object perceived under a certain aspect (for example, the same meal elicits different passions once we are hungry and when we are full). This distinction between object *per se* and the object apprehended by its intentions also represents the distinction between material and formal objects of a passion respectively. Lombardo also holds that the cause of the passion is also its object.

Miner considers the intentional object of the passions primarily in terms of presence/absence and approaching/withdrawal. Let us clarify his position. He agrees with the aforementioned authors that a passion is only elicited if there is an ‘agent’ or an ‘activator’ acting on it, which is also an object of that passion. Miner specifies “[a]ctivators of the passion of concupiscence, for example, may be nothing other than its objects: a warm bath, a cold dessert, a cup of hot coffee.”⁹⁹ These examples clearly indicate concrete things, material objects to which the passions of a concupiscible sort are prone to react.¹⁰⁰ Miner inquires into the question of what these material objects have in common in order of being able to elicit a passion. His answer lies in specifying the formal object of these

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 131.

⁹⁶ A Thomist scholar Claudia Eisen Murphy furthers that the prime objects of sense appetite are “sensorily good particular things. The sensory part of a human being includes the body, so things that are good for the body will be sensory goods (health, safety, pleasures associated with the five senses). Sensory goods also seem to include something like the preservation and protection of the ego. So things that promote a good image of one’s self – like other people’s admiration, or being treated fairly by others, or power over others, or a sense of superiority over others – all seem to count as sensory goods, and therefore as objects to which the sensory appetite is moved naturally.” Claudia Eisen Murphy, “Aquinas on Our Responsibility for Our Emotions,” *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 8 (1999): 171.

⁹⁷ Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 43.

⁹⁸ Cf. Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 24-25.

⁹⁹ Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 59.

¹⁰⁰ Aquinas divides the sense appetite into the concupiscible and irascible powers. Following this logic, there are two sorts of passions corresponding to these two powers. The concupiscible passions are inclined to good absolutely speaking and the irascible seek good under qualification of it being arduous, difficult good. Here, we will not engage in a longer presentation of the concupiscible/irascible division as it will be presented in the upcoming discussion 3. *Structure of the Passions: The Concupiscible and the Irascible Division*.

activators. Once we want to distinguish one passion from the other, formal object is what stands for and makes that difference. We know that a general object of the sense appetite is a sensible good, thus, we can say that any passion *formally* is a movement toward the apprehended good or away from apprehended evil. Yet, Miner points out, this general statement does not aid at differentiating the particular passions. He claims that Aquinas defines formal differences in the passions in the following way:

He [Aquinas] finds these differences in a ‘diversity which is according to the activating power’ (that is, the power of apprehension) and which ‘makes a formal difference among the passions, according to which passions differ in kind’ (30.2.co). Because it is possible to apprehend sensible goods under distinct *rationes* – ‘aspects’ or ‘descriptions’ – there are formal differences among sensible objects.¹⁰¹

Because the concupiscible passions in Aquinas’s thought are the sort caused by the pleasurable good, this kind of object is formally apprehended in terms of being *present* or being *absent*. When an appealing object is grasped as present – the result is pleasure, when it is apprehended as absent – the resulting passion is desire, and if the object is apprehended as pleasant abstracting from the characteristics of possessing it, the occurring passion is love. Miner construes the formal object of the concupiscible passions as resting on the perception of an object as being desirable and being distinguished according to the properties of presence/absence. Miner continues that the passions of the irascible sort are also distinguished according to their formal object. These passions seek the arduous good or turn away from painful evil, thus their domain formally is *useful* good rather than the *pleasurable* one. To specify concretely, the formal objects of arduous good, and so the qualities that distinguish one irascible passion from another, are the notions of approach and withdrawal.¹⁰² For Miner, this consideration of the formal differences in the fields of pleasant good and arduous good gives rise to the identification of the eleven primary passions in Aquinas’s thought.

Yet Miner does not stop here and wants to highlight one more distinction in the elicitors of the passions and argues that the formal object is crucial in triggering the passions, but it seems to not be the only factor. Sometimes when we inquire into the cause of the concrete passion, we are actually referring to the concrete particular object, a material specification of the formal object. He argues that the clearest instance of Aquinas distinguishing between the object (material and formal) and the cause of the passion can be found in his discussion on the passion of fear. Miner points out that Aquinas devotes Question 42 to the object of fear and Question 43 to its causes. He furthers that what

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 60. Here Miner quotes *ST I-II* 30.2.

¹⁰² Miner illustrates this point with the genesis of the irascible passion of hope: “As an irascible passion, hope concerns the arduous good. Goodness and difficulty constitute two of the ‘four conditions’ that anything must satisfy in order to be hope’s formal object. What are the other two conditions? The object of hope necessarily exists in the future; we do not hope for what we presently have. In this respect, hope is akin to desire; the difference between hope and desire lies in the first condition. While only arduous goods are the object of hope, the object of desire may be either easy or difficult to obtain. Finally, the object of hope must not only be good, difficult, and future, it must also be possible to obtain. If these conditions are met, the appetite will move toward the difficult possible future good. This ‘approach’ of the appetite is hope. If the same object is apprehended as not simply difficult, but impossible, the motion of the appetite will be ‘withdrawal.’” Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 61-62.

makes us see a concrete face (the material object) as an instance of terrible evil (the formal object) might be some characteristic of our condition: a certain dispositive cause from the side of the subject. It alternatively can be a dispositive feature of the object itself or something that transgresses the subject/object boundary, something which can be called a ‘side condition’ something without which a passion would not be elicited.¹⁰³ Miner concludes his analysis of the intentional nature of the passions with the argument that:

It is vital to keep these distinctions in mind. When a person asks about the ‘cause’ of a passion, she may be asking about either the formal object, the material thing perceived under a certain formality, or the factors (whether in the perceiver or the thing perceived) that lead a person to construe the concrete thing in a manner that activates the passion. She may even be asking about all these things simultaneously. Alternatively, her question may concern the multiple ‘inputs’ possessed by animals which, under the right circumstances, reliably activate the full range of passions.¹⁰⁴

2.1.2 Apprehensive Powers of the Sensitive Soul

Question 78, Article 3 establishes that we receive the sense data from the five external senses via the power of sense apprehension. Article 4 goes on to establish that the external senses input is then processed by four internal senses: common sense, imagination, estimative power, and memorative power (all of these are the same for human and non-human animals, except that the estimative power takes on a more complex form in humans being termed the cogitative power or practical reason). The role of the common sense is to gather sense images into a coherent whole; the capacity to retain and be moved by sense objects even in their absence is called imagination. Estimative power in a non-human animal is there to trigger sense appetite by estimations of what is dangerous/useful which are not merely perceptions of what is pleasurable/painful.¹⁰⁵ The estimative power does not merely receive sense data, but it receives the intentions¹⁰⁶ that are not accessible to the exterior senses. The power that is capable of storing these intentions is memory and so Miner concludes – “[w]hat the imagination is to sensation, the memorative power is to the estimative power.”¹⁰⁷ Miner further argues that, though, Aquinas conceptually distinguishes the separate powers, the estimative and the memorative powers cannot work

¹⁰³ Cf. Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 64-65. Apart from fear, Miner points out Aquinas discusses love and pleasure in a similar fashion – emphasizing conditions which participate in eliciting a passion.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹⁰⁵ Aquinas describes the function of the estimative power in the following way: “Again, note that if an animal moved solely because of sensibly pleasurable or painful things, one would have to posit in the animal only an apprehension of forms that the sensory power perceives and with respect to which it takes delight or feels revulsion. But an animal has to seek out or flee from certain things not only because they are pleasant or unpleasant to sense, but also because of other kinds of suitability and utility, or harm – as, for instance, when a sheep, seeing a wolf coming, flees not because of the ugliness of the wolf’s color or shape, but because of the danger to the sheep’s nature; or as when a bird collects straw not because the straw delights its senses, but because this is useful for building a nest. Therefore, an animal has to perceive intentions of this sort which the exterior sensory powers do not perceive. And for this sort of perception there has to be some distinct principle, since perception of sensible forms comes from changes effected by the sensible thing, whereas the perception of the intentions just alluded to does not.” *ST I* 78.4.

¹⁰⁶ Miner suggests that we should understand the intentions in an animal’s case as non-empirical valuations of the apprehended object as useful or dangerous. The valuations are not perceived by the external senses but by natural instinct. Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 70-71.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 70.

without the first input of sensation and imagination.¹⁰⁸

Now there appears to be a disagreement among scholars on whether estimative/cogitative powers participate in activation of each passion or whether the sense apprehension and imagination being the more basic powers are also capable of moving the sense appetite. One group of scholars bases their argumentation on Question 78 Article 4 claiming:

Now note that as far as sensible forms are concerned, there is no difference between man and the other animals, since they are affected in similar ways by sensible exterior things. However, there is a difference with respect to the intentions we have just been talking about. For the other animals perceive intentions of this sort only by a sort of natural instinct, whereas man also perceives them through a certain comparison (*per quandam collationem*). And so what in animals is called the natural estimative power, in man is called the cogitative power, which arrives at intentions of this sort through a certain comparison. Hence, it is also called particular reason, and physicians assign it a determinate organ, viz., the middle part of the head; for it compares intentions of individuals in the way in which intellectual reason compares intentions of universals.¹⁰⁹

If we look at the passage above, we may get an impression that each passion is reason dependent in Aquinas's thought. Lombardo seems to argue that the estimative/cogitative powers are present at the formation of any passion since it always involves an act of evaluation of the sensible object. The kind of apprehension the passion responds to is an apprehension of an intention of the object, as we have seen. And this kind of apprehension occurs through estimative/cogitative power. The role of this power is precisely in coloring the object with some evaluation of it. We have also seen that Lombardo maintains that seeing the process of the activation of the passions in this way safeguards the object-centeredness of Aquinas's account of the passions.

Peter King joins this track of interpretation and explicitly writes that Aquinas is cognitivist about the passions: "Aquinas is therefore a cognitivist about emotion, since cognitive acts are not only causal preconditions of emotion, but contribute their formal causes as well."¹¹⁰ He argues that the sensitive apprehension is not enough for a passion to occur – in addition, to the act of five sense powers there must be a power that links the apprehension to the appetite and estimative/cogitative power is that link. King quotes Aquinas's writing, illustrating that "the lower appetitive power does not naturally tend to anything until after that thing has been presented to it under the aspect of its proper object."¹¹¹ He thus comes to the conclusion that: "What does matter to Aquinas is that thinking and reasoning affect the evaluative response-dependent concepts that trigger the sensitive appetite, and that human 'cogitative power' is involved in the process."¹¹²

Another scholar Elizabeth Uffenheimer-Lippens joins the discussion to defend the claim that the estimative/cogitative power is a necessary element of activation of all passions. She further claims that appetite necessarily presupposes knowledge in Aquinas's

¹⁰⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 73.

¹⁰⁹ *ST I* 78.4.

¹¹⁰ King, "Emotions," 215.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 214 quoting *QDV*, q. 25, a 4, *ad* 4.

¹¹² King, "Emotions," 215.

thought rendering knowledge at the basis of passions.¹¹³ As King and Uffenheimer-Lippens argue, apprehension of an object alone is not enough to evoke a passion. For passion to be raised the object has to be apprehended as attractive or repugnant. And so she argues that: “In other words, the knowledge of the object must be accompanied by a value-judgment. The power that judges the attractiveness of a known object at the sensitive level is called the estimative power (*vis aestimativa*) in the animal and the cogitative power (*vis cogitativa*) in man [*sic*].”¹¹⁴ Uffenheimer-Lippens considers the cogitative power as being directly connected to universal reason and by this being able to judge the object against a comprehensive background. She furthers: “The object that arouses the passions is never a mere material object. It is a ‘known’ object that is evaluated for its attractiveness or repulsiveness. In man [*sic*] this evaluation is subject to reason.”¹¹⁵

Now there is another path of interpreting the role of the cogitative power in the activation of the passions and we could say that, generally speaking, it consists of interpreting Question 78 *vis-à-vis* Aquinas’s claims in Question 81 of the *Prima pars*. Namely: “For the sentient appetite is apt to be moved not only by the estimative power in other animals and the cogitative power (which is ruled by universal reason) in man, but also by the power of imagining and the sensory power.”¹¹⁶ In Question 78, Article 4, as we have seen, Aquinas claims that there are four distinct internal powers of the sensitive soul and Miner argues that each power can activate the sense appetite directly as Question 81 states.¹¹⁷ He holds that the estimative power in animals and the cogitative power in human beings are not activated at each instance of the occurrence of a passion. Miner also argues as evident the fact that the motion of the sensitive appetite follows sensation. He thus claims: “If I put my hand on a stove, I feel pain at once. Greek and Latin capture the closeness of the connection between sense perception and appetitive motion; *aisthesis* and *sensus* signify both ‘sensitive apprehension’ and ‘feeling.’”¹¹⁸ He also wants to demonstrate that even though the ‘common sensibles’ or the sense impressions gathered via the five senses and the common sense usually work together (we typically perceive the sensible qualities of an object in a united fashion), there is still a possibility for the common sense to activate the sense appetite on its own influence at some level. “This does not prevent, however, the possibility of other instances in which the act of the common sense plays a decisive role in moving the sensitive appetite[.]” Miner writes, “[i]f I perceive a certain combination of qualities as united in the same painting, I may be affected by the painting as a whole in a way quite different from how I would be affected if I were only to perceive the proper sensibles of texture, color, shape, etc., without recognizing them as belonging to a unified object[.]”¹¹⁹ It is also rather clear that we do not have to possess an image in front of our senses for the passion to be elicited – the power of imagination aids this task. Miner argues that, as in the case of sensation and common sense, imagination and sensation usually also work together, but not necessarily. Both of

¹¹³ Cf. Elizabeth Uffenheimer-Lippens, “Rationalized Passion and Passionate Rationality: Thomas Aquinas on the Relation between Reason and the Passions,” *The Review of Metaphysics* Vol. 56, No. 3 (2003): 539.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 540.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 541.

¹¹⁶ *ST I* 81.3 *ad* 2.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 66.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 67.

these powers bring the images before apprehension in essentially the same way and are capable of moving the sense appetite.¹²⁰

In the same vein, Miner argues that “[w]hat rational animals actually perceive as appetible is always influenced by intellect.”¹²¹ He is not entirely clear on the role of intellect in the four internal powers of the sense apprehension. His argument might be similar to the one stated in the above section by Lombardo in which he argues that sense apprehension is never just a sheer perception and that the human being is a unity of its various capacities, even in apprehending a sense object. It is nevertheless, clear that Miner wants to demonstrate that the sort of evaluation which is typical to estimative/cogitative power is not occurring with activation of every passion and that all four distinct powers can move the sense appetite.

Claudia Eisen Murphy building on the same claim of Question 81, Article 3, also argues that some passions can be moved by reason through mediation of cogitative power, but she also holds that Aquinas does not claim that all the passions are activated through this mediation:

In fact, the passage might seem to suggest that all passions are responses to reasoned judgments, because here Aquinas is focusing on reason as a source for the objects of the sensory appetite. If a person is responsible for a passion when the passion is somehow dependent on reason, and if all passions, by their very nature, are always caused by reasoned judgments through the mediation of the particular reason, then we are responsible for all passions. This, of course, would not be a very attractive view, and it is not the view Aquinas accepts. Aquinas holds that although the sensory appetite *can* be moved by reason (in the way described above), it *can* also be moved by its own source of cognition[.]¹²²

Cates also argues that cogitative power is not involved in activation of every passion. Her argumentation centers on showing that humans are uniquely intellectual creatures, yet at the same time akin to other animals. She wants to invite her reader to imagine what it is to conceive the objects of the passions in sensory terms without reducing the sensory to the five senses. Cates suggests that it is best to try to understand the argumentation of Aquinas in terms of range:

With respect to the examples at hand, the range might extend from a simple impression that an object is attractive to the eye (which might not engage the cogitative power) – to a judgment that an attractive object is suitable for eating (which appears to engage the cogitative power on a basic level) – to a judgment that an object (such as a fellow human being) is suitable company (which engages the cogitative power to a greater degree) – to a judgment that ‘this person qua moral agent is good, and is also good for me’ (which takes us well beyond the cogitative power and requires the engagement of the intellect).¹²³

¹²⁰ Miner explains the mechanism of imagination producing concrete passions in the following way: “The first passion that imagination will produce is either pleasure or pain. Any image that moves the sensitive appetite is, as such, experienced as either pleasant or painful. But when the image is present and the thing is absent, another passion will be experienced. If the image is experienced as pleasant, then the combination of the image’s presence and the thing’s absence will produce desire. Should the image be painful, the thing’s absence and the image’s presence will yield aversion.” Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 68.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 69.

¹²² Murphy, “Aquinas on Our Responsibility for Our Emotions,” 177.

¹²³ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 120. Note, in this quote Cates allows the passions not only to be formed by the mediation of the cogitative power, but to be responsive directly to the intellect.

Now Cates still argues that sensation (input of the five senses and common sense), imagination, memory, and estimative/cogitative powers are always object-oriented. She builds her argument in light of Damasio's research that the human brain contains older and newer parts – the evolutionary older parts contain certain pre-organized neural circuits that will register some of the sensory input in concrete ways before the newer parts of the brain are able to register it and activate related cognitive activities.¹²⁴ Cates illustrates the case with the following example: “[I]t is common for humans to judge a long, thin object moving quickly through the grass at their feet to be a threat of some kind, even before they have time to think, ‘this is a snake, and some snakes are dangerous.’”¹²⁵ This refers to the concept of basic emotions which are there to assure immediate reactions of an organism in possibly threatening situations. Cates wants to demonstrate that Aquinas's account can, indeed, accommodate what we understand in contemporary terms as basic and complex emotions.¹²⁶

Drawing from *ST I 81.2 ad 2*, Cates argues that Aquinas indicates that the cogitative power is at least present in the formation of the irascible passions.¹²⁷ Cates furthers that from Aquinas's texts it is not clear whether he thinks that cogitative power participates in eliciting the concupiscible passions, but her thesis is that he, nonetheless, judges the cogitative power to be involved in the formation of many (if not most) concupiscible passions. The concupiscible passions are reactive to the sensory input alarming the subject with the pleasurable/painful properties of the object, Cates in this regard argues that Aquinas must also hold that there are such objects of the concupiscible power “that a subject perceives or judges via the cogitative power to be suitable or unsuitable with respect to one or more of the subject's purposes – with respect to appetites for more than pleasing sensations *per se*.”¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, 114 referring to arguments found in Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza*, 60.

¹²⁵ Cf. Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 114.

¹²⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, 114. We could say that the whole of chapter 5 *Approaching the Human Sensory Appetite from Below (I)* is geared to show that Aquinas's account can accommodate a range of emotions from those that require relatively low cognitive input to the ones that involve complex cognitive activity – as long as they have an object. See especially note 88 on page 127 where Cates allows hunger, thirst, and sexual desire to be construed as passions as long as they imply an interior objectual motion.

¹²⁷ Cf. Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 117. The reply to the object found in the question argues: “Just as, in keeping with what was pointed out above (q. 78, a. 2), among the apprehensive powers of the sentient part of the soul there is an estimative power that perceives things that do not affect the sensory powers, so also in the sentient appetite there is a power that does not seek what is appropriate for delighting the senses, but instead seeks something that is appropriate insofar as it is useful to the animal for its own defense. And this is the irascible power.” Miner in his argumentation also notes that estimative/cogitative power activates irascible passions and seems to think that this does not include the concupiscible passions. See Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 73.

¹²⁸ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 120. In this regard we could draw our attention to Cates's examples of motions of hunger and sensory love. In the case of hunger if we consider it being elicited only by the sensory input (look, smell, taste), we may miss out on the fact that everything pleasing to the senses is not suitable for eating. Cates concludes: “It is thus doubtful that the property ‘suitable for eating’ is given immediately with the five senses and common sense. Apprehending this property requires the exercise of the estimative or cogitative power (and, in some cases, the exercise of higher intellectual powers as well).” Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 119. In the case of sensory love she argues that we can see that the five sensory judgments might not be enough to arouse this passion: “[T]he sorts of judgments that arouse sensory love are principally sensory and particular: This person has many attractive qualities; he or she is fun to be with. Yet these judgments involve more than undergoing (and being aware that one is undergoing) enjoyable five-sensory

What does this analysis leave us with? First of all, a recognition that Aquinas's texts contain many different elements that allow scholars to construe similar yet distinct interpretations. Could we, after all, conclude that Aquinas is cognitivist about the passions? We would argue not entirely – he seems to distinguish between the passions being triggered by external sensation and the passions that are formed by a sensory kind of judgment informed by reason. If this interpretation is correct, it makes Aquinas's account very attractive in light of contemporary research arguing that there, indeed, are emotions of a basic and complex character.¹²⁹ His account, then, can accommodate our animal¹³⁰ and distinctively human characteristics and provide some illuminating insight into the way we undergo such emotional experiences. Cates's suggestion to see the passions in the light of range is particularly helpful as it aids us in understanding how we can be moved by the things around us with various levels of engagement – some objects will appear attractive and inviting, some objects will draw us toward them as suitable and some will involve significantly more complex cognitive judgments.

2.1.3 Role of the Cogitative Power

Now we can take a closer look at the role of cogitative power in forming distinctively human passions.¹³¹ This power, as we have seen, enables one to make a sensory evaluation

impressions: It is not simply that he or she is pleasing to the eye or smells good. Emotions such as love must ordinarily involve the exercise of the cogitative power." Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 119-120. The core of her argument lies in the thesis that some objects that elicit the passions of the concupiscible type are apprehended as pleasing or displeasing to the senses, but they are usually simultaneously judged to be suitable or unsuitable for one – "where one is aware, on a basic sensory level, of having a life and wanting it to go pleasantly or well. Most sensory beings have an appetite to engage in countless activities beyond five-sensory experiences, and it is against the backdrop of this appetitive tending that they construe the significance of particular sensible objects." Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 119.

¹²⁹ This discussion can be found back in Chapter I, section 3. *Thinking of Nussbaum's Account of Emotions: Some Critical Reflections* with all its subsections.

¹³⁰ This should not be understood in a way of conceiving animals as brute creatures. Aquinas, as we have seen, ascribes the estimative power to animals which has its source in instinct but is also understood in the sense of sensory judgment. Furthermore, Aquinas claims: "In brute animals the sentient appetite does not obey reason. And yet insofar as brute animals are led by a certain natural estimative power that is subject to a higher reason, viz., God's reason, there is in them a certain likeness of moral goodness with respect to the passions of the soul." *ST I-II 24.4 ad 3*.

¹³¹ Miner, Lombardo, and Cates indicate that Aquinas's account on the cogitative power or particular reason lacks a considerable amount of detail. Cf. Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 80 and Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 24; Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 115-116. The term is not used in great frequency so it is difficult to reconstruct the exact meaning of it, especially in relation to other terms referring to human cognitive capacities. Lombardo judges Peghaire's study to be the most comprehensive up to this day. See Julien Peghaire, "A Forgotten Sense, the Cogitative, According to St. Thomas Aquinas," *Modern Schoolman* 20 (1943): 122-140, 210-229. He also refers readers to more recent studies on the matter, for example, Anthony Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 37 and Robert Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature: A Philosophical Study of Summa Theologiae Ia 75-89* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). Lombardo, Miner, and Cates also offer different perspectives on the discussion of cogitative power – Lombardo discusses it briefly together with the other four internal senses (pages 22-24), while Miner devotes the whole of chapter three to discussing the powers activating the passions in general, of which he devotes pages 76-82 in particular to the cogitative power. Cates devotes pages 113-120 to discussing the cogitative power and its role in activation of a passion and in chapter 7 of her book she looks into the relationship between intellect and cogitative power. The discussions also take different angles. Cates, for example, offers insights on how cogitative power can be understood in contemporary terms, while Lombardo and Miner are busy with the presentation of the concept.

of the sensible object. We also saw Aquinas arguing that: “[T]he cogitative power arrives at intentions of this sort through a certain comparison. Hence, it is also called particular reason, and physicians assign it a determinate organ, viz., the middle part of the head; for it compares intentions of individuals in the way in which intellective reason compares intentions of universals.”¹³² Miner argues that particular reason imitates universal reason, but on the lower level. The task of universal reason is to ‘compose and divide’ (*ST I 85.5*) and by the analogous rudimentary form of ‘composing and dividing’ particular reason discovers not the universal concepts, but individual intentions.¹³³ Yet particular reason is not an immaterial power. As we have seen, Aquinas ascribes a bodily organ to it, thus its discoveries are not genuinely universal (in Aquinas’s thought only immaterial powers can reach truly universal truths). The intentions are not sheer perceptions which are accessible by sensation and imagination. Miner claims that, generally speaking:

The particular reason, according to Aquinas, is the power that enables a person to attach a set of particular sensible qualities to images stored in the imagination that are directly connected with experiences of pain. Through making this connection between sensible forms and painful images, it estimates the sensed forms as ‘dangerous,’ despite the fact that nothing about these forms directly produces pain. In this way, its function is precisely analogous to the estimative power’s capacity to apprehend some sensed objects as dangerous, although nothing about the sensible forms themselves is painful.¹³⁴

If we look at this description we can see that the human cogitative power and the non-human animal estimative power have some essential similarities, (both serve the natural preservation of an organism by natural instinct), yet in the human case – we learn the intentions of objects largely led by our previous experience, not the immediate instinct.¹³⁵ Miner captures this conviction of Aquinas in the following way:

Since its *intentiones* are largely given by instinct, non-rational animals discover very little by the estimative power. The sheep does not learn from prior experience that the wolf is dangerous; it already ‘knows’ this. By contrast, much of particular reason’s work consists in the actual discovery of intentions. Certainly humans are able to make some estimations innately, as can a baby searching for the mother’s breast. Generally speaking, however, humans do not know by instinct what is useful or dangerous for them; they must learn this from experience.¹³⁶

Cates also notes that Aquinas usually construes the notion of intention under properties of ‘threatening’ or ‘useful.’ She furthers that Aquinas’s concept of intention “seems to refer, instead, to a sensory impression of the property itself. Yet the property the animal apprehends is a property of the object, which the animal must also apprehend.”¹³⁷

¹³² *ST I 78.4.*

¹³³ Cf. Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 77.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 78.

¹³⁵ Cates wants to construe non human animals’ instinct in such a way that it respects their capacity to make basic sensory judgments: “However, Aquinas says that a nonhuman animal can and often does make a ‘well-regulated judgment [*iudicium*]...about certain things.’ In his perspective, animals make judgments ‘from a natural estimate, not from any deliberation, since they are ignorant of the basis of their judgment.’” Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 114. Here Cates quotes *Truth 24.2.*

¹³⁶ Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 80.

¹³⁷ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 114.

Cates suggests that like the estimative power in other animals, the cogitative power in humans allows one to perceive the sensible qualities of the object that go beyond the capacities of the five senses, but unlike other animals, humans can apprehend multiple properties in complex relations within several objects at the same time. She argues that Aquinas takes human sensory cognition seriously and by consequence, he identifies the powers of perception and judgment also at this level. This conjunction helps us to see in which ways we are akin to other animals when we act on the basis of sensory judgments¹³⁸ without losing sight of the fact that even at this level humans can be influenced by intellect to some degree. Cates quotes Aquinas arguing that “[t]he cogitative power owes its excellence ‘not to that which is proper to the sensitive part; but to a certain affinity and proximity to the universal reason, which, so to speak, overflows into [it].’”¹³⁹ We should be attentive to the fact that the cogitative power indicates what is on the sensory and particular level; this power does not signify an ability to engage in sophisticated acts of understanding or practical reasoning:

Yet it is significant that even on this level a human can perceive or imagine a ‘sensible good or evil,’ namely, an object with sensible properties that appear to be relevant to the human’s efforts to go on living and doing what he or she wishes to do. By virtue of the cogitative power, a human can form impressions of many different objects and their suitability or unsuitability with respect to his or her basic concerns.¹⁴⁰

To end our discussion on the cogitative power we would like to draw attention to some interesting thoughts by Miner on the effects of the cogitative power on human psychology. He suggests that the estimations of the cogitative power which are stored in the memory are “literally ingrained in a person’s soul”¹⁴¹ according to Aquinas (remember, the bodily organ responsible for the cogitative power is ‘the middle part of the head’ and the estimations of it become ingrained in our psychological and physical make up). As these estimations have become part of our material make up they prove to be very difficult to alter. Leaving out the medieval primitive knowledge of the human brain, Miner wants to point out that the vital element in Aquinas’s conception of the cogitative power’s ingrained estimation “is that a person will approach maturity with a system of neurological correspondences between sensible patterns and estimations of usefulness and danger.”¹⁴² Despite the difficulty to alter the estimations which become part of human *psyche*, Aquinas

¹³⁸ Cates explains the meaning of sensory judgment: “Humans often behave more like nonrational animals than like rational animals, especially when we have the impression that our lives or safety, or the lives or safety of our kin, are at stake – or food, sex, or other tangible pleasures are involved. Often, in such situations, humans do not act in the absence of judgment; rather, we act on the basis of sensory judgments that have not been informed by rational reflection. It is helpful to be able to say what these lower-order judgments are like – how they are judgments about objects and their properties, and judgments about how these objects are significant for one’s well-being – but also how they differ from higher-order intellectual judgments that presuppose a reflective view of what is good for a human being and for oneself as a human being.” Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 116.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 116 quoting *ST I 78.4 ad 5*.

¹⁴⁰ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 115.

¹⁴¹ Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 80.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 80.

also points to the relationship the cogitative power has to human reason.¹⁴³ Question 81, Article 3 claims that: “But as was explained above (q. 78, a. 4), in man the estimative power is replaced by the cogitative power, which some call ‘particular reason’ because it brings together intentions of individuals (*collativa intentionum individualium*). This is why the sentient appetite is apt to be moved by the cogitative power in a man. Now particular reason is itself apt to be moved and directed by ‘universal reason,’ and so there are syllogisms in which singular conclusions are derived from universal propositions.”¹⁴⁴ The distinct powers of the soul are interacting in Aquinas’s faculty of psychology and reason, since the highest power in a human person, is, in fact, capable of correcting the distorted estimations that give rise to the passions that involve an act of the cogitative act in their formation. We will dwell on the relationship between reason and the passions further on in our discussion,¹⁴⁵ yet at this point it is important to highlight Aquinas’s conviction that the person always represents a fundamental unity of his distinct powers/capacities. It is also essential to note, once more, that for Aquinas reason plays a role even at the initial stage of activating some of the passions – since it is able to affect estimations that give rise to them through the mediation of the cogitative power. In a best case scenario universal reason will correct the distorted estimations of the particular reason, yet it can also comply with them (making, let us say, a universal abstraction of estimation that ‘this particular dog is dangerous’ to the general idea that ‘all dogs are dangerous’ and in this way giving rise to a passion of fear each time one is in proximity to any kind of dog). Universal reason itself needs appropriate guidance and so Miner suggests that “[w]ithout virtue (both infused and acquired), universal reason stands a poor chance of being able to revise and reshape the historically established judgments of particular reason. Instead, it will merely perform induction on the estimations already stored in the memorative power.”¹⁴⁶ This means that universal reason which is able to guide particular reason needs to be adequately formed by virtuous habit in order to affect our estimations correctly. Furthermore, this also indicates that virtue stands as a source of formation and activation of orderly passions.

2.2 MOVEMENT OF THE SENTIENT APPETITE

After an apprehension of the object the movement of the sentient appetite may follow, that is, a passion may occur. We have discovered Aquinas’s metaphysics of the appetite in general as central for his anthropology.¹⁴⁷ We can recall that an appetite, generally speaking, is a kind of movement toward what the appetite seeks as the good. Created appetite is a passive power and so its movement is always conditioned by an external object. Human beings have all three sorts of appetites: natural, sense, and the will – they all

¹⁴³ Miner refers us to the research of two Catholic psychologists who specialized in the research on the emotions and based their works on the thought of Aquinas. They considered the cogitative power to be essential to human psychology: “This conception of particular reason has a profound bearing on the subject of our discussion because certain of the disorders of emotional life can be traced to this faculty. The transition from instinct to particular reason, or the penetration of the purely sensory estimative power by reason, constitutes one of the most important developmental processes of the human mind (p. 29).” Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 80, footnote 21 quoting Terruwe, and Baars, *Loving and Curing the Neurotic*.

¹⁴⁴ *ST I* 81.3.

¹⁴⁵ See section 4. *The Passions, Reason, and Will* of this chapter.

¹⁴⁶ Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 81.

¹⁴⁷ See section 1.3 *The Appetite in General* of this chapter.

respond to different kinds of desirable objects, but once activated they signify movement to perfection in the way that is natural and appropriate to them. We have also already discovered that there is a hierarchy in the appetites according to the type of cognition they depend on. Natural appetite is surpassed by sense and the rational because the two latter imply cognition and willful engagement. The rational appetite surpasses the sense appetite because it corresponds to the highest form of universal cognition and seeks unqualified goodness. Humans take a special place in all there is – only we possess all three kinds of appetites according to Aquinas. Lombardo suggests that this fact makes humans complicated – the appetites, when operative, can compete with each other as they incline us to incompatible goods.¹⁴⁸ Yet despite the difficulties that arise due to the interaction between the appetites, “each moves us toward our perfection; each is necessary for human flourishing; each is a God-given inner compass oriented toward happiness; none can be ignored without cost.”¹⁴⁹

2.2.1 Movement of the Sentient Appetite as a Movement Toward Telos

Our task is precisely to describe what kind of compass sense appetite is in its movement. In Question 81, Article 1 Aquinas discusses the sensitive appetite in general, when making a conceptual distinction between it and apprehension. He describes the natures of both in the following way: “For an act of the apprehensive power is not called a movement in as proper a sense as the action of the appetitive power is, since the apprehensive power’s operation finds its perfection in the fact that the things apprehended exist in the one apprehending them, whereas the appetitive power’s operation finds its perfection in the fact that the one who has the desire is inclined toward the desirable thing. And so the apprehensive power’s operation is more like rest, whereas the operation of an appetitive power is more like a movement.”¹⁵⁰ Now Miner suggests a lengthy discussion on what the term ‘movement’ may actually mean. The interpretations range from suggesting that the term ‘motion’ referring to passion means an actual physical movement (as in the sense of local motion)¹⁵¹ to seeing passions as movement to a certain *telos*, as we have indicated above. Miner dismisses the literal interpretation of the passions as physical movements and he suggests that a first step in understanding the passion as movement is to see it as alteration of a soul-body composite (alteration meaning “the actualization of what exists potentially, insofar as it exists potentially”).¹⁵² However, Miner also indicates that seeing motion *qua* alteration does not exhaust the meaning of this concept. Together with Lombardo, he interprets it as a motion toward *telos* and so he argues that “Aquinas privileges the category of ‘motion’ not because he intends a crude physicalism, but

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 33.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹⁵⁰ *ST I* 81.1.

¹⁵¹ In this case, Miner refers us to the research of Eric D’Arcy and Simo Knuuttila. See Eric D’Arcy, Introduction to Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae (1a2ae QQ22–30)*, xix, tr. E. D’Arcy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006f) and Simo Knuuttila, “Medieval Theories of the Passions of the Soul,” in Henrik Lagerlund and Mikko Yrjönsuuri, eds., *Emotions and Choice from Boethius to Descartes* (Boston: Kluwer Academic, 2002), 49-79.

¹⁵² Miner argues that Aquinas understands motion and alteration in Aristotle’s sense. The quote is taken directly from *Physics* 3.1, 202a11, Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 39.

because he wants the likeness of motion to evoke the pattern of human life itself, conceived as a return to the end.”¹⁵³

We are primarily interested in the interpretation of Thomistic passions as a *movement toward telos* – an active dimension of the passions which according to Lombardo is prime and more central to the nature of the passions in Aquinas’s thought.¹⁵⁴ And thus Lombardo argues that “[t]he primary function of the passions is not to allow sensible objects to act upon us, although of course they do that, but to incline us toward the perfection of our nature.”¹⁵⁵ Passions are not obstacles to the *telos* of human existence, they participate in attaining it. Lombardo argues that the placement of the *Treatise on the Passions* itself, shortly after the discussion on happiness as a final end of human life, indicates the centrality of the passions in human flourishing in Aquinas’s anthropology.¹⁵⁶ We should be careful, however, since the Thomistic passions can also lead one astray due to the reality of sin, and so they need the guidance of reason and virtue. Yet “[p]aradoxically, however, even when the passions prompt us to act in ways that we ultimately judge inappropriate, in their essential structure, the passions still serve the attainment of our telos.”¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, as we have seen from our introduction to the ethical framework of Aquinas – virtue is needed to attain our *telos*,¹⁵⁸ and what Lombardo wants to demonstrate at this point is that virtue itself requires the passions. Thus he argues that “[w]ithout the passions, we would not respond to sensible objects, and without this first step toward engaging the world, human flourishing would not be possible.”¹⁵⁹ He interprets the role of the passions to be precisely this – respond to the stimuli around us and prompt a person to act in the face of those stimuli, yet the course of actual action is always decided by reason. A human passion signifies this receptivity for the world around us and our inner movement toward that world, but only rational appetite commands human action judging the information a passion conveys to be worthy to act upon or no. And so Lombardo further claims that “[w]hen rational analysis concludes that acting on a certain

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 38. We should note that Lombardo argues that the passions have both aspects, passive and active, but he considers a passion *qua* movement to be a more central characteristic. We believe that Cates offers some insightful comments on the passive-active language about the passions which can help to nuance and better grasp the meaning of these two dimensions. The passions are modes of tending, but Aquinas constructs the tending of the sense appetite as a passive operation of the embodied soul. It is passive because it is caused by an external ‘agent’ and it involves a bodily change (a loss). Cates explains the passive-active language of the passions in the following way: “Given that acts of emotional tending are caused by objects in one’s mind that generally relate to situations in one’s extramental world, it is to be expected that Aquinas would characterize such acts in passive terms: A sensory being is drawn toward an object that appears to be good or repulsed by an object that appears to be evil. Yet Aquinas characterizes such acts also in active terms: A sensory being reaches out toward a good object or recoils or turns away from an evil object. This use of active language might appear inconsistent, but it is unavoidable and appropriate. Many emotions involve feeling that one is reaching out toward something interiorly or turning away from it. Aquinas recognizes this. However, he holds that one is made to feel that one is moving in one direction or another by the object of one’s apprehension.” Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 131.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, 40, footnote 81. In this regard he also refers us to the discussions found in Stephen Loughlin, “Similarities and Differences between Human and Animal Emotion in Aquinas’s Thought,” *The Thomist* 65 (2001): 60n29 and Paul Gondreau, *Passions of Christ’s Soul in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2003), 108.

¹⁵⁷ Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 41.

¹⁵⁸ See the section 1.2.2.2 *Virtue* above.

¹⁵⁹ Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 41.

prompting of the passions is not conducive to the attainment of our final end, the passions have not failed to offer reliable guidance: they have provided precisely the sort of first-order response and motivation that is their sphere of competence.”¹⁶⁰ This means that the passions have an essential role, together with other appetites, in guiding us to our flourishing and happiness. To see the passions as our compasses to the fullness of life is not merely an outcome of philosophical reflection, Lombardo furthers – “there is a massive theological premise that is never explicitly stated because it is so obvious: the passions carry us toward our *telos* (and therefore happiness) because they were created by a God who is trustworthy, God is the guarantor of desire. In him, there is a metaphysical basis for welcoming and trusting the passions.”¹⁶¹

2.2.2 *The Passions and the Body*

We have thus discovered the Thomistic passions to be an object directed (or in other words, intentional) movements of the sentient appetite which contribute to attainment of human happiness. At this moment, however, we should consider the second half of the definition of the passions, namely, that “a passion properly speaking exists when there is a bodily change (*ubi est transmutatio corporalis*).”¹⁶²

Miner points out that the history of interpreting the relationship between the passions and the body is not a history of agreement. There are authors arguing that Aquinas defended a materialist account of the passions;¹⁶³ yet the most prominent course of interpretation is to understand that “[t]he act of the sensitive appetite, though an appetitive motion that is accompanied by a physical change, is not itself a bodily motion.”¹⁶⁴ We should see the relationship between the appetite and the somatic event as a relationship between formal and material aspects of the same act. And even though Aquinas usually treats the somatic aspect of the passions in the discussions about the particular passions under the heading ‘effects,’ we should be aware that “[f]or Aquinas, events within the soul produce distinct bodily events. But the distinction is not a separation. Because the body and soul are fundamentally integrated, there will always be an ordered connection between them.”¹⁶⁵ Passion, then, is an event that occurs in unity of the powers of the human person, encompassing his/her capacities to comprehend, to undergo an inner movement, and to feel. Apprehension, the movement of sentient appetite, and the bodily event, then, stand in an intimate relationship in an experience of the passion and the latter two appear to be constitutive elements of it.

Lombardo adds that while we surely see the passions as an experience of the body-soul composite, “matter is the metaphysical realm of passive potency par excellence”¹⁶⁶ and thus “the bodily dimension of the passions makes their subjective experience more

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 42-43.

¹⁶² *ST I-II* 22.3.

¹⁶³ In this regard Miner refers us to one of the strongest accounts arguing that the Thomistic passions are just somatic events, see Robert Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 243.

¹⁶⁴ Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 44.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 45-46.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 46.

dramatic than that of immaterial psychological movement.”¹⁶⁷ He also argues that the fact that Aquinas gives substantial attention to the discussion of bodily aspects in discussing particular passions (as their causes and effects) shows that he takes the bodily dimension of a passion very seriously.

Cates joins the discussion with a claim that “[t]o say that emotion is a motion of the *soul-body composite* is to say that the main powers or capabilities that are involved in the production of an emotion are exercised directly by means of the body.”¹⁶⁸ Taking into account contemporary research of neuroscience she furthers:

It makes sense to say that emotion necessarily involves bodily changes if we think emotion occurs by virtue of the brain and [the rest of the] the nervous system – particularly if we recognize that ‘the brain and the body are indissociably integrated by mutually targeted biochemical and neural circuits.’ It makes sense to say also that at least some emotions have a characteristic brain-body signature – that there is a patterned way in which the brain and the rest of the body tend to be altered when a person is moved by certain objects of apprehension.¹⁶⁹

Cates interprets that Aquinas surely holds that the passions have correlative material expressions. But she also argues that these expressions are understood in a flexible manner as ‘a certain bodily change’ and not necessarily as one-to-one correspondence between a particular passion and a highly specified set of bodily reactions. A passion is always about a perceived or imagined situation, Cates furthers, and not about the body itself (unless the object of the passion is the body or its particular state). Thus Cates wants to respect the bodily dimension in the account of the passions, but also gives it a certain character of flexibility. Her position is best summarized in the following way:

Nevertheless, I take it that for Aquinas most emotions register to some degree – for most people – as familiar patterns of feeling enlivened, agitated, lifted up, weighed down, constricted, relaxed, or the like. This is presumably why most people speak of ‘feeling’ an emotion: We feel an interior motion or a tending in relation to an object of apprehension (for example, we have the experience of rising to meet a challenge – or resting, subsequently, in a goal attained), and we feel a related change in the body (for example, an increase in energy level – or a subsequent sense of euphoria or relaxation). It is the first sort of feeling (the imaginative experience of tending or coming to rest) that is most definitive of emotion, but this feeling has a material dimension. It occurs by means of changes in the body.¹⁷⁰

We judge Aquinas’s attention to the body in the experience of the passions to be a strong element of the account. He, in fact, considers the bodily element so essential that it

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁶⁸ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 81. Concretely: “Experiencing an emotion involves having a sensible object in mind, on some level of awareness. An act (or process) of sensory apprehension might involve, for example, receiving and entertaining sensory impressions, making basic judgments of the significance of the impressions, associating these impressions with similar impressions from the past, and/or creating sensory images by the power of imagination. According to Aquinas, all such acts take place by means of bodily organs. In some cases, they take place by means of the organs of exterior sense, such as the eyes or the ears. In all cases they take place by means of the chief organ of interior sense, which Aquinas identifies with ‘the middle part of the head.’ Today we would say that acts of sensory apprehension take place by means of the brain and the rest of the nervous system, which extends throughout the body.” *Ibid.*, 81.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 83. Here Cates quotes Damasio, *Descartes’ Error*, 87.

¹⁷⁰ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 85-86.

is taken into the very definition of a passion. Aquinas, indeed, holds a passion to be an event of the body-soul composite: “As was explained above (q. 28, a. 5), in the case of the passions of the soul, the movement of the appetitive power is itself like a form, whereas the bodily change is like matter, and the one is proportioned to the other. Hence, the bodily change follows as a likeness to the appetitive movement and in keeping with the character of that movement (*secundum similitudinem et rationem appetitivi motus*).”¹⁷¹ Both components are essential to the nature of the passions. Sometimes attending to our cognitive capacities can help us to understand the roots of the emotion we are experiencing and by this aid at giving it its place. But at the same time, we would argue, being attentive to our bodies can help us to grasp that we are experiencing a certain emotion (or being attentive to other bodily signs to be aware of their emotions). Certain bodily expressions are indicative of emotions, even when our mind refuses to acknowledge it. Being sensitive to it can be a path by which we consciously attend to our feelings, deliberate on their possible source, and thus their object, and can become aware more consciously and honestly about the ways we relate to this object and thus engage with our surroundings.

2.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Up to this point we have seen that Aquinas describes the passions in terms of appetite; that means that they signify the ways we are engaged with our surroundings. The appetite is triggered only when we apprehend an object as being sensorily attractive or repulsive and it comes to its movement by the means of a bodily change. The above discussion endeavored to present these three fundamental points – the passions themselves as movement of the sense appetite, their connection to apprehension (and by consequence, their intentionality) and the role of the body in the experience of the passions.

When it comes to the apprehensions activating the passions, generally speaking, our main interlocutors showed a consensus that the kind of sense apprehension eliciting the passions is not just a sheer perception; it involves our cognitive capacities because a human being, normally, functions as a unity. In this regard, Cates notes: “[I]t is to be expected that humans will ordinarily exercise both powers at the same time in assessing the significance of various objects. When we apprehend an object to be good on an intellectual level, we will ordinarily apprehend it (or an image or impression of it or something related to it) to be good on a sensory level as well, and vice versa.”¹⁷² We also indicated that for Aquinas, sense apprehension includes these powers: external senses (sight, smell, touch, taste, hearing) and internal senses (the cogitative power, the common sense, the imagination, and the memorative power). At this point, the interpretations diverged – the role of the cogitative power in the activation of each passion appears to be a *locus* of academic debate. Our own reading of relevant passages of the *Summa* sides with an interpretation that the passions appear to be elicited either by mediation of the cogitative power or they follow sensation and imagination. This line of interpretation will allow us to speak of the passions

¹⁷¹ *ST I-II* 44.1.

¹⁷² Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 185.

that are influenced by reason on various levels and it will help us to speak of responsibility for them depending on it.¹⁷³

We should also note that our main interlocutors credit Aquinas for making a conceptual distinction between appetite and apprehension while keeping their unity in operation. For Lombardo this distinction is more truthful for our daily experience – we seem to speak more often about emotions as responses to some cognitive appraisal than something that includes both, the appraisal and the response. He argues:

When someone says, ‘I feel angry’ or ‘I am afraid’ or ‘I am sad,’ we understand what is meant, even when we do not know why the person feels this way. We presume that there are reasons, conscious or otherwise, and we may immediately ask what they might be, but inquiring about the reasons is another question and a different question. ‘How are you feeling?’ and ‘Why do you feel that way?’ are getting at two different realities.¹⁷⁴

Cates credits the distinction between apprehension and appetite for being able to account for the experience of turmoil when our evaluative judgments seem to contradict our appetite motions. She claims: “[T]hinking something to be good (judging, say, that it contributes directly or indirectly to one’s flourishing as a human being) does not necessarily amount to being drawn toward it, and thinking something to be bad does not necessarily amount to finding it unattractive or being repelled by it.”¹⁷⁵ At this point, we would like to highlight the importance of the distinction and we will flesh it out in greater depth in the upcoming chapter comparing the accounts of Aquinas and Nussbaum.¹⁷⁶

We have also presented the Thomistic passions *qua* movement – the passions themselves are movements of the sense appetite, but theologian and Thomist, Thomas Ryan explains that Aquinas uses the model of physical movement as a heuristic tool to illustrate the dynamics of the passions. “As a body moves toward its object,” he writes, “so a person moves toward the goal of living which is happiness. The person and the human powers (operations) move (are activated) by being drawn (‘inclined’) by the desire for happiness.”¹⁷⁷ Lombardo seconds this opinion and argues that Aquinas takes seriously the notion that all created beings tend toward their *telos* by the means of their appetites implanted by God. He furthers that the logics of Aquinas’s position is intrinsic to a Christian understanding of creation as good – every element constituting our nature must be good. “Since desire and all other forms of emotion are manifestations of appetite,” Lombardo argues, “emotion in all its elemental forms is not just tolerable: it is essential to human flourishing.”¹⁷⁸ Aquinas’s understanding of the appetite provides a metaphysical foundation for the psychology of the passions. Aquinas is aware of the gravity of the reality of sin and the distortions it introduces to human nature and, by consequence, our desires. Yet he shows in his account on the passions that human appetites remain fundamentally

¹⁷³ See the discussion on the responsibility for our passions in section 4.2.2 *Responsibility for the Passions* with all its subsections in this chapter.

¹⁷⁴ Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 226.

¹⁷⁵ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 70.

¹⁷⁶ See Chapter IV, section 3.2.1 *Reason and Emotion: Intelligent Responses and Apprehension-Appetite Distinction*.

¹⁷⁷ Thomas Ryan S.M., “Revisiting Affective Knowledge and Connaturality in Aquinas,” *Theological Studies* 66 (2005): 53.

¹⁷⁸ Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 230.

orientated toward authentic happiness even after the fall. Lombardo furthers that Aquinas also identifies the nature of our *telos* by the method of observation of our inclinations. Aquinas looks into constitutive elements of a given nature and observes what brings that nature to fulfillment: “He begins with a close examination of what actually exists, trusting that whatever exists comes from God, and therefore, in its essential ontological structure, contains within itself its own measure of goodness.”¹⁷⁹ That means that in Aquinas’s system our inclinations themselves serve as sources of information in constructing the picture of authentic human happiness. Lombardo claims: “We can discover something about human flourishing by reflecting on our subjective experience of desire. Our experience of desire cannot be taken entirely at face value, due to the possibility of disordered desire and self-deception, but it does provide a legitimate, if incomplete, basis for determining how we should live.”¹⁸⁰ Lombardo interprets that Aquinas makes the goodness of the appetite the cornerstone of his account of the passions and this means that our inclinations are fundamentally trustworthy.¹⁸¹ Consequentially, this makes the nature of the appetite a fundamental reference point in ethical reflections.

Lastly, we should not forget that the passions are psychosomatic events. For Aquinas, they come to be through bodily change. The passions are embodied states of awareness. As Cates puts it: “Emotions are, in part, ways of taking in certain features of reality in ways that reverberate in the body.”¹⁸² The body is the matrix of the affective change¹⁸³ and thus, we argued, we should be attentive to it in our emotional experiences as it can be an important source of information. Our bodily reactions and feelings can be indicative of our emotions and can lead us to delve into the sources of our emotions.

3. STRUCTURE OF THE PASSIONS: THE CONCUPISCIBLE AND THE IRASCIBLE DIVISION

Question 23 of the *Treatise on the Passions* presents the structure of the passions dividing them into two different species – the concupiscible and the irascible. Lombardo claims that this division is one of the most important structural features of Aquinas’s account.¹⁸⁴ This division differentiates the passions according to the ease or difficulty in achieving their objectives and Lombardo is convinced it holds up when we are thinking about human experience. “There are first-order emotions that often have objectives beyond their own resources to achieve,” he writes, “and there are also second-order emotions that serve first-order emotions by tackling obstacles that get in the way of their interests.”¹⁸⁵ In this hierarchy the irascible serve the concupiscible passions and the distinction itself aids discerning the elements of an authentic human flourishing. The distinction illustrates the nature of the particular passions and what purpose they serve – by attending to the discussion on the particular passions, we can see how they are related to each other and we can see which passions Aquinas considered to be truthful to our nature and which he saw

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 232.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 233.

¹⁸¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 233-234.

¹⁸² Diana Fritz Cates, “Thomas Aquinas on Intimacy and Emotional Integrity,” *Studies in Spirituality* 16 (2006): 123.

¹⁸³ Cf. Ryan, “Revisiting Affective Knowledge,” 53.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 236.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 236.

as parasitic. In this regard Lombardo adds: “Envy, for example, is not an elemental component of human affectivity; it is the corruption of something good, that is, the passion of sadness.”¹⁸⁶

Now the division of the passions into concupiscible and irascible lies in the initial division of the sentient appetite into these two powers established in Question 81, Article 2 of the *Prima pars*.¹⁸⁷ Here Aquinas claims that:

The sentient appetite is generically one faculty (*una vis*), which is called sensuality, but it is divided into two powers, which are the species of the sentient appetite, viz., the irascible and the concupiscible...Therefore, since the sentient appetite is an inclination that follows upon sentient apprehension in the way that a natural appetite is an inclination that follows upon a natural form, it must be the case that in the sentient part of the soul there are two appetitive powers: (a) one through which the soul is simply inclined to pursue those things that are agreeable according to the senses and to avoid those things that are harmful, and this is called the concupiscible power; and (b) a second through which the animal resists aggressors that pose obstacles to what is agreeable and that inflict harm, and this is called the irascible power. Hence, the object of the irascible power is said to be what is difficult (*arduum*), because the irascible power tends toward overcoming contraries and winning out over them.¹⁸⁸

The basic distinction of the appetite into two powers highlights Aquinas’s conviction that the concupiscible simply seeks pleasure and shies away from pain and the irascible power of sense appetite inclines the soul to resistance even when an apprehended good involves something unpleasant and painful. We could put it simply and say that the distinction stands for an appetite seeking something under the quality of pleasant in the concupiscible case and something as useful in the irascible case (we may remember that Aquinas divides the good under the aspects of befitting the good, the pleasant and the useful – the two latter are precisely the formal objects of the concupiscible and the irascible powers, respectively). And these two are quite different instances for Aquinas. Miner explains that “[t]he irreducible distinction between the pleasant (painful) and the useful (dangerous) accounts for Aquinas’ differentiation of the sensitive appetite into a concupiscible and an irascible component.”¹⁸⁹ This, for Miner, is clearly visible from our common experience – it seems rather impossible to collapse our perception of something useful to something pleasant.¹⁹⁰

Article 1 of Question 23, assuming we are already familiar with the distinction within the appetite, inquires whether the passions residing in both powers are the same or different. Aquinas suggests that the concupiscible and the irascible passions are different because just as in the case of the two species of the sensitive appetite they respond to different formal objects. The generic object of concupiscible is “the sensible good or the

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 237.

¹⁸⁷ Miner explains that this division refers to a long tradition, it traces back not only obviously to Aristotle, but likely to Hippocrates and Plato. In this regard he points us to the research of Peter King, “Late Scholastic Theories of the Passions: Controversies in the Thomistic Tradition,” in Henrik Lagerlund and Mikko Yrjönsuuri, eds., *Emotions and Choice from Boethius to Descartes* (Boston: Kluwer Academic, 2002), 37-211. Lombardo also agrees with this interpretation and bases his argument on the research of Susan James, *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 60.

¹⁸⁸ *ST I* 81.2.

¹⁸⁹ Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 50.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 50.

sensible bad taken absolutely (*bonum vel malum sensibile simpliciter acceptum*), i.e., the pleasurable (*delectabile*) or the painful (*dolorosum*).”¹⁹¹ In the case of the irascible passions, we should note that “because it is necessary for the soul to suffer sometimes from difficulties and opposition in attaining a good of this sort or in avoiding something bad, and to the extent that attaining the good or avoiding the bad is in some sense elevated beyond the animal’s easily exercised power (*quodammodo elevatum supra facilem potestatem animalis*), it follows that the object of the irascible power is the good or the bad insofar as it has the character of being arduous or difficult (*secundum quod habet rationem ardui vel difficilis*).”¹⁹² Thus we can say that the concupiscible passions seek an easily attainable good, here and now, and the irascible are inclined to the future good with the qualification of something difficult to attain. Miner wants to demonstrate that the division of the two powers is also useful practically because “[w]hen the division is made, he will show, multiple relations among the passions naturally fall into place that would otherwise be difficult to explain or even acknowledge.”¹⁹³

Article 2 of the same question starts to inquire precisely into the relationships that the passions residing in the different powers have with each other. For Aquinas the passions relate to each other through the principle of contrariety. Aquinas argues that “two sorts of contrariety are found among the passions of the soul – (a) one involving a contrariety among their objects, viz., the good and the bad, and (b) the other involving approach toward and withdrawal from the same terminus.”¹⁹⁴ The passions of the concupiscible power are mutually related only through the first kind of contrariety because they involve the good in an absolute sense. Because the good is what everyone desires they can only be inclined to, but never withdrawn from it. At this point Aquinas starts to introduce the pairs of eleven principle passions and show how they relate to each other. Love (*amor*), desire (*desiderium*), and joy (*gaudium*) seek the good itself and the passions that have to do with evil – hatred (*odium*), withdrawal (*fuga*), and sadness (*tristitia*) – shies away from evil itself. Thus the concupiscible passions cannot be moved toward and withdrawn from *the same* object.

As we have seen, the object of the irascible passions is not the good absolutely speaking, but the good perceived as difficult to achieve. And at this point we can encounter five irascible passions: hope (*spes*), despair (*desperatio*), fear (*timor*), daring (*audacia*) and anger (*ira*). Hope tends toward an arduous or difficult good. Despair, on the other hand, withdraws from it under the same aspect (if the object in the course of action is judged to be unattainable). When an arduous evil cannot be avoided, the culminating passion will be fear. An arduous evil can also incline one to act upon it, but only in order to avoid it in the future, and in this instance one experiences the passion of daring. And so, Aquinas concludes, “among the passions of the irascible power one finds (a) a contrariety according to the good and the bad, as in the case of the contrariety between hope and fear, and again (b) a contrariety according to approach toward and withdrawal from the same terminus, as in the case of the contrariety between daring and fear.”¹⁹⁵

¹⁹¹ ST I-II 23.1.

¹⁹² ST I-II 23.1.

¹⁹³ Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 54.

¹⁹⁴ ST I-II 23.2.

¹⁹⁵ ST I-II 23.2.

Aquinas moves to Article 3 to show that the case of contrariety is more complex in the irascible passions – anger is an irascible passion, yet, in Aquinas’s thought, anger does not have a passion which is contrary to it. Aquinas holds anger to be a reaction, attack of the *present* evil. Precisely due to this already-there temporal category, he judges that it is impossible for anger to have an irascible contrary. If one experiences the present evil, the appetite may move – which is a passion of anger itself; or the appetite may succumb and remain at the experience of sadness which is a passion of concupiscible power. Aquinas argues that an appetite cannot experience a movement towards withdrawal and so anger does not have an irascible opposite. When it comes to the distinction between the good and evil as a basis for contrariety, Aquinas holds that if the object of anger is already present evil, the only contrary to it is already acquired good, but in this case it loses the character of arduous or difficult. No other movement remains when a good is present, unless it is joy, which is a concupiscible passion. Aquinas thinks that there is no passion of irascible power which could count as a genuine contrary to anger *qua* movement; the only opposition seems to be calm – but it lacks the characteristic of movement and it is rather anger’s privation when a genuine contrary passion.

Article 4 goes on to establish the eleven principle passions residing in the two powers of the sensitive appetite; the concupiscible power contains six passions, the three pairs of the contrary passions: love (*amor*) and hatred (*odium*): love is an inclination toward a connaturality with the good, hatred pertains to the same when one apprehends the object as evil; desire (*desiderium*) or sentient desire (*concupiscentia*) and withdrawal (*fuga*) or aversion (*abominatio*): desire is a movement toward an absent good, withdrawal or aversion is a contrary on the side of absent evil; and pleasure (*delectatio*) or joy (*gaudium*) and pain (*dolor*) or sadness (*tristitia*): pleasure or joy signify a certain rest of an appetite in the good, pain or sadness is a terminus of an appetite in evil.¹⁹⁶ The irascible passions are five, three groups constituted of hope (*spes*) and despair (*desperatio*): both are responses to the unattained good, but hope judges it to be attainable and despair judges the object unattainable; fear (*timor*) and daring (*audacia*): inclines to the future evil, fear apprehends it as unavoidable and daring inclines to act upon it to avoid it; and anger (*ira*) that has no contrary signifies, as we have seen, a response to present evil.

Commenting on Article 4, Miner points out that this Article is geared to show the non-ultimacy of irascible passions.¹⁹⁷ They are always framed within the concupiscible passions; they cannot arise first because they are always presupposing some prior inclination toward the good or withdrawal from evil; nor can the irascible be a last passion in any emotional experience. When it comes to the final stage, no irascible passion can correspond to an attained good; that is the task of the concupiscible. We could say, thus, that the concupiscible concern first-order desires, withdrawals and pains, while the

¹⁹⁶ The translation we are utilizing is the one provided by Fredosso. Miner, for example, translates the pairs of the concupiscible passions as: love/hatred, desire/aversion, pleasure/pain. See Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 54. Lombardo translates them as love/hatred, desire/aversion or repulsion, pleasure/sorrow or pain. See Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 51. Cates translates these passions as love, desire, delight, aversion, hatred, sorrow. See Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 134-149 for her discussion on the particular passions. Joy and sadness are both species of pleasure and pain, respectively; both joy and sadness depend on interior apprehension while pleasure and pain depend on the exterior apprehension (*ST I-II* 35.2). The translation of the irascible powers is identical among all the authors.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 57.

irascible are inclined to the second-order of the same and they evaporate once the concupiscible passion attains its goal.¹⁹⁸ Anger, as an answer to the present evil, also does not constitute the final passion for Aquinas – it necessarily has to terminate in joy or sorrow. While we will not expand on this discussion here, it is essential to note this characteristic of anger as it is important for our upcoming discussion on the moral status of anger – anger for Aquinas has a fundamentally transitional character.

3.1 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CONCUPIBIBLE AND THE IRASCIBLE PASSIONS

Question 25 of the *Treatise on the Passions* continues to inquire into the way the passions are ordered with respect to one another – that is – are causes of each other.¹⁹⁹ Article 1 goes on to solidify Aquinas’s view that the concupiscible passions are prior to the irascible. Aquinas argues that the concupiscible passions are related to more things than the irascible – they can be described in terms of movement and rest, while the irascible can be described only in terms of movement. From this perspective, as we have just discussed, the concupiscible passions are always prior because they seek unqualified good and they are also the last because they have a quality of appetite attaining rest. The irascible passions, on the other hand, are always an addition to the already present concupiscible passions as they signify how the object relates to the desired good in terms of a possibility to attain it. From this perspective the irascible passions stand as defenders of the concupiscible desire when the good cannot be attained immediately.

Discussing the passions in order of execution, Aquinas suggests a particular scheme of how passions are causes of each other. In this picture Aquinas arranges the passions in the particular order to show that irascible passion always signifies a midway between the two concupiscible passions. Thus Aquinas suggests that in the case of an object being apprehended as good, desire is the first movement, hope the second (if one judges it to be a not easily attainable good), and joy then constitutes the rest of the appetite (this is the case of the successfully attained good). Similarly the passions that deal with evil as their object proceed with withdrawal/aversion, are followed by fear and culminate in sadness (if the feared thing happens). Things get a little more complex in the case of anger – for Aquinas sadness is a cause of anger. Miner explains that “Aquinas holds that what makes sorrow a passion in the strictest sense is its radical unsuitability for human beings who seek what completes them by nature. The soul does not naturally reconcile itself to sorrow.”²⁰⁰ In this situation anger is what follows the passion of sadness as it hopes to repay the evil and substitute what is bad with the good. If the vindication is achieved, the movement from sadness to anger culminates in joy. Thus Aquinas concludes that all of the irascible passions necessarily culminate in the concupiscible passions of joy or sadness (corresponding to the positive or negative culmination of a situation from the subject’s perspective) as a terminus of the passion.

¹⁹⁸ Cf. Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 51.

¹⁹⁹ Normally, we follow the structure of Aquinas’s *Treatise* and progress with it, yet at this point for the sake of the coherence of the discussion we skip Question 24, which discusses the morality of the passions, and continue the discussion about the concupiscible and irascible passions. We will take up the discussion on the moral character of the passions right after our current exposé.

²⁰⁰ Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 83.

3.1.1 Love: Principle of all the Passions and a Passion Itself

Now one might have noticed that Aquinas did not discuss the place of love in the ordering of the passions. He fills the void in Article 2 of this question where he establishes love as prior among all the passions. At this point Aquinas distinguishes between the ‘order of generation’ and ‘order of intention.’ In the order of intention – pleasure is the passion that causes others (the intended pleasure causes desire and love). In the order of generation love is a primary passion from which all the rest flow. Aquinas describes this mechanism in the following way:

Now the appetite’s very readiness for or proportion to the good is love (*amor*), which is nothing other than being pleased with the good (*quid nihil aliud est quam complacentia boni*). On the other hand, the movement toward the good is desire or sentient desire (*desiderium vel concupiscentia*), whereas rest in the good is joy or pleasure (*gaudium vel delectatio*). And so in accord with this ordering, love precedes desire and desire precedes pleasure.²⁰¹

Love is described as a principle of every desire (and in construing this argument Aquinas reinstates that good is fundamentally prior to evil and any passion seeking good is naturally prior).²⁰² By this virtue love is a principle of any passion. Love as ‘being pleased with the good’ or a certain complacency with the good produces desire for that good which terminates, if attained, in pleasure. The order of generation, thus, is as follows – love, desire and pleasure.

We consider it useful to discuss love to a greater extent here since it is a passion of prime importance for Aquinas, a passion that holds all the rest together and so it is essential to our understanding of his account. Yet his conception of the passion of love and its subsequent relationship with desire and pleasure is a *locus* of very different interpretations. What precisely does Aquinas mean when he says that sensitive love is a principle of other passions and yet the passion itself (thus including a movement)? What is the precise relationship that love has with desire and pleasure and how exactly does love differ from them? Our three main interlocutors suggest rather different interpretations of Aquinas’s account on sensitive love. Miner and Cates present a positive interpretation of it, agreeing with Aquinas’s views on love and seeing internal logic behind conceiving love as a principle and as a passion and appreciating the differences between the passions of love, desire, and pleasure. Lombardo struggles to find an inner coherence of the account, cannot see an *actual* difference between the functions of love, desire, and pleasure and suggests a revision of the account on the passions by removing love as a passion with desire and pleasure being able to perfectly subsume the functions of love and so relieving the account from incoherencies and redundancies.

3.1.1.1 Defining the Terms

²⁰¹ *ST* I-II 25.1.

²⁰² Cf. *ST* I-II 25.2.

Yet before we dwell on this discussion let us demarcate the ground of discussion and clarify the main terms to see precisely why these tensions arise. Question 26, Article 1 takes up the task of defining the passion of love. Aquinas writes that love involves appetite since the good is the object of both of them, thus the distinction among types of love follows the distinction among the appetites. Aquinas, then, describes sense love *vis-à-vis* natural and rational kinds of love. First of all, all types of love follow apprehension: in the case of natural appetite, apprehension is inherent by nature of a thing and not dependent on the subject itself (natural appetite follows and relies on the all-encompassing apprehension of the Creator); in the case of sense appetite it follows apprehension of a subject itself but without free will (this is in the case of an animal which follows instinct). In human beings this apprehension ‘has some participation in freedom’ since passions have a natural tendency to obey reason (we will discuss this essential point further on when discussing the relationship between the passions and reason).²⁰³ In the case of rational appetite, love follows apprehension of a free subject. What is called love in all these appetites is “the principle of the movement that tends toward the end that is loved.”²⁰⁴ This principle takes a form of certain bonds in different kinds of love: in natural love it appears as connaturality, a certain fit between a thing having appetite and the thing toward which it tends. Aquinas considers that love exists in the same way in sense and intellective appetites: “Similarly, the bond (*coaptatio*) between the sentient appetite or the will and some good – i.e., its being pleased with the good (*ipsa complacentia boni*) – is called ‘sentient love’ or ‘intellective (or rational) love.’”²⁰⁵ Now love as a passion is described as a first change in the appetite produced by the appetible thing and love signifies the appetite being pleased with the object: “Thus, the first change effected in the appetite by the desirable thing is called love, which is nothing other than the appetite’s being pleased with the desirable thing; and from its being pleased there follows a movement toward the desirable thing, and this movement is desire; and, finally, there is rest, i.e., joy.”²⁰⁶

In Question 30 of the *Prima secundae*, Aquinas describes desire as movement toward pleasurable good. Here Aquinas restates that the passions are distinguished by their objects. The object of all concupiscible passions is the good and so Aquinas claims that they are differentiated from one another by way of relating to this object. He chooses to distinguish the good as object of the concupiscible in terms of its *presence* and *absence*. Absent good moves the passion of desire toward itself. Pleasure, which is a motion of the soul, but also its terminus (*ST I-II 31.1*) is then a passion which is distinguished by the present good. Aquinas distinguishes all three passions in the following way: “Hence, what is pleasurable to the senses is a cause of love insofar as the appetite adapts and conforms to it in a certain way, whereas it is a cause of concupiscence insofar as, when absent, it draws the appetite to itself, and it is a cause of pleasure insofar as, when present, it brings the appetite to rest in it. So, then, concupiscence is a passion that differs in species both from love and from pleasure.”²⁰⁷ We can instantly see that he describes the good as object of desire in its absence, the present good as an object of pleasure, but in the case of love he

²⁰³ See section 4. *The Passions, Reason, And Will* in this chapter.

²⁰⁴ *ST I-II 26.1*.

²⁰⁵ *ST I-II 26.1*.

²⁰⁶ *ST I-II 26.1*.

²⁰⁷ *ST I-II 30.2*. Fredosso uses the term of concupiscence instead of desire.

bypasses this kind of explanation and describes the good in terms of a *change* in the appetite. This results in multiple interpretations of what the object of love really is and how its role is distinct from desire and pleasure in Aquinas's thought.

3.1.1.2 *Is Sense Love a Distinct Passion?*

Now when it comes to interpreting Aquinas's account on love, Miner points out that all three types of love just encountered are unified, at least analogically in their status as principle of motion.²⁰⁸ For him, to give love such a broad meaning reflects an interplay between sameness and difference. In this instance Miner quotes a prominent Thomist scholar Josef Pieper observing that "a single fundamental word apparently underlies all the variety in vocabulary and binds together all special meanings."²⁰⁹ He elegantly illustrates it by showing that our language allows us to say – 'a stone's love of downward motion, a dog's love of his master, a young man's love of his fiancée, a woman's love of chocolate, a drinker's love of wine, a mathematician's love of calculus, a philosopher's love of wisdom' – and so he concludes that our language itself points to the unity in diversity of loves. Aquinas's description of love as a basic adaptation (our encountered 'first change' in the appetite) toward the object which is apprehended as suitable signifies the unity in these diverse experiences of love. "In this most basic respect," Miner writes, "language does not lie. The minimal grammar of love requires a subject (a 'lover') and an object (a 'beloved')." ²¹⁰ He also argues that love is experienced most tangibly where the appetite is in motion; yet he defends Aquinas's views that love and desire cannot be equated because the motion of desire may cease while inclination remains. Miner illustrates his argument through an example of a chocolate-lover desiring a chocolate cake and after eating it feeling satisfied. Desire is satisfied and the appetite is no longer in motion, but does it mean that the love for chocolate also ceased? That does not seem to be the case and for Miner, Aquinas's separation of love and desire rests precisely on this point, love does not signify a motion of an appetite, but its fundamental inclination (Lombardo as we will see later on in a discussion considers love and desire to be inseparable in an actual human experience).

Yet if we want to construe love as a constant which remains when desires change and as a principle, in other words, it raises some serious questions about postulating it also as a passion, that is, a movement. And Aquinas does defend a view that love is a passion in a true sense. Miner appeals to the interpretation that Aquinas uses the term motion in an elastic sense. Yes, love is not a motion in a sense that desire is but, nonetheless, it is a motion. Miner points out that love signifies a motion of appetite where appetite is *changed* by means of the appetible thing.²¹¹ When the passion of love is there, it is present because we were acted upon by the thing outside ourselves. Precisely because of this passivity the passion of love is love in the most true sense and so Miner leads us to a passage of crucial importance in understanding Aquinas's account on love:

²⁰⁸ Cf. Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 118.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, quoting Josef Pieper, "On Love," in *Faith, Hope, Love* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997), 146-147.

²¹⁰ Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 118.

²¹¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 119.

Some have claimed that even in the case of the will itself, the name ‘love’ (*amor*) is more divine than the name ‘elective love’ (*dilectio*). The reason is that ‘love’ implies a certain passivity (*passio*), mainly because love exists in the sentient appetite, whereas elective love (*dilectio*) presupposes the judgment of reason. But a man is better able to tend toward God through love (*per amorem*), having been attracted passively in a certain way by God Himself, than he is able to be led to this by his own reason – which, as has been explained, is what is involved in the nature of elective love. And in this sense love (*amor*) is more divine than elective love (*dilectio*).²¹²

Miner notes that this passage disturbs the conventional wisdom that the rational creature moves to his/her end mostly through an act of will (he, in fact, attributes this conventional thought to the fact that the questions on the passions received little interest in comparison to other topics in the *Summa* in the history of theology and philosophy). Precisely due to its passivity, love is the most potent. And so Miner states that:

Far from being collapsible into rational love, the *amor* proper to the senses has a function of its own. The power of God to draw creatures to himself by sensible means exceeds the power of human reason. *Amor sensitivus* cannot be neglected by the rational creature in its motion toward God: ‘The highest does not stand without the lowest.’²¹³

When it comes to the object of love, we have seen that Aquinas avoids a clear definition and describes it in terms of an effect it has on the appetite. Object of love is a desirable thing acting upon the appetite (*ST* I-II 26.6). Thus, Miner points out that in Question 27 discussing the causes of love, Aquinas claims that ‘properly, the cause of love is the object of love.’²¹⁴ Article 1 reminds us that the proper object of love is good. Article 2 goes on to specify that the good cannot be an object of appetite unless it is apprehended, thus love requires some sort of apprehension of the loved thing. “So, then,” Aquinas writes, “cognition is a cause of love for the same reason that the good is, viz., that the good cannot be loved unless there is a cognition of it.”²¹⁵ Article 3 then adds that likeness with specification of the subject having in potentiality what the object has in actuality also being a cause of love: “For each thing that exists in potentiality has as such a desire for its own actuality, and, if it is something with sentience and cognition, then it delights in attaining that actuality.”²¹⁶

Miner claims that by naming cognition as a cause of love Aquinas regards knowledge as a precondition of love. One cannot love something which he/she does not know. This, he suggests, reminds us of the architecture of the *Summa* itself – before addressing the human love for God, it lays out what we know, even very limitedly, about God.²¹⁷ Love does not require full knowledge of its object, only *some* apprehension of it. The passage from *ST* I-II 26.3 points out that for Aquinas love always outruns knowledge and so love goes beyond the qualities of the loved that we apprehend. This, Miner notes, is

²¹² *ST* I-II 26.3.

²¹³ Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 122.

²¹⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, 126 referring to *ST* I-II 27.1.

²¹⁵ *ST* I-II 27.2.

²¹⁶ *ST* I-II 27.3.

²¹⁷ Cf. Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 128.

evident from the experiences of love of a newborn baby, love of a spouse, love of God.²¹⁸ Aquinas concludes Question 27 with Article 4 where he affirms once more that there is no other passion prior to love (he states that for the first time, as mentioned, in *ST* I-II 25.2). There is no other passion of the soul that does not presuppose some instance of love. “The reason for this,” Aquinas writes is, “that every other passion of the soul involves either a movement toward something or a resting in something. But every movement toward something or instance of resting in something proceeds from some sort of connaturality or bond (*ex aliqua connaturalitate vel coaptationem procedit*), and this belongs to the nature of love.”²¹⁹ Seeing love at the root of every other passion and as a first inclination to the perceived good resembles Nussbaum’s theory of emotions which presupposes that prior involvement, care and attachment to an object has to be there for one to have subsequent emotional experiences. Miner concludes his analysis of love by stating that the primacy of love in the *Prima secundae* prepares and builds Aquinas’s argument toward the primacy of *caritas* in the *Secunda secundae*.²²⁰

Cates joins the discussion essentially agreeing with Miner’s line of interpretation. Cates suggests that we should, indeed, see love as a certain bond between the subject and the object.²²¹ Before the object arouses desire, an actual movement towards the apprehended good, the object causes an aptitude for itself and this is what love, as a passion, is for Aquinas, according to Cates – a link corresponding to the good, finding it fitting, but yet not producing a movement toward it. She construes Aquinas’s description of love as ‘the appetite’s being pleased with the desirable thing’ and in more contemporary terms as “resonating pleasantly with an object in its suitability.”²²² She goes on to characterize this experience of sensory love “as a state of the soul in which we have an impression that there is a ‘likeness of proportion’ (a fitting relationship) between a sensible object and ourselves. In love, we apprehend that some object of experience is such that we are capable of acting on it, being acted upon by it, or interacting with it, in ways that allow us to be ourselves and to actualize some of our potential.”²²³ Particular love is activation of this tendency. Cates recognizes that Aquinas does not classify love as movement toward a particular object; that is the task of desire. Yet she wants to argue together with Miner that love is still a form of appetite’s motion:

An emotion of sensory love is a tending in the sense that it is an activation or expression of a tendency to be changed with respect to one’s sensory appetite when one apprehends certain objects of apprehension, under certain conditions. In love, the tendency to undergo responsive

²¹⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 128.

²¹⁹ *ST* I-II 27.4.

²²⁰ Cf. Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 139. Miner also asserts that the most decisive authority in Aquinas’s treatment of love is Dionysius. First, his influence appears in defending the fundamental primacy of the good and by consequence securing the primacy of love. Miner writes: “Thus we may conclude, at least provisionally, that Aquinas’ consideration of the fundamental passion, and therefore his treatment of the passions as such, has a deeply Platonic character, even as it makes use of Aristotelian materials throughout. As Pinckaers suggests, Question 28’s consideration of love’s effects ‘evokes directly the language and the experiences of Christian mysticism; the numerous citations of the *De divinis nominibus* of Denys the Areopagite are there to confirm it (1990, p. 382).” Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 138-139 quoting Servais Pinckaers, “Les passions et la morale,” *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* (1990): 382.

²²¹ Cf. Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 138.

²²² *Ibid.*, 140.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 139.

appetitive motion takes the initial form of resting in the awareness that a perceived object is suitable to oneself. It takes the form of appreciating the object's attractive properties. It takes the form of resonating with pleasure in the presence of an object to which one is already united by a sensible suitability ('connaturalness') and by the apprehension of this suitability.²²⁴

As we have seen, Miner construes love as a motion where appetite is changed by the object: love is set in motion by the object and the very change in the appetite is seen as a motion. From the quotation above we can see that Cates also associates the motion of love with its object, but she sees it under the aspect of 'resting in the awareness that a perceived object is suitable.' Thus Cates considers the motion of love to be very close to what the passion of pleasure is for Aquinas without further indicating the actual distinction between the two if we choose to see love as an appreciative resonating with the attractive properties of the object (this, indeed, seems to be a function of pleasure already).

The possibility to arrive at these similar, yet distinct interpretations shows that Aquinas's account of love is fluid and not entirely clear in the meaning of its concepts. Lombardo presents the most critical view on Aquinas's account of love from our three main interlocutors. He finds it difficult to fully understand Aquinas's account on love as passion precisely due to its unclear relations with desire (understood as movement toward the good), pleasure (resting in the good) and apprehension (recognizing the good). He thus judges Aquinas's views on the passion of love to be 'evocative' but 'elusive.'²²⁵ Building on the same Thomistic descriptions of love as Miner and Cates,²²⁶ he finds it difficult to grasp the concrete meaning of it. How is love concretely and differently from the passions of desire, pleasure, and our apprehending the good? Lombardo suggests that one way to explain the nature of the passion of love as principle of all other passions and distinct from desire is to interpret it as a movement of a general kind (somewhat similar to Miner's interpretation of love as *motus*). If Aquinas argues that love is not an appetitive movement that tends to something desirable, but it names an appetitive movement in which the appetite is changed by the desirable object so that the appetite becomes complacent with the object (*ST* I-II 26.2 ad 3), Lombardo suggests interpreting love as a movement of a general sense, not a movement of a specific kind seeking the good. "Desire is the movement toward a good," says Lombardo, "while love is an inclination or a kind of complacency, and, as such, the principle of desire and pleasure and the rest of the passions."²²⁷ Yet even this partial explanation seems dissatisfying for Lombardo. He wonders if we construe desire as a movement toward an object, what room is there for love which moves from an indifferent state toward complacency with the object, without actually moving toward the object?²²⁸ This is a curious objection since from our reading of

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 140.

²²⁵ Cf. Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 57.

²²⁶ He points to the multiple phrases which Aquinas uses to characterize the passion of love as: affinity with (*connaturalitas*) or aptness to (*coaptio*) some good (*ST* I-II 27.4.); a certain consonance (*consonantia quadam*) with something agreeable (*ST* I-II 29.1); affective union (*unio affectiva*) (*ST* I-II 25.2 ad 2); a change caused in the appetite (*immutazione appetitus*) by the appetible object (*ST* I-II 26.1.); movement toward good (*accessum ad bonum*) (*ST* I-II 29.2 obj. 3); complacency in some good (*complacentia boni*) (*ST* I-II 26.1.); complacency as something desirable (*complacentia appetibilis*) (*ST* I-II 26.2.).

²²⁷ Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 58-59.

²²⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 59. Here Lombardo indicates that Knuutila notes the same ambiguities in Aquinas's account on the relationship between love, desire, and joy. He refers us to Simo Knuutila, *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 249-51.

Aquinas, love does not move from an indifferent state as it indicates the first change in the appetite already by virtue of apprehending the object as good, it seems to signify a very first relation and connection between the subject and the object before one starts to have a range of passions directed to that object. But Lombardo continues his argument and states that love and desire are both forms of psychological movements; neither can be distinguished by a voluntary/involuntary basis (both can be pleasing or displeasing to the will in particular cases). Here once more we could note that if love is a first change of the appetite by being acted upon by the object which is found good and pleasing, this argument might not seem entirely true. Love, then, appears to be the occurrence of the object ‘catching’ our attention as something suited for us, apprehended under this aspect and so it seems to be able to become displeasing to the will only when it is connected to the movement of desire. Lombardo furthers that we may want to distinguish love and desire by indicating that desire prompts voluntary action, which love does not, it simply rests in the good²²⁹ (something similar to Cates’s interpretation). But then we could not separate love from pleasure. What is more complex is Lombardo’s interpretation that the Thomistic passion of love always has to coexist with desire and pleasure; consequently this means that “we cannot isolate love’s characteristics from those of desire by imagining what it would be like to feel love without desire, insofar as it is metaphysically impossible to have such an experience.”²³⁰

Lombardo argues that if we want to look at the object of love for some clarification, it does not prove to be helpful as Aquinas avoids a clear answer on what actually is love’s object. He points to the fact that love is not specified by its object (in terms of presence or absence) and in this way is distinguished from desire (and pleasure by consequence). It is rather distinguished from desire, the *effect* that the object has on the appetite.²³¹ Love’s object adapts the appetite to itself, while the object of desire attracts the appetite to itself

²²⁹ Cf. Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 59.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 59. Lombardo argues that for Aquinas, as Augustine, love is not separable from desire and pleasure. He refers us to Aquinas quoting Augustine with approval: “Love longing to have what it loves is desire, while love having what it loves and the benefit of it is joy,” (*ST I-II 25.2*; Augustine, *City of God* 14.7). Lombardo furthers that “[b]y way of comparison, Augustine avoids the problems Aquinas encounters because, being less metaphysically oriented, he is content to define love in terms of desire and joy. For Augustine, love is a twofold passion manifested as either desire or joy, and it is not distinct from either.” Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 59, footnote 48. Lombardo is also aware that his interpretation of Thomistic love is not without contenders. Mark Drost interprets the same passages as accommodating an idea that for Aquinas love can exist without desire: “The ontological possibility of loving something without taking delight in it or desiring it,” he writes, “is a consequence of Aquinas’s understanding of the passion of love.” Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 59, footnote 49 quoting Mark P. Drost, “In the Realm of Senses: Saint Thomas Aquinas on Sensory Love, Desire, and Delight,” *Thomist* 59 (1995): 48. Lombardo, however, argues that Drost does not provide any textual evidence to support his thesis. Drost seemingly construes the Thomistic passion of love as ‘inclination’ and ‘complacency’ and Lombardo argues why it then cannot be seen as aspects of desire and pleasure, respectively. And so he concludes that “[w]ithout a clear, unambiguous distinction between inclination and desire, and between complacency and pleasure, it is difficult to maintain that it is ontologically possible to experience love without either desire or pleasure.” Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 59, footnote 49. Lombardo additionally points out that Christopher Malloy suggests the same interpretation as his – the view that love is always accompanied by desire or pleasure. See Christopher J. Malloy, “Thomas on the Order of Love and Desire: A Development of Doctrine,” *Thomist* 71 (2007): 65-87.

²³¹ Cf. Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 60.

(and so makes it move toward itself). Thus we are left without a clear description on the nature and essence of love's intentional object.

Lombardo agrees that the inclusion of love among the passions and the attempt to systematically unite them under it has a certain intuitive appeal and elegance, yet he also argues that the passion of love, as construed by Aquinas, seems not to find a proper function separately from desire and pleasure. Lombardo thus offers a revision which, according to him, would not collapse the coherence of the account of the passions itself, but would eliminate the ambiguities and redundancy. He thus suggests: "The essential structure of his system can be preserved by interpreting the sense appetite itself, in place of love, as the principle of desire and pleasure. Additionally, the qualities Aquinas attributes to the passion of love can be interpreted as a combination of apprehension, desire, and pleasure: apprehension subsuming the attentiveness of love; desire subsuming the movement of love; and pleasure subsuming the complacency of love."²³²

Now we can be sure that the discussion on the exact meaning of Aquinas's views on love as a passion is a large topic in itself and we cannot hope to solve it here.²³³ Our own reading of Aquinas's texts stands more in line with Miner's and Cates's where love is seen as a first change in the appetite triggered by the things outside ourselves in the sense of a bond between the subject and the object. To omit love, as Lombardo suggests, from the Thomistic account of the passions, even with all its incoherencies, seems like a move that takes away the intuitive force, the vitality, from the account. It would also mean omitting one of its most evocative claims; that God leads us through our passivity. If love is not a passion, what counts as one? Miner also indicates that Aquinas's views on *amor* pave the way to crown *caritas* as the queen of virtues; the highest cannot exist without the lowest. Lombardo's views might be influenced by his conviction that what corresponds to the contemporary category of emotions is the category of affections (*affectiones*, taken in a broad sense, encompassing passions and intellectual affections of the will) – in this case, love can be seen as a higher order affection of the will involving a cognitive dimension.²³⁴ We conclude, however, that Lombardo's suggestion that love as *amor* is redundant in Aquinas's account of the passions seems to be a move that takes something essential away from that account.

3.1.2 Ordering the Passions: Questioning the Status of Hope, Daring, Fear and Despair

²³² *Ibid.*, 62.

²³³ Not in the work of our prime concern, but elsewhere Cates also acknowledges that scholars still attempt to put the puzzles on how many things Aquinas said on love fit together. In this instance she highlights this segment of conducted research: Frederick E. Crowe, "Complacency and Concern in the Thought of St. Thomas," *Theological Studies* 20, nos. 1, 2, and 3 (March, June, and Sept., 1959): 1-39, 198-230, 343-395; Patrick A. Messina, "Love Lost and Found: The Ambiguities of Amor, Caritas and Concupiscentia in St. Thomas Aquinas' Summa Theologiae," *Confessions of Love: The Ambiguities of Greek Eros and Latin Caritas*, eds. Craig J. N. de Paulo et al. (New York: Peter Lang), 55-73; Guy Mansini, "Duplex Amor and the Structure of Love in Aquinas," *Thomistica* (1995): 127-196. See Diana Fritz Cates, "Love: A Thomistic Analysis," *Journal of Moral Theology* Vol. 1, No. 2 (2012): 6.

²³⁴ We will discuss the category of the affections of the will in the upcoming section 3.3 *Affections of the Will*.

Returning to our discussion on the order among the passions, Aquinas continues Question 25, Article 3 establishing hope as a prime passion among the irascible passions. Even though the power of irascible passions is named after the most familiar passion with the most profound sensations – anger (*ira*), (the same occurs with the concupiscible power named after *concupiscentia*), the passion of hope is called the first among the irascible because it is closest to love, (with anger itself being the last, since it is the last in order of generation according to Aquinas). In Question 40, Article 1 Aquinas describes hope *vis-à-vis* its object: hope is a passion which after apprehension seeks an arduous future good which is possible to attain. Since the irascible passions always follow upon the concupiscible and, generally speaking, those passions following the good are naturally prior, it follows that the sequence of the irascible passions is as follows: “hope (*spes*) and despair (*desperatio*), are naturally prior to the passions whose object is the bad, viz., daring (*audacia*) and fear (*timor*). However, this is so in such a way that hope is prior to despair, since hope is a movement toward the good as a good that is attractive by its nature, and so hope is a *per se* movement toward the good, whereas despair is a withdrawal from the good – a withdrawal that (a) belongs to the good not insofar as it is good, but insofar as it is something else, and hence a withdrawal that (b) is, as it were, *per accidens*.”²³⁵

Aquinas goes on to conclude this question with Article 4, referring to an inherited tradition which designates joy and sadness, hope and fear as four principal passions. He explains that the enumeration of these passions as principal has to do with the qualities of present and future. Joy and sadness, as we have already encountered, deal with a present good/evil and in this sense they are always final as each movement of a passion necessarily culminates in either. The second pair of passions of hope and fear has to do with the future good/evil – the result of future good is hope and fear is an answer to awaiting evil. And so Aquinas concludes: “Now all the other passions that have to do with a good or an evil that is present or future are traced back to these four as their culmination. Hence, some writers call the four passions in question ‘principal passions’ because they are general.”²³⁶

Lombardo points out that Aquinas’s separation between the passions of hope and daring may pose some philosophical problems to their being considered distinctly.²³⁷ The

²³⁵ *ST* I-II 25.3. None of our primary interlocutors offers a lengthy discussion of hope as passion (with an exception of Miner who offers a presentation of Question 40 of the *Treatise* which discusses the passions of hope and despair together). Aquinas does not devote a large discussion to the passion of hope either. He not only discusses it together with despair, but also discusses the causes and effects under the heading of the same question (while usually devoting separate questions to them). Miner suggests that there might be several reasons for this: first many aspects of hope are already discussed while addressing love and desire; the passion of hope may raise less questions than a corresponding theological virtue of hope which is treated in the *Secunda secundae* and, finally, the historical conversations about the qualities of the passion of hope are not as complex as those concerning love, pleasure, and sorrow, for instance. See Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 215.

²³⁶ *ST* I-II 25.4. Miner points out once more that this kind of ordering of the passions is little indebted to Aristotle: “The continual insistence that passions tending toward good are naturally prior to those which shun evil derives from Augustine and Dionysius, not Aristotle...Inspection of the arguments *sed contra* in Question 25 confirms the point. The first and third Articles cite no *auctoritas*; the second quotes Augustine on the power of love to generate desire and culminate in joy. Aristotle’s authority plays only a small role in securing the architectonic principles that inform Thomas’s ordering of the passions.” Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 87. Miner thus continuously argues that a great deal of Aquinas’s views on the passions is of Platonic origin.

²³⁷ Cf. Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 67.

object of hope is a future object that is judged possible to attain while the object of daring is future evil judged to be possible to overcome. Aquinas, additionally, holds that daring is a result of hope. This, Lombardo argues, seems like a problematic position – if we look at the intentional objects of both (actual objects that define the passions), the intentional object appears to be the same – a future, arduous good which is perceived as possible to attain. For hope and daring to be distinct passions, their intentional objects need to have some intrinsic difference. Lombardo points out that Aquinas attempts to solve this problem by referring to the movement of the passions: hope moves toward the object that is good in itself, daring moves toward the good of overcoming evil. “However,” Lombardo writes, “the object’s arduous quality already denotes the presence of some obstacle, and hope, like daring, necessarily moves toward the overcoming of some evil. So in the end we are left with the tenuous distinction that hope moves toward a good by overcoming an evil, while daring moves toward an evil in order to overcome it and attain some good.”²³⁸ And so Lombardo asserts that it is difficult to see a real distinction between the two intentional objects; ultimately they seem to be the same. According to the principles of his own system, it seems for Lombardo, that Aquinas should not postulate hope and daring as distinct passions, even though he clearly regards them as two different passions.²³⁹

Now, according to Lombardo, there are some other problems with Aquinas’s ordering of the passions. Despair which is discussed together with hope in Question 40 is defined in similar terms as hope itself – despair is an outcome of one losing hope to attain good; thus its object *per accidens* is evil.²⁴⁰ This makes it impossible, Lombardo argues, to distinguish despair from either fear, if we want to see it as an irascible passion, or aversion, if we attempt to construe it as a concupiscible passion (if the intentional object is an arduous future evil – the outcome of Aquinas’s account would be fear, if the evil is not arduous – the consequential passion for this situation is aversion). Lombardo correctly observes that in Question 25, Article 3 Aquinas claims that despair is a cause of fear and so precedes it, but in Question 45, Article 2, he claims the reverse.²⁴¹ There are multiple ways to interpret this contradiction: we can claim that fear and despair are discussed in their relationship from different angles and perspectives; to say that at times one can be the cause of the other and this does not appear to be directly or logically contradictory. But these unresolved tensions signal for Lombardo an inherent ambiguity in the treatment of fear and despair by Aquinas: “The haphazard character of his comments about the relationship between fear and despair suggests that Aquinas’s primary point of reference for his account for despair (which is much less developed than his account of fear) is the

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 70.

²³⁹ Lombardo argues that there are different ways to remain faithful to Aquinas’s phenomenological description of hope and daring, but revises his taxonomy in order to be faithful to the metaphysical principles of the overall account on the passions: “In one model, daring remains the affective movement toward an arduous good, and hope ceases to denote a distinct passion. Hope, instead, names a combination of concupiscible passions: desire for some absent good and pleasure in the mental presence of that same good. Another model defines hope as the movement toward an arduous future good, while daring and anger denote a movement toward the elimination of some present evil, as opposed to the elimination of some future evil that, in this interpretation, would be constitutive of the object of hope. Although this would eliminate any formal distinction between daring and anger, Anna Terruwe, for instance, argues that daring and anger are the same passion[.]” Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 71.

²⁴⁰ *ST I-II* 40.1.

²⁴¹ Cf. Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 71.

phenomenology of the psychological experiences that Aquinas intuitively characterizes as despair, and not the logical implications of his metaphysical principles, despite his interest in making despair fit with the rest of his system.”²⁴²

Miner suggests an alternative interpretation of the relationship between hope and daring and fear and despair. As we have seen, Aquinas defines hope as seeking future, arduous good when one estimates that this good is possible to attain. In Question 45, Article 1 Aquinas defines daring *vis-à-vis* fear and writes: “But what is maximally distant from fear is daring. For fear withdraws from a future harm because of the harm’s victory over the one who fears it, whereas daring attacks the imminent danger for the sake of winning a victory over the danger itself.”²⁴³ Miner does not question whether the intentional object of hope and daring is the same. In this argumentation he wants to show that hope and daring are distinct passions and that daring *can* follow hope. Miner argues: “He now provides a metaphysical explanation. Good is pursued *per se*; evil can be pursued only *per accidens*, on account of some annexed good. Correlatively, good cannot be avoided *per se*, but only *per accidens*, on account of some annexed evil.”²⁴⁴ This means that what is *per se* is prior to something *per accidens*, thus, Miner stipulates, essential pursuit of good is prior to accidental pursuit of evil and essential withdrawal from evil is prior to accidental withdrawal from good (these distinctions are considered superfluous by Lombardo, as he judges hope and despair, for instance, to ultimately correspond to the

²⁴² *Ibid.*, 72. Lombardo observes that Knuuttila also notes the contradiction and suggests that Aquinas mistakes natural precedence with the order of occurrence. This means that Aquinas wanted to say that fear chronologically precedes despair, but is ontologically preceded by it in the case of despair being concerned with good rather than evil. Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 71 footnote 103 referring to Knuuttila, *Emotions*, 246. Lombardo responds that: “Knuuttila seems correct that Aquinas uses precedence equivocally in these different contexts. However, since Aquinas sometimes suggests that despair chronologically precedes fear (ST I-II 25.3, 25.4 obj. 3), Knuuttila’s analysis cannot stand as it is.” Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 71 footnote 103. He once more reaffirms that Aquinas’s account on the relationship between fear and despair strikes one as more impressionistic than logically precise and these ambiguities signal that Aquinas did not fully conceptualize the relationship between the two passions. Further in his discussion he, as usual, offers a remedy to keep the conceptual coherence of the account, since despair together with love and hope seem incapable of being distinct passions because their intentional object is not distinct enough from other passions already accommodating those objects. Lombardo thus suggests that the phenomenon Aquinas calls despair could be reconciled with the logics of his system in the following way – it should be perceived as a combination of two things – “first, the passion of sadness (*tristitia*) in not being able to attain some future good, and second, the experience of the fading of the passion of hope, after its object is judged less attainable than previously thought. So despair would be the fading of hope combined with sadness in the seeming impossibility of attaining a certain good...but this proposal fits well with the logic of his system.” Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 71 footnote 104. This is a curious suggestion because Lombardo just described what we know experientially as an emotion of despair, which Aquinas himself, it would seem, from the same experiential point of view denoted as a passion, but refuses this recognized experience to be a part of Aquinas’s account of emotion. Lombardo is truly after the *logic* behind the Thomistic account of the passions (even though his interpretations suggesting elimination of certain passions belong to the disputable questions and does not represent a scholarly consensus), willing to eliminate elements that clearly respond to experience and allow them to exist not under the names that encapsulate that experience (in this case – despair), but as less self evident elements of other passions (in this case, hope of which legitimacy as a passion he doubted himself). This approach seems to attempt to clear Aquinas’s account from possible incoherencies, but to forget the human relevance and meaning of Aquinas’s thought for today. Sadness and loss of hope seem to correspond to what we commonly know as despair and the relations between it and the other passions that Aquinas suggests are still illuminating for self-knowledge and learning the emotional vocabulary.

²⁴³ ST I-II 45.1.

²⁴⁴ Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 256.

same object). He argues that Aquinas establishes this structure in the following quotation: “These four things pertain to the four passions, for pursuit (*prosecutio*) of good pertains to hope, withdrawal from evil pertains to fear, motion toward the terrible evil (*insecutio mali terribilis*) belongs to daring, and withdrawal from good pertains to despair. Whence it follows (*sequitur*) that daring is consequent upon (*consequitur*) hope, for it is thus that someone hopes to overcome a terrible threatening thing (*terribile imminens*), and thereby attacks boldly (*audacter insequitur*).”²⁴⁵ This, according to Miner, establishes the priority of hope metaphysically and Aquinas reinforces this view again and again rhetorically. Moreover, to claim that the withdrawal from evil *per se* is prior to the withdrawal from good *per accidens* is a way to affirm that fear is prior to despair (as Aquinas does in Question 45). But can this be reconciled with the contradiction already noted by Lombardo that earlier (*ST I-II 25.3*) Aquinas writes that despair is prior to fear? Miner suggests an interpretation which holds that Aquinas arrives at Question 45 after having reconsidered the position in *actu*.²⁴⁶ He suggests that the following passage confirms his interpretation: “Although good simply is prior to evil, yet withdrawal from evil must be prior to withdrawal from good, as the pursuit of good is prior to the pursuit of evil. And thence just as hope is prior to daring, so fear is prior to despair.”²⁴⁷ Miner argues that hope does not have to necessarily result in either daring or despair, likewise, not each case of fear generates despair – it has to be strong.²⁴⁸ Thus Miner concludes: “When an object is regarded as a threatening evil, but the hope for victory is more intense than the accompanying fear, the result is daring. If the fear increases to the point that hope for victory is obliterated, the result is *desperatio*. Thus, ‘properly speaking, daring is not a part of hope, but its effect, just as despair is not a part of fear, but its effect.’”²⁴⁹

3.1.3 Concluding Remarks

Aquinas’s account on the eleven elemental passions divided into the concupiscible and irascible, as many facets of his ethical thought (we think of multiple interpretations of his account of natural law, virtue, human nature etc.), contains ambiguities, especially, in the way one can interpret their intentional objects. Lombardo suggests some critical remarks concerning this matter and while he seems to agree with the argumentation holding the metaphysical background of the account, he holds that the same principles do not allow one to fit certain passions into that account. Miner and Cates follow and defend Aquinas’s logics by trying to defend the position that the passions Aquinas postulates, resonate with our common emotional experiences. We argue that Aquinas’s account in its current form is illuminating for discerning the dynamics of human emotional experience even today. Aquinas presents an account where he conceives of the passions as depending on apprehension of an object. By attempting to show how passions cause each other, he highlights, essentially, their relatedness and the fact that a great number of human

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 256, Miner quoting *ST I-II 45.2*.

²⁴⁶ Cf. Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 256.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 256 quoting *ST I-II 45.2 ad 2m*.

²⁴⁸ Indeed, Aquinas claims so: “And just as despair does not always follow from fear, but only when the fear is more intense, so, too, daring does not always follow from hope, but only when the hope is strong.” *ST I-II 45.2 ad 2m*.

²⁴⁹ Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 258 quoting *ST I-II 45.2 ad 3m*.

emotional experiences depend on the relationship between a person who has an emotion and its object. Aquinas names the first connection between a subject and an object love – this recognized fit between the subject and the object marks the start of the unfolding emotional experience. Cates, similarly, observes that Aquinas’s account provides a helpful structure to discern our emotional lives and at the same time it offers great flexibility.²⁵⁰ Aquinas points out the key motions that can expand in number by identifying their intensity, by further specifying the object and by showing how these motions can be combined in different ways. Cates also argues that the account is particularly illuminating in the way it accentuates the dynamics between the subject and the object – one can apprehend an object in multiple ways, from multiple angles; many of these apprehensions eliciting the motions can be implicit, some of the motions can occur immediately and some unfold during time as they grow from the previous passions. If we see the passions as related, it will be easier to detangle the complex emotional experiences and see how a person can be drawn to different directions by various appetitive motions depending on the assessment of the object.

Aquinas’s account of the passions is common for human and non-human animals. The animal and human passions depend on similar activation mechanisms; they imply similar physiological changes and effects. Cates adds that all beings capable of sensuality are aware that they stand in relation to other things:

As sensory beings, nonhuman and human animals have a lot in common: They share a set of appetites that dispose them to resonate with, to desire, to pursue, and to enjoy what contributes to their sensory well-being. They also share a set of appetites that dispose them to find disagreeable, to be repulsed by, and to resist or suffer in pain what causes them dysfunction and diminishment. To recall Aquinas’s theological frame, nonhuman and human animals both participate as sensory beings in a universe ordered by Love, which is the first principle and final goal of all tending.²⁵¹

The fact that Aquinas construes human and animal sense appetite as being almost identical is another strong aspect of his account because it allows to account for the animality element in our emotions and so is capable of accommodating the basic emotions. However, we should also note that Aquinas considers that human and non-human animals, while similar on the sensory appetite level, nonetheless, are distinct. The activation mechanisms while manifesting similarity are also distinct in the case of human beings. Here, estimative power becomes cogitative which is influenced by universal reason. That means that humans are capable of emoting not only in relatively basic instances (a sudden fright reaction), but in complex social situations (as we will see Aquinas portraying in the description of the passion of anger). Cates adds a very important observation concerning the human-animal case – humans are also aware of themselves undergoing an emotion in the sense that they are capable of detaching from it and evaluating it prudentially and morally.²⁵² And, indeed, Aquinas’s account constructs the passions in such a way that a human person still has the opportunity to not consent and act upon the influence of the

²⁵⁰ Cf. Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 155.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 156.

²⁵² Cf. *Ibid.*, 157.

sensitive motion. These observations lead us to inquire into the relationship the passions have with our intellectual capacities.

3.2 AFFECTIONS OF THE WILL

Before we turn to the question of the relationship the passions have with our reason and will, we need to highlight an important distinction found in Aquinas's thought in order to be able to understand some conceptual distinctions emerging in that discussion. In addition to our prime interest – the passions, Aquinas distinguishes something he calls the affections of the will. We will use Lombardo's account of the category of the affections of the will since he explains it in detail, with conceptual clarity and since neither Miner's nor Cates' accounts offer competing views.²⁵³

²⁵³ We should note that Lombardo has a special interest in the affections of the will because he considers them, together with the passions of the soul, as corresponding to the contemporary account of emotions. Lombardo writes: "Aquinas classifies psychological phenomena such as desire, joy, sadness, fear, anger, and hope as affections, and, when he is more specific, as either passions of the soul or intellectual affections. Since these psychological phenomena are today classified as emotions, it seems at first glance that there is a clear correspondence between Aquinas's category of affection and the contemporary category of emotion." Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 224. Cates equates the passions of the soul and the emotions and leaves affections of the will as a separate category. Her interpretation of the category of affections of the will is essentially similar to Lombardo's: she considers the affections of the will to result from an act of the intellectual apprehension of the intelligible goodness of an object (p. 193). They do not need to be mediated directly by the body (but in intense cases of affections they 'overflow,' 'spill' into the sense appetite (p. 193); they have an active dimension of self-moving (p. 194). In addition, Cates discusses the affections of the will in light of the absence of the body in the state after death and before the general resurrection (p. 90-92). She attributes to God passionless affections (p. 92-95). When it comes to the human experience here and now, Cates furthers that we can make sense of the affections which are purely intellectual acts in light of the understanding that the acts of the intellect and the will are always bound to sensory experience in one way or another. She explains: "Humans rarely wish simply and abstractly to unite with goodness as such. Usually we wish to unite with particular objects in respect of their goodness. In tending toward good things, we tend toward possibilities for ourselves or for others that we cannot help but imagine, in some form, with reference to phantasms, examples, or experiences. If a way of uniting with a prospective good strikes us as significant for our well-being, partly through the use of our interior sensory powers, then our sensory appetite is likely to become engaged...That is, our experience of being perfected in relation to an intelligible good will be accompanied by noticeable bodily changes, such as a heightening of our energy level, a lessening of our awareness of physical discomfort, or a relaxation response." Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 204. Miner, on his behalf, is the most careful in attempts to equate the Thomist passions with the contemporary category of emotions. His task is to discern what the passions mean on their own right and, for Miner, they represent a segment of a long history of philosophical discussions leading from *pathe, passionnes*, to the passions and finally to the emotions. He, however, briefly mentions that the category of *affectiones* has some correspondence with the contemporary usages of the term 'emotion' – Both Miner and Lombardo note that Aquinas's *affectiones*, taken to include both intellectual and sense movements of appetite, indeed, come close to contemporary parlance about the nature of emotions (p. 35-36, footnote 6). Now, when it comes to the category of affections of the will itself Miner follows the lead of King. (Peter King, "Aquinas on the Passions," in Scott MacDonald and Eleonore Stump, eds., *Aquinas's Moral Theory: Essays in Honor of Norman Kretzmann* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), 101-132). He argues that we can label them as pseudopassions – they are analogous to the passions in a proper sense, but the affections of the will pertain to the purely intellectual part of the soul and so they lack bodily dimension. Pseudopassions are proper to God and the angels because they lack a material body. King's distinction is not at odds with Aquinas's own usage of the concepts, Miner suggests, as "Thomas consistently reserves *passiones* for acts of the sensitive appetite. He uses *affectiones* (and, less frequently, *affectus*) for acts that may or may not belong to the sensitive appetite." Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 35.

Lastly, we should note that Aquinas never clearly defines his category of affection, therefore its contemporary interpretations *vis-à-vis* the category of emotions rest on the theory of emotions the author

Aquinas does not explicitly define the category of affection in general thus the exact meaning of it is a work of reconstruction and interpretation. Lombardo suggests that the term affection can serve as a synonym for the passions. It can also indicate the affective movements of the will in humans and in God and angels.²⁵⁴ The affections in God and angels are an important point of reference for Aquinas as they are geared toward explaining the immaterial power of will in humans. Lombardo explains that this analogy is most clear when Aquinas speculates about the nature of the human soul when it is separated from the body after death and not yet rejoined with it in the general resurrection. “The body is dead, yet the soul perdures, and ‘separated souls grieve and rejoice at the rewards and punishments they have.’”²⁵⁵ Aquinas considers that joy and sadness in separated souls are in the intellectual appetite and not in the sense; this is why he also needs to postulate an account of affections which are proper to the immaterial part of a human being. Lombardo furthers that from Aquinas’s writings we can see that all the passions of the soul are affections, but not all the affections are passions. In addition, it also appears to be unclear whether all movements of the will are affections (while it is taken for granted that every affection of the will is a movement of the will). Because of this uncertainty and because Aquinas seems to use the term affection only to describe movements of the will analogous to the passions, Lombardo suggests that “it is also possible that he [Aquinas] would reserve the term ‘affection’ for only those phenomena that somehow resemble the subjective experience of the passions.”²⁵⁶ To avoid any misinterpretation, Lombardo discusses only those phenomena that Aquinas himself describes as affections.

Now when it comes to the intellectual affections themselves, as in the case of the passions, they also respond to cognition (in their case, intellectual affections correspond directly to the intellectual apprehension of an object). Intellectual affections in their structure also parallel the structure of the concupiscible passions – love is the first movement of the affections of the will and it rises from an intellectual apprehension of the good. When the good is absent, the affection of desire (*desiderium*) occurs and the pleasure (*delectatio*) called joy (*gaudium*) is present when the good is obtained and the will can rest

finds the most credible. We should further indicate that Lombardo’s interpretation of the category of affection in a broad sense (including the passions and the affections of the will) being close to the contemporary understanding of the emotions is echoed by several other authors. Carlo Leget, for instance, puts it rather straightforwardly: “The emotions found in the *appetitus sensitivus* are called *passiones animae*. The same emotions insofar as they are found in the *appetitus intellectivus* (the *voluntas* or will) are called *affectus*. This distinction enables Aquinas to clarify how certain emotions (*affectus*) can be attributed to God, angels and demons, although neither of them has a body.” Leget, “Martha Nussbaum and Thomas Aquinas on the Emotions,” 573.

²⁵⁴ Cf. Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 75. Lombardo explains that God, in Aquinas’s thought, does not experience affections in the same way angels and humans do – God is a fullness of being and his affections do not imply potentiality and change. He furthers: “Passions like love and joy are analogously present in God, but passions that imply some imperfection, such as sadness and anger, which each imply the experience of some evil, cannot be analogously present in God; they can be only metaphorically attributed to God.” Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 83. Angels, in Aquinas’s thought, also do not experience passions due to the lack of a body. Yet, Lombardo explains that “[t]heir affections still involve passion in one of the more qualified senses of *passio*, however, because they are creatures, and as such their created appetites are passive powers directed toward goods outside themselves.” Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 83.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 84. Here Lombardo quotes *ST I* 77.8 obj. 5.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 77.

in it. Sorrow (*tristitia*) is a species of pain (*dolor*) and if Aquinas speaks of sorrow as affection of the will, he refers to an interior pain that results from interior apprehension (yet can also accommodate exterior pain). Lombardo emphasizes that “[j]oy is described as a movement of the will, but sorrow is defined as an interior affection without specific reference to the will, and consequently, it is not clear whether sorrow (*tristitia*) is proper to the will in the same way as joy (*gaudium*).”²⁵⁷

Lombardo furthers his inquiry and explains that in one area Aquinas’s distinction between a passion and an intellectual affection becomes especially murky, namely, in Aquinas’s account of the nonnatural passions. We have encountered that natural passions are common to humans and other animals and they respond to objects that are harmful/useful for self-preservation. The nonnatural passions are unique to humans and they stem from an apprehension of objects as harmful/useful through the judgment of reason. By consequence, the passions become responsive to immaterial objects by the influence of reason and the will. Lombardo argues that the category of nonnatural passions seems to accommodate any passion, but Aquinas discusses it mainly through cases of nonnatural desire, pleasure, and fear.²⁵⁸

Aquinas dedicates special attention to nonnatural desire and by taking a closer look at it we can get a sense of the mechanism of other nonnatural passions. Nonnatural desire is inclined toward objects that are seen as pleasurable through a rational judgment of their desirability (instead, of being just pleasing to the senses as in the case of a passion of desire). Lombardo gives an example of a nonnatural desire in the instance of desiring a particular kind of food because it is conceived as particularly tasty or healthy.²⁵⁹ He furthers that Aquinas is not explicit about how the nonnatural desires are formed, but his suggestion is that the nonnatural desires are formed, in time, through activities of reason while intellectual affections are formed into the patterns of nonnatural passions. Lombardo’s argument, then, is that reason and intellectual affections can over time spread throughout the memory and sense appetite. He claims: “Very quickly, a complex web of associations penetrates the sense appetite and forms many nonnatural desires. For the most part, then, with the possible exception of infants and very young children, purely natural desires are rarely experienced.”²⁶⁰

The ambiguity arises because Aquinas never states whether the nonnatural desires are movements of the sense or rational appetites. Lombardo attempts to reconcile the ambiguities found in Aquinas’s writings by suggesting that we should see nonnatural desires as movements involving both the sense and rational appetites. Furthermore, because the same mechanism applies to all of the nonnatural passions, generally speaking, we can apply this interpretation to the rest of the nonnatural passions.

Lastly, we can find yet another doctrine in Aquinas’s thought connecting the affections of the will and the passions, namely, an account of an overflow. Aquinas claims: “There is an overflow in the powers of the soul from the higher ones to the lower ones.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 86.

²⁵⁸ Lombardo indicates the instances in the *Summa* where we can find these discussions: Aquinas discusses nonnatural desire *ST* I-II 30.3-4, nonnatural pleasure *ST* I-II 31.3, 31.7, nonnatural fear *ST* I-II 41.3. See Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 87 footnote 66.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 88. Lombardo takes this example from Loughlin, “Human and Animal Emotion,” 57-58. Lombardo bases a great deal of his analysis of the nonnatural passions on Loughlin’s article.

²⁶⁰ Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 88-89.

Accordingly, the pleasure of contemplating, which is in the higher part, overflows to lessen even that pain that exists in the sensory power.”²⁶¹ Lombardo explains: “According to Aquinas, the will’s loves, desires, and joys, as well as its hates, aversions, and sorrows, can spill over into the passions of the sense appetite by a kind of overflow, because ‘it is not possible for the will to be moved intensely toward something without exciting some passion in the sense appetite.’”²⁶² Again, it is not entirely clear how precisely the overflow works, but Lombardo suggests his own interpretation: “The will first moves the intellect by the vehemence of its affections regarding some objects, so that the intellect causes the particular reason to form an intentional object that engages the passions. This new intentional object then immediately prompts a response from the sense appetite.”²⁶³

²⁶¹ *ST I-II 38.4 ad 3.*

²⁶² Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 89. Here he quotes *ST I-II 77.6*. Lombardo lists the instances of the overflow: “The will’s desire for wisdom or other spiritual goods can spill over into the sense appetite” (*ST I-II 30.1 ad 1*); “the joy of contemplation can sooth pain felt in the senses” (*ST I-II 38.4 ad 3*); “the will’s joy in an act of justice can redound to the passions” (*ST I-II 59.5*); “and in heaven, after the resurrection, though beatitude consists first and foremost of the soul’s vision of God, the intense spiritual joy of the saints will flood their passions and bodies with a kind of overflow” (*ST I-II 3.3, 4.5-6*); “[l]ike spiritual joy, spiritual sorrow can also overflow and affect the passions and the body” (*ST I-II 37.2*). See Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 89-90.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 90. Robert C. Roberts is a scholar who is critical of the overflow doctrine primarily because he thinks that Aquinas locates the passions wrongly in the sense appetite – first, he equates Aquinas’s account of the passions with the contemporary cognitive interpretations of the emotions and argues that even from Aquinas’s own argumentation we can see that the passions are basically rational and their rationality is not derivative, but intrinsic. Roberts furthers that Aquinas acknowledges that some objects of the passions are not necessarily sensory (like the joy of overcoming certain injustice, for instance). He ascribes experiences similar to the passions to God and the angels (and they are beings without bodies, so they cannot experience the changes in the sense appetite); but Roberts judges that Aquinas’s answer for justifying the existence of these phenomena is to deny that they are passions and he construes them, rather, as movements of the will. Roberts further argues that sensory and rational appetites are not as distinct as Aquinas would like them to be since we can find a conviction in Aquinas’s writings that “when the object of an appetitive mental state is intellectual, the state will not be accompanied by bodily changes; and that when there are no bodily changes, the object of the mental state will be non-sensory. But this prediction is not borne out by experience.” Roberts, “Thomas Aquinas on the Morality of Emotions,” 295. Roberts argues that it is evident from our own experience that we can get emotional about the objects that can be present only to our intellect. He writes: “We get to sweating and pumping about theories, injustices, betrayals, guilts, moral improvement, and the kingdom of God. Aquinas responds to this kind of case with the overflow theory: When we have bodily reactions of an emotional sort it is because the movement of the will is so intense that it overflows into the sensory appetite. This certainly looks like an *ad hoc* move to save the faculty psychology. It seems clear that the enterprise of associating emotions with the senses and the body, and dissociating them from reason and the intellect, was a mistake. If so, then we are free to think of the sway that reason has over the emotions not as something extrinsic to them, but as something fundamental to their nature as mental states.” Roberts, “Thomas Aquinas on the Morality of Emotions,” 295-296. Lombardo answers Roberts’s critique by pointing out the distinction between natural and nonnatural passions – the latter allow passionate reactions to immaterial objects. Furthermore, Lombardo reminds us that Aquinas explicitly argues that we know immaterial objects through phantasms – a concept that stands for a kind of interior image of a material object – thus our intellect does not know objects without mediation of phantasms. This is another way to show why passions are, indeed, responsive to concepts – “[s]ince concepts are known through phantasms abstracted from material objects, they are directly related to sense experience and thus the sense appetite, and so it follows naturally that the passions might respond to the apprehension of a concept.” Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 91. Miner, on his own right, responds that while Roberts raises some important points to join the complex discussion, it seems that some of his critique is rooted in a misinterpretation of the sense appetite as Aquinas ascribes a large role to the intellective apprehension in an activation of some of the passions. Miner claims: “Aquinas does not reduce the passions to instinctive reactions that are impermeable to rational apprehension. King rightly concludes that for Aquinas ‘the passions are not, after all, similar to our reactions

Can we say that Aquinas considers that we can experience an intellectual affection without any kind of overflow to the sense appetite? In many instances, as in this one, there are various interpretations,²⁶⁴ but Lombardo chooses to follow the line of thought arguing that we, indeed, can experience an affection of the will without an accompanying passion. He chooses this interpretation on the basis of the textual evidence and also because the separation between an affection of the will and a passion, for him, constitutes an important aspect of human experience. It allows one to have affection for divine things without undergoing a bodily change (*ST* I-II 22.3). Furthermore, it explains a reality of emotional conflict – Lombardo locates it within competition between the will’s and sense appetite’s desires. His argument is that by our own experience we know that our will’s desires and the passions do not always move in tandem; additionally, we can experience good and bad feelings toward the same object on different levels.

4. THE PASSIONS, REASON, AND WILL

Now much of Aquinas’s arguments about the relationship between the passions and reason and will can be found in Question 81 of the *Prima pars* discussing the sentient appetite in general. In this question Aquinas, as we remember, divides the sense appetite into the concupiscible and irascible powers. In Article 3 of this question he goes on to express his views on the way sensitive and intellective powers of the human being interact. In this key passage Aquinas claims:

[I]n man the estimative power is replaced by the cogitative power, which some call ‘particular reason’ because it brings together intentions of individuals (*collativa intentionum individualium*). This is why the sentient appetite is apt to be moved by the cogitative power in a man. Now particular reason is itself apt to be moved and directed by ‘universal reason,’ and so there are syllogisms in which singular conclusions are derived from universal propositions. Thus, it is clear that universal reason gives commands to (*imperat*) the sentient appetite, which is divided into the concupiscible and irascible, and that this appetite obeys it.²⁶⁵

Now Aquinas goes on to solidify his argument with an appeal to common experience, stating that we can observe the relationship between reason and the passions in situations where through the application of universal consideration, (thus actually deliberating about the case) the passions of anger and fear (and other passions) can be mitigated and instigated.

When it comes to the relationship between the passions and the will, we have already encountered in the discussion above that one of the ways in which rational and sense appetites interact is through ‘a kind of overflow’ where the affections of the will ‘spill’ into

to hot peppers. They can be affected by reasons and beliefs,’ while remaining motions of the sensitive appetite (1998, p. 131).” Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 38 quoting King, “Aquinas on the Passions,” 131.

²⁶⁴ Lombardo draws our attention to the competing accounts of Shawn Floyd who argues that we always experience affections in combination with the passions. On the other hand, Daniel Westberg claims that we can find evidence in Aquinas’s works that we experience passionless affections. See Shawn D. Floyd, “Aquinas on Emotion: A Response to Some Recent Interpretations,” *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 15 (1998): 161-175 and Daniel Westberg, “Did Aquinas Change His Mind about the Will?,” *The Thomist* 58 (1994): 41-60.

²⁶⁵ *ST* I 81.3.

the sense appetite and cause its movement. Question 81, however, offers a claim that passions can be related and subjected to the will also in terms of execution. Here Aquinas claims that other animals are immediately moved upon the movement of the sense appetite, but this is not the case in humans. “By contrast, a man is not immediately moved by an appetitive act of the concupiscible or irascible powers,” Aquinas writes. “Rather, he awaits the command of the will (*expectatur imperium voluntatis*), which is a higher appetite.”²⁶⁶

Aquinas goes on to explain the way reason and the passions communicate and use the Aristotelian image of the despotic and political rule. He holds that the latter describes the relationship between the sense appetite and reason. Aquinas furthers that the body is ruled by the soul by the despotic rule, whereas reason rules the appetite with ‘a constitutional and royal rule:’

Despotic rule is that by which someone rules slaves, who do not have the ability to resist the ruler in any of his commands, since they have nothing of their own (*quia nihil sui habent*). By contrast, political and royal rule is that by which someone rules free men, who, even if they are subject to the rule of the leader, nonetheless have something of their own (*habent aliquid proprium*) by which they are able to resist the leader’s command...By contrast, the intellect, i.e., reason, is said to rule the irascible and concupiscible powers with constitutional rule, since the sentient appetite has something of its own by which it is able to resist reason’s command. For the sentient appetite is apt to be moved not only by the estimative power in other animals and the cogitative power (which is ruled by universal reason) in man, but also by the power of imagining and the sensory power. Hence, we experience the irascible and concupiscible powers resisting reason when we sense or imagine something pleasant that reason forbids, or something unpleasant that reason prescribes. And so the fact that the irascible and concupiscible powers fight against reason in some cases does not rule out their being obedient to reason.²⁶⁷

These are key passages to engage in further discussion on the ways reason (and the will) interact with the passions. We will begin our conversation with Uffenheimer-Lippens who represents a model of interpreting the passions as standing in a very close relationship to reason and arguing that the rationalization of the passions is an aim of the Thomistic account on human affectivity. Uffenheimer-Lippens, it seems, ends up advocating an ambiguous position where passions can be considered as an integral part of the human being only if they lose their distinctiveness as embodied movements of the sense appetite. Then, we will move to Lombardo’s thought. This author is fascinated by the fact that in Aquinas’s account, passions obey reason, but argues that the passions cannot be shaped into any form we desire as they have a definite structure. Lombardo suggests a positive perspective, where reason does not suppress the passions, but trusts their inclination to seek its guidance. Cates continues along the positive interpretation path and reminds us that we should approach Aquinas’s thought on the reason/passions relationship with an image of balance in our minds. Humans are intellectual and sensual beings and these separate, but communicating powers, ultimately, penetrate each other. From his perspective, Miner takes an original look at the political rule metaphor and suggests that we should further inquire what the passions on their own right, as free subjects, contribute

²⁶⁶ ST I 81.3.

²⁶⁷ ST I 81.3.

to our rational capacities. At this point, we will turn our discussion to inquire into the possibility of affective knowledge in Aquinas's thought.

Uffenheimer-Lippens argues that the relationship between reason and the passions rests on Aquinas's understanding of rationality: "According to Thomas, 'rational' refers not only to that which is rational *per se*, in itself, or essentially, as is man's [*sic*] intellect (*intellectus*), reason (*ratio*), and will (*voluntas*). 'Rational' is also that which participates in reason."²⁶⁸ Her argument is that it is by this that human beings differ from non-human animals – we are distinguishable not only by what is essentially reasonable but also by what participates in rationality. The sensitive soul thus by its definition participates in rationality. When Aquinas argues that we can look at the passions in two ways – as far as they are common to humans and other animals and as far as they are naturally directed by reason, Uffenheimer-Lippens interprets that only the second case sufficiently highlights the distinctively human character of the passions. Uffenheimer-Lippens suggests that Aquinas does not want to merely show that the passions are common to humans and other animals. Her thesis is that he employs this argumentation, rather, to highlight the impulsive character of the passions in the absence of reason. Thus, human beings have distinctively human passions that have very little to do with the passions of the non-human animals.

Uffenheimer-Lippens further argues that by its very structure the sense soul is inclined and open to the guidance of reason. She also holds that sense appetite is directly related to reason and the will. "With respect to sense-knowledge, Thomas holds that imagination (in the sense of fantasy) and the sensitive power of judgment (*vis cogitativa*) have an immediate contact with universal reason,"²⁶⁹ Uffenheimer-Lippens writes. Sense appetite, in turn, is related to the will in terms of execution, as it ultimately needs an approval of the will.

However, we also experience that the passions are not perfectly attuned to our reason and will; thus, Uffenheimer-Lippens attempts to give an explanation to the disorderly experience of the passions. Her argument is threefold: first of all, the passions sometimes feel unpredictable because they are reactions to the external world of changing objects. Secondly, they have a relationship to the body and this makes their relationship to reason imperfect. Ultimately, however, original sin is the cause of the rebellious character of the passions because it broke the harmony within human nature (that is, the perfect relationship between reason and the rest of the human capacities). Uffenheimer-Lippens argues that this interplay between inclination of the passions to obey reason and a certain freedom they possess, gives rise to the political rule metaphor. She, nonetheless, argues that the very possibility of the inner structure of the passions being open and inclining to the rule of reason indicates several important theses:

First, it indicates that man [*sic*] does not have to be subject to his passions as such. The immediacy of his reaction to external stimuli can be broken. Human beings can wait in order to react to the world. They can respond at a future point of time and in a different place. Passions are most certainly not instincts.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁸ Uffenheimer-Lippens, "Rationalized Passion and Passionate Rationality," 542.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 543.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 543.

For Uffenheimer-Lippens, the passions are indicators that a human being is a ‘frontier’ being – an intellectual being standing in the material reality. A passion, the author stresses once more, contains in itself rational elements (understood as an act of cogitative power activating the passion) and irrational elements (understood as an unpredictable character caused by the external object), the work of reason as a political ruler over the passions is precisely to increase their rational character and level down their uncontrollable, unpredictable aspects. “This can only be done,” Uffenheimer-Lippens writes, “by changing passion from a mere reaction-action into a reaction-action that fits in with the overall goals of human nature.”²⁷¹ This is a curious comment because the whole Uffenheimer-Lippens’ exposé is geared toward showing that the passions are not ‘just mere reaction-actions,’ thus how can they be changed from something they are not in the first place? Uffenheimer-Lippens attempts to explain that a passion is a spontaneous reaction of the sense appetite to the sensible object and reason cannot control the external objects. Reason can only influence the passions by influencing the evaluations of the knowledge that give rise to the passions – thus reason can break the immediacy of this reaction. Uffenheimer-Lippens continues with her discussion indicating that reason’s political rule over the passions indicates “that reason is given a controlling and governing role with regard to the passions of the soul. Such a role presupposes not only that the passions can be controlled but also that they need to be.”²⁷² Control, Uffenheimer-Lippens highlights, does not mean extirpation. In Aquinas’s thought it refers, rather, to mitigation. The role of reason is not to make the passions disappear – its role is to ‘rationalize’ them. She writes:

This means the development of their original capacity for responding to the command of reason. Only these ‘rationalized’ passions are natural for man as man [*sic*], that is, as a rational being. Those passions that transcend the limits of reason are *contra naturam* for man.²⁷³

The rationalization of human affectivity, for Uffenheimer-Lippens, means that we need to learn, through our rational capacity, to react to the external stimuli appropriately. Reason can introduce elements of reflection, distance, delay and most importantly moderation of the excessive aspect of the passions.

Now we have seen that Uffenheimer-Lippens associates the excessive character of the passions with their link to the body, their dependence on external objects, and original sin. First of all, we should be aware that an argument stating that the passions are uncontrollable because they have a link to our body is an argument that can be easily misinterpreted – we should not forget that even though they can be reactive to reason, the passions in their essence are embodied responses. Furthermore, to argue that they are problematic because of their relation to the body is not to take seriously and give its right dignity to our embodiment. Another aspect of Uffenheimer-Lippens’ account that seems not to be entirely loyal to the nature of the Thomistic passions is the sharp line she draws between human and other animal passions. She argues that Aquinas in many cases presents the human and other animal passions identically, not to show that we have the same

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 546.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 547.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 548.

reactions to the external world, but to highlight their urgent, unpredictable character. Yet, the mainline reading of the fact that in the *Treatise* itself, especially, in the discussion on the passions Aquinas does not make a clear distinction between human or other animals' passions is indicative of the fact that they are, indeed, very similar in their structure.²⁷⁴ This is not to deny that there are distinctively human passions and their object can be significantly more complex, yet, these passions rest on the same mechanisms as the passions of non-human animals. To claim that the passions are only welcomed if they mimic reason, is not to venerate their distinct role in created human nature (and note, in Catholic teaching, created as good).

Moreover, to suggest that Aquinas speaks of human and other animal passions as similar just to indicate their uncontrollable character is to deny our rightful kinship with other animals. Aquinas suggests that human beings have three kinds of appetites which in their essence show how we are similar to the rest of creation and even God himself. Natural appetite shows how we are linked with the non-living things, our sense appetite shows how we are akin to the other sensible beings, our rational appetite resembles a certain kind of similarity to our Creator. All these appetites are embraced by reason as the highest capacity of the human person. Thus, from this perspective Uffenheimer-Lippens' interpretation is surely correct. But the way she attempts to reach this conclusion seems not to adequately respect the unique composition of the human person with his/her diverse powers. Reason, virtue, and grace bring human nature to its perfection by harmonizing it as gentle caregivers that do not demolish its essence. Looking at it from this perspective, Uffenheimer-Lippens' interpretation in certain aspects may seem like suggesting 'rationalization' (the term itself is indicative) of the passions in a suppressive way by not respecting their distinctive character, even though the aim of the article is clearly to vindicate the passions from the negative interpretations and their integration within the framework of human striving for fulfillment.

Lombardo joins the discussion with the statement that Aquinas argues that the passions have certain autonomy, but paradoxically it is inclined to reason's service.²⁷⁵ He argues that in Aquinas's thought we can find a conviction that any cognition-dependent appetite, sense as well as the will, is moved by reason. Thus in the case of human passions they can be 'rational in participation.'²⁷⁶ Lombardo notes that the fact that the passions tend to reason's command does not entail that they can be passively molded as 'a lump of clay' in to any shape we desire. Sense appetite responds to reason on its own terms, since it has 'something of its own.' For Lombardo, the idea that passions, in their inner structure, tend to guidance of reason represents a central idea of Aquinas's account and also serves as one of the most exceptional features of it.

Now when it comes to the relationship of particular reason and universal reason, Lombardo holds that even though universal reason has an oversight of the cogitative

²⁷⁴ Cates explicitly explains this issue in chapter 5. *Approaching the Human Sensory Appetite from Below (I)* of her book.

²⁷⁵ Cf. Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 94-95.

²⁷⁶ Lombardo claims that the phrase 'rational in participation' is derived from Aristotle's *Ethics*, I.13, 1102b13, b26, b30. Examples of it can be found in the Summa *ST* I-II 56.4 ad1, *ST* I-II 56.6 ad 2, *ST* I-II 60.1. He also refers us in this regard to the research of Uffenheimer-Lippens, "Rationalized Passion and Passionate Rationality," 542-547 and that of Gondreau, "The Passions and the Moral Life," 435. Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 95 footnote 8.

power, “[i]ts [universal reason’s] judgments, however, have to be applied by engaging particular reason; its conclusions do not penetrate particular reason automatically.”²⁷⁷ Again, Lombardo wants to highlight that universal reason does not have an absolute control over the passions and it cannot change their original structure. Universal considerations can influence the cogitative power’s evaluations of objects and thus formation of intentions that elicit the passions but there are limitations to particular reason’s ability to reinterpret the input of sense perception.

Lombardo interprets the metaphor of the reason’s political rule of the passions in light of the argument that reason is the higher power that can affect the sense appetite even though it has a freedom of its own. He argues that Aquinas trusts the basic orientation of the passions and their inclination to be guided by reason. Thus Lombardo argues that the metaphor of the political rule: “[B]eautifully captures some key points that are central to Aquinas’s account of the passions: the passions operate independently of reason, but nonetheless are inclined to obey it, and yet if reason attempts to rule the passions like the soul rules the body, the passions will erupt in rebellion. Furthermore, the metaphor implies that the inclinations of the passions are basically legitimate, just in need of some guidance.”²⁷⁸ And so Lombardo finishes his discussion with a claim that “[v]irtue consists not in the forced submission of passion to reason, or the evisceration of passion into something manageable, but the rational ordering of the various faculties toward flourishing.”²⁷⁹

Now when it comes to the relationship between the passions and the will, Lombardo briefly asserts that the passions are subject to the will in terms of execution – will has to consent to the movement of the sense appetite (though, there are exceptions where through bodily indisposition the appetite can overwhelm the power of will). Lombardo’s argument, however, is that will cannot affect the passions in the way reason does. He concludes: “But though the will qua will does not shape the actual passions, the will is important to reason’s modification of intentions, since it can command universal reason to saturate particular reason with its conclusions: ‘The sense appetite does not obey reason directly, but through the mediation of the will.’”²⁸⁰

Cates comes to aid our discussion by pointing out that the various powers we are discussing ultimately belong to the *person*. Her argument goes on to highlight that we are embodied beings who live through engagement of our sensory powers, but we are also intellectual beings and this mode penetrates the way we emote. Cates writes:

It is in the midst of all of this dynamic, reciprocal, causal activity that emotions are best located. Emotions are well construed as features of our sensory or animal nature, yet as humans our animal nature is informed by an intellectual principle, which means that we typically respond to sensible particulars in ways that are both like and unlike the ways in which wolves, sheep, and other animals appear to respond to what matters to them. Indeed, humans are highly advanced intellectual beings who can register and respond to what we believe to be beyond all sensory experience.²⁸¹

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 97.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 100.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 101.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 98 referring to *ST II 46.4 ad 1*.

²⁸¹ Cates, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 237.

She further notes that because of the object-orientedness of the passions they will reveal a certain influence of reason (reason, after all, can influence the formation of the intentional content of some passions).²⁸² The fact that we are highly cognitively advanced animals makes it possible to be observers of our own emotional functioning and to a certain degree determine it.

Cates follows the argument of Lombardo and Uffenheimer-Lippens that for Aquinas the passions can *participate* in reason. For Cates, the passions participate in reason through the formation of its intentional content – primarily through activity of cogitative power, but also through high-level activities of memory and imagination. “Activities of the cogitative power, or ‘particular reason,’ are rational inasmuch as they operate like – and also combine in seamless ways with – the activities of ‘universal reason,’” Cates writes, “most notably the activities of understanding and practical reasoning. Activities of particular reason are rational also in that they are ‘naturally guided and moved according to the universal reason.’”²⁸³ Some of reason’s guidance of the passions can be a deliberate activity of the self, but most of it just happens during a matter of course – our thinking of the particular situation affects our sensory powers.

In addition to the participatory character of the relationship between reason and the passions, Cates argues, that reason can also influence the sense appetite by *persuasion*. This means, that one has a power to direct other capacities of oneself to agree with the judgments made. This is a similar argument to the one we saw Uffenheimer-Lippens making – one, as an intellectual being, can take a step back and look at one’s own situation and the passions one is experiencing. According to Cates we can alter our emotional states in the following way: “By reflecting upon the way in which a sensible object currently appears, by noticing that it is possible to look at that object from a different perspective, and by *directing* oneself to look at the object from a new perspective, turning one’s interior sensory powers toward different features of the object, one is sometimes able to alter one’s emotional state.”²⁸⁴ This means that reason can persuade the passions to re-appropriate their object but it does it by directing the interior senses to present and re-present the object to the appetite until the movement itself is altered (we can also be moved by the apprehension of the universal reason, but its apprehension has to be presented as something particular in order to set sense appetite in motion). This, once more, shows that Aquinas construes objects of emotions flexibly. To put it in a nutshell, Cates argues that reason can affect the passions at the stage of their formation (the participation stage) and after the passion is already formed (the persuasion stage). That means that because of our intellectual capacities reason can affect passions when we are not thinking of them directly, but we are also able to engage in conscious management (to a certain extent) of our sensory powers.

When it comes to the will’s influence on the passions, Cates interprets that the role of the will is to move and/or motivate the other human capacities. The will cannot prevent the movement of the sentient appetite from arising but it exercises the capacity to consent or

²⁸² Cates utilizes the terms reason and intellect interchangeably, though, she tends to use the term intellect more frequently. For the sake of coherence of our text we continue to use the term reason.

²⁸³ Cates, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 215. In the quotation Cates refers to *ST I* 81.3.

²⁸⁴ Cates, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 216.

not to consent to it. Cates suggests that we can look at the will consenting to the passion as an intellectual love – one recognizes its intelligible goodness, thus, its worth to his/her overall course of life and rests with a consenting pleasure in it. Once our will rejects a particular passion, effectively, it hates the passion intellectually, Cates argues.

Miner joins this discussion by agreeing with the core of the above discussed authors' arguments – the passions of the rational human being can be considered as lying under the command of reason and will. He, however, suggests an interpretation of the meaning of reason's political rule over the passions as not being accurately understood as a paradigm for control in the history of Thomistic thought.²⁸⁵ Miner holds that Aquinas clearly argues that sense appetite is subordinated to reason, yet he also holds that the distinction between despotic and political rule is very illuminating to the nature of their relationship. Passions are subject to reason; they obey it, but in the same way free citizens obey their rules. Considered from this perspective, Miner argues that the relationship between reason and the passions cannot be adequately described in terms of control. He considers that the Thomistic passions have a curious in-between status because they are neither rational volitions nor sheer bodily reactions.²⁸⁶ Miner adds that while thinking of the implementations of reason's political rule, we often forget to consider not only the aspect of a certain freedom of passions to resist the rule, but also that they can contribute something positively. "As free citizens contribute something of their own to the life of the well-governed polis," Miner writes, "beyond what is already known or prescribed by the rulers, so the passions are able to contribute 'something of their own,' as Aquinas says (1.81.3 ad 2m) to the life of the human being."²⁸⁷ Miner maintains that this analysis does not spring from the desire to romanticize passions; he holds that it is contained in the image of the political rule.

4.1 THE INFLUENCE OF THE PASSIONS ON REASON AND THE WILL AND A POSSIBILITY OF AFFECTIVE KNOWLEDGE IN AQUINAS'S THOUGHT

Miner's discussion builds a bridge to look at what the passions themselves can contribute to our cognitive capacities. If the passions have a certain relationship with reason and will, this by definition indicates they also contribute, both positively and negatively, something to it. Our discussion partners primarily highlight some better-known aspects of the passions' contribution to reason. Lombardo acknowledges that an ideal relationship between reason and passions is a fluid one: "Moreover, while the passions sometimes

²⁸⁵ Some examples of reason/passions' relations as control according to him are these: Mark Jordan, "Aquinas's Construction of a Moral Account of the Passions," *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 33 (1986): 96–7; Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, 257–62; King, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 126; Murphy, "Aquinas on Our Responsibility for Our Emotions," 174. Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 106 footnote 23. He considers Sweeney as an interpreter who does not follow this path and quotes her writing: "What Aquinas does not do is express any fundamental distrust of the passions or engage in any heavy-handed appeals to the need for rational control of the passions." Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 107 quoting Sweeney, "Restructuring Desire," 222.

²⁸⁶ Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 107; the observation that the passions get an in-between status comes from the insights of Pasnau. See Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, 257.

²⁸⁷ Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 107.

hinder the use of reason, sometimes they sharpen it, too, since ‘pleasure that follows the act of reason, strengthens the use of reason,’ and moderate fear concentrates the mind.”²⁸⁸

Cates notes that reason and will have only limited possibility to affect the passions and because these distinct capacities can interact in the first place, their relationship is inevitably reciprocal. She wants to highlight some possible negative influences the passions can have on our reason and will. According to Cates, the passions themselves “can exert an influence on the intellect and the will so that, for example, sometimes a judgment or piece of reasoning by which one seeks to shape a given emotion has already been shaped by that emotion and ends up functioning in the emotion’s service.”²⁸⁹ An intense passion can indeed consume one’s awareness so intensely that our entire perception becomes colored by the logics of that passion. Cates furthers: “This sort of collapse of the interior space of one’s moral agency can occur with many emotions, but Aquinas thinks it occurs most often with pleasing sensory-appetitive motions that have a strong material component, for ‘we attend much to that which pleases us.’ He notes that ‘if [a] bodily pleasure be great, either it entirely hinders the use of reason, by concentrating the mind’s attention on itself; or else it hinders it considerably.’”²⁹⁰ When we are overwhelmed in a powerful way by certain sense images, it is partially a problem of distraction. Cates also notes that the Thomistic passions can mislead not only by way of distraction but also by way of opposition; this resembles a psychological process of rationalization. Due to a power of overwhelming attraction which stems from the sense judgment and in turn reinforces it, one tries to find reasons why the sensible good is also actually intelligible good. Additionally, we can find Aquinas arguing that reason can be shadowed by a strong bodily transmutation. Here again, the main argument is that the strong working of one capacity (remember, the passions always occur through the bodily change for Aquinas), can overwhelm the other and leave it confused for a moment.

Those were highlights of the negative impact the strong movement of the sense appetite can have over reason and will. Cates wants to additionally note that Aquinas mentions some positive contributions the passions can add to reason and the will. It is important to highlight that if “an emotion arises and persists in a manner that one judges rightly to be appropriate to the situation, and one therefore gives it one’s consent, it enhances one’s agency and perfects one morally.”²⁹¹ Even the well-ordered passions can alter the way we perceive objects, but in this case it can work for one’s benefit. Cates suggests looking at the simple example of the parent’s love for a child. This passion can also assume a significant place for our awareness. It also highlights attractive qualities of the object, but in a case of well-ordered passions this intensity will serve virtue. “Consider,” Cates writes, “the way a parent’s love for a child can cause the child to appear especially beautiful and wonderful, and it can make it easier for the parent to do the daily work of caring for that child.”²⁹² Thus, our virtuous passions aid us going about our daily lives by giving support and motivation to continue. This leads to a second aspect Cates

²⁸⁸ Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 101 quoting *ST I-II 33.4 ad 1* and indicating Aquinas’s views on the sometimes positive effects of fear taken from *ST I-II 44.4*.

²⁸⁹ Cates, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 229.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 230-23. Here Cates quotes *ST I-II 33.3*.

²⁹¹ Cates, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 230.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 230.

notes about a positive influence of the passions on the will – when aroused, sense appetite also energizes the will and makes it more pleasant to continue certain operations. Cates observes that Aquinas focuses on instances where extreme passions can hinder the acts of reason and will – if one makes distorted intellectual judgments about the goodness of some union with the desired object, if reason prompts misguided motions of the will that can eventually yield regrettable actions, actions that set one off from true happiness, it is didactically wise to show that the passions, indeed, have this power. “Yet it is an important part of his ethic that well-ordered emotions are a reflection of goodness. They also motivate the further cultivation of goodness[,]”²⁹³ Cates highlights. In this instance, Cates quotes Aquinas arguing: “[W]hen by a judgment of reason the will chooses anything, it does so more promptly and easily if in addition a passion is aroused in the lower part, since the lower appetitive power is closely connected with changes in the body. Thus Augustine says: ‘The movement of pity is of service to reason when pity is shown in such a way that justice is preserved.’ And this is what the philosopher also says, bringing in the verse of Homer: ‘Stir up your courage and rage,’ because when a man is virtuous with the virtue of courage the passion of anger following upon the choice of virtue makes for greater alacrity in the act.”²⁹⁴

Now Miner suggests that “Aquinas considers the passions to play an important role in elevating the power of human cognition.”²⁹⁵ His aim is to inquire whether the passions can suggest something distinctly qualitative that goes beyond their motivational capacity. He thus writes: “For Aquinas, a primary task in the moral life (perhaps even *the* primary task) is to make the ascent from the condition where the sensitive appetite is an obstacle for the will to overcome, to a better condition where the passions gladly serve reason. This means that reason must govern the passions, without ruling them despotically.”²⁹⁶ Miner wants to further inquire into the reciprocal relationship between the passions and our intellectual powers and to think of the ways the sense appetite contributes something positive and distinctively its own that goes beyond motivational dimension and aids qualitatively in guiding us to the final *telos*. For Miner, this unique contribution takes place primarily through the passion of love which is at the root of every passion – “[i]f directed by reason, the energy provided by the sensitive appetite can deepen the love by which the rational creature is drawn to her end.”²⁹⁷ We have discovered already that Miner interprets the passion of love as the most potent passivity through which God can be active in our lives; sense love, additionally is the source of *dilectio*, rational love.²⁹⁸ Miner puts in a nutshell, what he interprets to be very essential to the Thomist line of thought:

The power of God to draw creatures to himself by sensible means exceeds the power of human reason. Thus the passion of love cannot be neglected by the rational creature in her motion toward God...The teaching that rational love grows, and can only grow, out of sensitive love

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, 237.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 235 quoting *Truth* 26.7.

²⁹⁵ Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 88.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 94. Lombardo appears to agree with this interpretation. He suggests the ‘matter of morals’ for Aquinas is our cognition and our appetites in their operations. Lombardo claims that Aquinas makes “affectivity, and especially its flourishing, a major organizing principle of theological ethics.” Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 200.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 95.

²⁹⁸ See section 3.1.1.2 *Is Sense Love a Distinct Passion?* of this chapter.

may be surprising. It disturbs the conventional wisdom that what is most relevant for the rational creature's motion toward the end is the love associated with the rational appetite.²⁹⁹

Miner wants to highlight, once more, that this is the reason why Aquinas devotes such a large part of the *Summa* to the discussion about the passions – he judges them to be very significant in our life's journey. Yes, Aquinas points to the ways they can be dangerous and distract us from the attainment of the ultimate happiness, yet Miner interprets (as we also have seen Lombardo arguing) that the passions contain significant potency to serve as a vital energy on the creature's movement to the end.

Miner wants to further his inquiry and ask whether the intelligent direction of the passions we have just discussed can alter the capacity of the human being to know? Can we say that the passions have a positive, cognitive value? We will discuss the moral quality of the passions in the upcoming section but for now it is important to emphasize that Aquinas does not seem to ascribe value to 'raw' passion, that is, to the passion that is not guided and disciplined by reason. In this instance, Miner argues that we need to distinguish between the ungoverned passion that has difficulties getting things right and the immediate passions of the virtuous person. "Part of what makes the virtuous person genuinely virtuous, as opposed to merely continent," Miner writes, "is that her initial emotional reactions do (by and large) get things right."³⁰⁰ Now the question is in the actual meaning of it: can we say that the virtuous passions mirror our cognitive judgments? On the other hand, can we say that they contribute to the acquisition of this judgment? It is a matter of debate, as is the case with many aspects of Aquinas's ethical thought, whether he would embrace affective knowledge, but Miner makes a step to argue that it seems that Aquinas in fact does. He cites an older essay by Victor White centered on the question of Thomism and affective knowledge to search for support for his argument.³⁰¹ He is critical of the contents of the essay insofar as they attempt to show modes of knowing in Aquinas's writings that are not reducible to speculative knowledge, referring more to experience, habits and intuition than the passions themselves. Yet, one mode suggested by White – the knowledge through love (*per amorem*) – refers to the knowledge that the passions can offer. When discussing the passion of love, we found Miner arguing that love requires a certain knowledge of a thing, but ultimately it outruns knowledge (we were given examples of a parent's love of a new born baby and believers' love of God).³⁰² Miner thus judges love to be a vital prerequisite of knowing in Aquinas's thought. In other words, his argument is that, according to Aquinas, we cannot divide knowledge and the passion of love as if true knowledge is a thing that could be acquired apart from love. Thus Miner concludes: "For Aquinas, attributing genuine cognitive value to the passions does

²⁹⁹ Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 95-96.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 97.

³⁰¹ Miner cites White declaring: "An intellectualist philosophy which is content to ignore or make light of affective experience is not only doomed to impermanence, it must forfeit the claim to be either truly intellectualist or truly philosophical. If intelligence is to be arbiter it is self-condemned if it must confess itself unable to account for the most vital and intimate forms of personal experience. If philosophy is by definition a system of universal applicability, if it is to explain to use the ultimate reasons of all things to the extent that these are discoverable by human powers, it follows that a system which must exclude affective knowledge can make no valid claim to be strictly philosophical (1943, p. 9)." Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 98 referring to Victor White, "Thomism and 'Affective Knowledge,'" *Blackfriars* 24 (1943): 9.

³⁰² See section 3.1.1.2 *Is Sense Love a Distinct Passion?* of this chapter.

not require that a passion accompany every act of ‘real’ knowledge. It lies, rather, in the fact that if one does not love a science or a person, the knowledge that one has of that science or person will inevitably be superficial, since one lacks the incentive for the seeking required to deepen one’s knowledge.”³⁰³

At this point we should highlight that theologians like Daniel C. Maguire, Charles E. Bouchard, O.P., and Thomas Ryan S.M., explore the dimension of affective knowledge in Aquinas’s writings. They all carefully note the problem of textual evidence in this regard and the lack of a systematic approach to affective knowledge in Aquinas’s thought, but, nonetheless, they consider that Aquinas’s treatment of the passions, virtues, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit allows one to stipulate such an account.³⁰⁴ We argue that they, like Miner, suggest that the first basic instance of affective knowledge is connaturally of love (*amor*) which is described as the first attraction or the pull toward happiness. Ryan describes it “as an attachment to an object arising from the sense that there is a natural ‘fit’ between the object and oneself.”³⁰⁵ Ryan argues that a passion for Aquinas “is a mode of knowing, a being affected by, and responding to, an object. An emotion is a form of affective knowing or appreciation – a blend of awareness (apprehending an object), of the intentional, the bodily, and the affective, which coalesce as an interactive response to value or disvalue.”³⁰⁶ A raw passion does not indicate connaturality and in order to be rightly ‘attuned’ it needs guidance of the right reason and virtue. Only in this way can it aid practical reason and guide us to true fulfillment. Thus, the passions signify the first level of our affectivity, and Maguire, Bouchard, and Ryan in their research go on to focus on the transformation of our affectivity through virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The main idea guiding their line of thought is the claim that ethical thinking, in its very nature, is not only a rational and analytical endeavor having the clarity of a natural science, they are convinced that one of the main elements of ethics, practical reason, “is not just a function of intellection, but also, in some way, of volition and affection.”³⁰⁷ Our transformed affectivity gives rich material for our ethical reflections and our ethical thinking in turn forms our affectivity. Maguire goes on to claim that:

Without that affective base to our moral knowledge, morality would be meaningless...Does this

³⁰³ Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 98. Lombardo also briefly notes the possibility of affective knowledge in Aquinas’s thought. He writes: “There is a sense in which virtuous passions impart ‘affective knowledge’ that assists moral decision making, so that the right choice is selected not just by the judgment of reason, but by the instinctual response of passions. Aquinas does not employ the concept of ‘affective knowledge’ frequently, but it is not foreign to his account: he explicitly speaks of *cognitio affectiva* when writing about kinds of knowledge of God.” Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 106; he refers to *ST II-II 97.2 ad 2* and *ST II-II 60.1*.

³⁰⁴ We should note that ascribing the affective dimension to Thomistic ethics is not uncontroversial. Scott Davies can serve as an example of a very sharp critique to Maguire’s approach (and so by consequence, the argumentation of Bouchard and Ryan as they build some of their essential arguments on the thought of Maguire). He claims that Maguire’s ethics present a distorted portrayal of Aquinas’s thought. It rests on the incoherent account of practical knowledge and “like previous forms of emotivism, it lacks the critical leverage necessary to distinguish between the description of our emotions, actions and responses and their judicious assessment.” Scott Davies, “Morality, ‘Affectivity,’ and Practical Knowledge,” *Modern Theology* 10 (1994): 77.

³⁰⁵ Ryan, “Revisiting Affective Knowledge,” 54-55.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 53.

³⁰⁷ Daniel C. Maguire, “*Ratio Practica* and the Intellectualistic Fallacy,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 10 (1982): 25-26.

mean or imply that ethics is ultimately arbitrary and at the mercy of the vagaries of feeling? No. But it does imply with Blaise Pascal (1965: nos. 277 and 282) that ‘we know truth, not only by the reason, but also by the heart.’... It makes us look to the mystical, the mysterious, the religious, and the contemplative capacities of the human spirit in assessing the full import of the moral.³⁰⁸

Generally speaking, the writings of these three authors also show a great interest in a renewed pneumatology and a search for the crossing points for spirituality and ethics. Bouchard argues: “For a number of reasons, a renewed pneumatology would enrich moral theology. The first and most important reason is that the Holy Spirit can help make morality theological, by linking it more closely to systematic and Trinitarian theology and also to spirituality which has become a distinct discipline.”³⁰⁹ He furthers that focusing on our intellect, will, and affectivity transformed by the gifts of the Holy Spirit opens a gate to make ethics more biblical³¹⁰ and thus opens topics about attitude and character formation. This consequently, would affect pastoral dimensions of Catholic theological ethics and would contribute to the renewal of Christian anthropology. This particular way of constructing projects of a theological, ethical nature seems to be a promising path, especially, if we are concerned with character formation in all its dimensions. We will briefly come back to the topic on the transformed affectivity at the end of this chapter and will continue this discussion in Chapter IV.³¹¹

4.2 MORALITY OF THE PASSIONS

Now because Aquinas makes explicit links between the passions and reason and the will (note that the domain of the rational and willful is the domain of the moral), we should not be surprised that he inquires attentively into the morality of the passions. Question 24 is devoted to discerning the moral status of the passions; thus Article 1 of the question asks whether we can say that passions are morally good or bad? Aquinas claims that we can look at the passions in two ways – consider them separately as the movements of sense appetite and look at them in connection with reason and will. Now, if we look at the passions abstracting them from the person who experiences them – they do not get moral character.³¹² But once we think of them as communicating or refusing to communicate with reason and will then they can be called morally good or bad. Aquinas, hence, writes:

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 36.

³⁰⁹ Charles E. Bouchard, O.P., “Recovering the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Moral Theology,” *Theological Studies* 63 (2002): 556.

³¹⁰ Bouchard claims: “The gifts are enumerated in Isaiah 11 and are at the heart of the Gospel of John and the letters of Paul who invokes them not only in the service of individual moral growth in Christ, but in the service of the growing ecclesial community. In addition, many treatments of the gifts, including that by Aquinas, link each of the gifts to one of the Beatitudes.” Bouchard, “Recovering the Gifts,” 557.

³¹¹ See sections 4.3 *The Passions, Habit, and Virtue* and 4.4 *The Passions, Sin, and Grace*. Here with the guidance of Lombardo we will discuss the flourishing of human affectivity (as Miner and Cates, in the works of our prime interest, do not go beyond the discussion of the passions and the role they, as such, play in ethics). In Chapter VI we will discuss our suggestion on educating the passions through prayer.

³¹² Lombardo suggests that we should interpret the passions considered in themselves as a philosophical construct, an abstraction that does not exist in reality. Once we speak of the concrete passions of a particular individual they always have a moral character because they are inevitably connected to reason and will. See Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 111. Miner, on his behalf, suggests that the passions in themselves are purely acts that we share with other animals as they represent certain motions of irrational appetite. He points out that for Aquinas another perspective of the passions that are distinctively human is available – “The

For the sentient appetite is closer to reason and will themselves than are the exterior members of the body, and yet the movements and acts of the exterior members are morally good or bad insofar as they are voluntary. Hence, a fortiori, the passions themselves, insofar as they are voluntary, can be called morally good or morally bad. And they are called voluntary either because they are commanded by the will or because they are not prohibited by the will.³¹³

Article 3 goes on to ask whether every passion is morally evil? Here Aquinas presents a discussion between the Stoics and the Peripatetics drawing attention to the core arguments of each school. The Stoics, as we may remember, considered a soul to be a one rational faculty entity; thus they considered the passions to be the irrational disturbances, sicknesses of the soul. The Peripatetics, who divided the soul into three parts (and as we have seen, Aquinas follows them), on the other hand, claimed that the passions moderated by reason are good. Aquinas, again, holds this opinion to be correct. He thus concludes: “Insofar as the passions of the soul lie outside the order of reason, they incline one toward sin; however, they pertain to virtue insofar as they are ordered by reason.”³¹⁴ Aquinas, then, with the first three Articles establishes three essential points: passions are not morally neutral, passions are not morally evil and thus the goal of morality is not the extirpation but moderation and cultivation of the passions.

Now in a Article 3 Aquinas inquires into the passions’ role in the goodness of the action. Does a passion diminish the moral goodness of an act? If we think of the disordered passions, they, indeed, diminish the moral goodness of an act. Yet if we think of passions as orderly movements of the sense appetite the contrary appears to be true. Aquinas claims: “[T]hen it is part of the perfection of the human good that these passions should themselves be moderated by reason. For since a man’s good lies in reason as its root, this sort of good will be more perfect to the extent that it is able to flow into more of the things that belong to a man.”³¹⁵ By this Aquinas confirms that in their structure the passions incline to the good and the governed passions contribute to the moral goodness of an action by being ‘an extra dimension’ penetrated and regulated by reason. Miner points out that we should understand Aquinas correctly in this case – he is not inquiring into the passion as a motivational power, he is asking whether a passion can enter a moral quality of an act.³¹⁶ And thus Aquinas’s analysis of the morality of the passions tackles a far more fundamental question on the nature of the passions. And his answer indicates that the presence of a reasonable passion will increase the moral quality of an act.³¹⁷

passions in rational creatures may be considered – and must be considered – as ‘lying under the command of reason and will’ (*subiacent imperio rationis et voluntatis*) (24.1.co)...The authority *sed contra* for every Article of Question 24, not coincidentally, is Augustine’s *De civitate Dei*. Regarding human passions, Augustine says: ‘They are evil if our love is evil; good if our love is good’ (24.1.sc.1.) Placed under the command of reason and will, the passions cannot be morally neutral.” Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 89. Here he refers to *ST I-II 24.1*.

³¹³ *ST I-II 24.1*.

³¹⁴ *ST I-II 24.2*.

³¹⁵ *ST I-II 24.3*.

³¹⁶ Cf. Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 91.

³¹⁷ Thomas Ryan, for instance, argues that the passions are integral to the moral act: “Consequent emotions contribute to the goodness of an act in two ways: firstly, by an overflowing of intensity downwards so that the emotion is both the result of the will’s orientation to goodness and a sign of the action’s greater worth. Secondly, the intensity of an action may result from a deliberate decision to cultivate a certain emotion

Aquinas discusses several ways in which the passions can be related to reason. The first way is antecedental – this indicates that a person acts out of the passion, instead of from a judgment of reason and so “it is more praiseworthy for someone to do an act of charity because of reason’s judgment than to do it solely out of the passion of pity (*miser cordia*).”³¹⁸ This kind of action out of passion diminishes the moral goodness of it.³¹⁹ Lombardo urges us to be attentive at this point – these kinds of passions primarily signify the dissonance with the pre-existing inclinations of the will and affections.³²⁰ The passions can also be related to reason consequently. Aquinas argues that this can happen in two ways:

(a) *by way of redundancy* – specifically, because when the higher part of the soul is intensely moved toward something, the lower part likewise conforms to its movement. And in such a case the passion that consequently exists in the sentient appetite is a *sign* of the intensity of the will’s act.

(b) *by way of choice* – specifically, when a man chooses by reason’s judgment to be affected by some passion, in order that he might act more promptly because of the sentient appetite’s cooperation. And in this way a passion of the soul *adds* to the action’s goodness.³²¹

The first case is the case of volitions resonating with the sense appetite, the second

precisely to do what is good more promptly and with greater commitment. When the emotion, in either form of influence, is attuned to the will’s choice, in Aquinas’ view there are psychological and physical reverberations that facilitate and enhance the moral act. Understood thus, emotions are integral to moral growth and integration.” Thomas Ryan S.M., “Aquinas’ Integrated View of Emotions, Morality and the Person,” *Pacifica* 14 (2001): 63.

³¹⁸ *ST I-II* 24.3.

³¹⁹ Lombardo suggests that we should be attentive when thinking of the moral quality of the antecedent passions: “Knowing that pity prompted someone to be generous does not, of itself, tell us whether that pity diminishes or increases the moral value of the generosity. If one is moved by pity despite one’s normal volitional disposition, then the passions is antecedent, and therefore diminishes the goodness of the moral act. If one is moved precisely because previous acts of kindness have formed an attentive disposition to the needs of others, then the passions is consequent, and therefore increases the virtuousness of the generosity.” Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 111.

³²⁰ Lombardo writes that “Aquinas’s few scattered comments about antecedent passions mostly seek to explain why sins committed out of involuntary passion are less grievous than fully deliberate sins, not how passions relate to subsequent virtuous acts. When this context is overlooked, it is easy to misinterpret ‘antecedent’ as signifying simply chronological precedence.” Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 110 footnote 84. Lombardo locates two sources of antecedent passions; original and personal repented sin. He argues that the passions generated by personal unrepented sins are consequent in Aquinas’s thought; when the personal sins are disowned they can still cause disordered passions but antecedently. Thus Lombardo argues: “Our disordered choices permeate our passions through vice, so that even after we decide to change our behavior, our passions may still show their influence. For example, the reformed binge-eater is likely to struggle with strong temptations to gluttony, and these temptations, insofar as they are movements of the sense appetite, are antecedent passions. Antecedent passions manifest the material dimension of human affectivity: even after their objects have been abandoned by the will, reason’s past penetration of the sense appetite remains to some extent, thus generating these antecedent passions.” Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 110. This seems an insightful comment on complexity of the mental life and can serve as an illuminating thought for anyone seeking a better self-understanding. Lombardo points out that in the research on Aquinas’s thought on the antecedent passions it is not uncommon to interpret them from the chronological perspective and consequently claim that the moral goodness of an action is diminished if it follows from the prompting of a passion. He refers to Richard K. Mansfield, “Antecedent Passions and the Moral Quality of Human Acts According to St. Thomas,” *Virtues and Virtue Theory: Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 71, ed. Michael Baur (1997), 221-231; and Pasnau, *Aquinas on Human Nature*, 262-263 as examples of it. He also shows that Knuuttila in *Emotions*, 253 disagrees with this line of interpretation.

³²¹ *ST I-II* 24.3.

case illustrates the case of a passion moderated by reason entering the morality of an action.

In Article 4 Aquinas asks whether we can say that any passion is good or evil in its species? Here he repeats his argument – if we speak of a passion in its natural genus, we cannot talk about morality of a particular passion. If we speak of the passions in its moral genus – in connection to reason and will – we can, indeed, speak of the moral character of a passion. In the later case the passion gets its moral quality from its object. In this case, the passions are said to be morally good or morally evil *per se* and not *per accidens*. “The passions that tend toward a good are good if it is a genuine good,” Aquinas writes, “and so are the passions that withdraw from a genuine evil. Conversely, passions that withdraw from a good and approach an evil are bad.”³²²

4.2.1 Normativity of the Passions

Lombardo suggests an interpretation of the nature of the generic and specific passions Aquinas distinguishes in Question 24. He notes that a typical interpretation of the generic passions claims that they are morally neutral.³²³ Many of these interpretations are correct as far as it goes – a generic passion is a theoretical construct which does not exist in reality and it cannot get a moral quality because, as we have seen, the passions are specified by their objects.³²⁴ Lombardo’s aim is to highlight the possible problems of arguing that the generic passions are morally neutral – if we understand the generic passions to be neutral in a sense of them not having any intrinsic relation to the moral characteristic of good and evil, then, this interpretation is incorrect. He points out that Aquinas considers the generic passions neutral because they do not have a specifying object, but that does not mean that they bear no relation to moral value. Lombardo suggests describing the generic passions as morally normative, instead of morally neutral to avoid misinterpretations of the concept. This means that a generic passion has a certain inner structure which comes into fruition when that passion obtains a definite object and becomes part of our experience. Lombardo points out that in this instance we should think of Aquinas’s positive metaphysics of appetite which directs us to our flourishing. “Since the passions in their inner structure are directed toward our flourishing,” Lombardo argues, “and since moral goodness consists precisely in that flourishing, moral goodness is the default orientation of generic passion, even though generic passion is not itself morally good.”³²⁵ Lombardo furthers that a

³²² *ST I-II* 24.4.

³²³ He gives examples of the articles of Judith A. Barad, “Aquinas on the Role of Emotion in Moral Judgment and Activity,” *The Thomist* 55 (1991): 403; Leo Elders, *The Ethics of Aquinas: Happiness, Natural Law, and the Virtues* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2005), 98-99; and Gondreau, “The Passions of the Soul,” 392-393 as typical cases of this kind of interpretation. Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 111 footnote 87. We could add that if we look not only in the specialized literature but also into general introductions to Aquinas’s thought the tendency is even more prominent. As a telling example, Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung, Colleen McCluskey, and Christina Van Dyke argue that “[i]n and of themselves, passions are neither good or bad; they are simply feelings that arise in us in response to various situations we face in our daily lives. They are morally neutral.” Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung, Colleen McCluskey, and Christina Van Dyke, *Aquinas’s Ethics. Metaphysical Foundations, Moral Theory, and Theological Context* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 88.

³²⁴ Cf. Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire* 111.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, 112.

generic passion has a specific internal structure and the moral quality of a particular passion is measured against it and not against any kind of abstract moral code which has nothing to do with the character of the generic passion itself. For instance, “[g]eneric sadness – that is, the conceptualization of the essential structure of sadness – plays an essential role in determining the moral quality of specific instances of sadness.”³²⁶ Lombardo also notes that when we think of the inner structure of the generic passions, we cannot conceive it independently of the guidance of reason – the sense appetite, after all, is naturally inclined to it in Aquinas’s thought. At this point one of the most essential arguments of Lombardo’s work re-emerges – the conviction that Aquinas’s thought shows immense trust in the passions. A proper ordering of the passions is conceived in terms of their inner structure and not an ethical system extrinsic to the nature of the passions. Lombardo even furthers that Aquinas, in fact, roots natural law in the appetites and tendencies of the human nature.³²⁷ And so our inclinations constitute the natural law:

In this understanding of natural law, the various commandments contained in divine revelation are not in tension with either natural law or our natural inclinations. Rather, the divine law of the Old and New Testaments complements natural law by pointing our desires more explicitly toward their authentic fulfillment. Divine law does not thwart desire. Divine law educates desire.³²⁸

Here Lombardo makes a move to advocate a traditional understanding of the natural law where the precepts are not based only on our rational capacity to direct ourselves, but also on the natural inclinations of the human person. We cannot even attempt to reconcile the many interpretations of the actual meaning of the natural law, yet we want to highlight that Lombardo’s argument is not geared exclusively to support the traditional doctrinal teaching on the natural law – his argumentation, together with Aquinas, shows extraordinary trust in the passions and human desire as part of the good creation. Lombardo’s aim is to demonstrate that the actual desires and cares we have are the starting point of Thomistic ethics. Thus Lombardo finishes his argument by writing:

The passions in their basic tendencies are not just oriented toward virtue and human flourishing; they constitute an indispensable norm and measure of natural law. Those choices that direct the passions toward their proper *telos* are morally good, and those choices that misdirect them are not. For Aquinas, natural inclination is law, and therefore so too is generic passion, that is, the passions themselves in their inner structure.³²⁹

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, 113.

³²⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 114. Lombardo is well aware that the contents of the natural law theory belong to the disputable questions. He explains that his interpretation of the natural law is similar to the one found in Pamela M. Hall, *Narrative and the Natural Law: An Interpretation of Thomistic Ethics* (South Bend, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994). Lombardo quotes Hall’s writing: “Aquinas holds that any knowledge of the natural law must be derived in part from desire for the goods to which men and women are directed by their natures; this form of directedness is in fact the primary sense of natural law for Aquinas. This means that people judge what is, or is not, in accordance with the natural law in part by deciding which actions are, or are not, conducive to those goods they so desire... The core sense of natural law is, as I have argued, exactly this for Aquinas: a kind of theology in human nature possessed within the *inclinationes*” (97-97, 99). Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 115 footnote 95.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, 115-116.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 116.

Lombardo puts an emphasis on the human in our thinking of ethics. While it surely prompts further questions on what qualifies as genuine desire and in what terms we define human flourishing, it also suggests a common ground for ethical discussions with a significant human interest as it attempts to build ethics on actual cares of a person (and this kind of ethics is likely to resonate with the experiences of people).

4.2.2 *Responsibility for the Passions*

As we have established that the passions have a strong relationship with our reason and will, and furthermore belong in the domain of the moral, we have to approach a critical question of responsibility for the passions and inquire whether and in what form we can think of accountability for the passions in a Thomistic framework. Murphy suggests some essential considerations on this topic.³³⁰ She starts her argument by pointing to the fact that Aquinas did not work out an explicit account on the responsibility of the passions himself – he does not directly ask whether the passions are voluntary, neither does he clearly distinguish between the acts that are voluntary and the acts we are held responsible for.³³¹ Yet, Murphy also argues that it is clear that Aquinas thinks that we are responsible for the voluntary acts. Furthermore, even though he does not inquire into the voluntary character of the passions, he, nonetheless, asks a number of related questions (many of them, especially on the relationship between the passions and reason and will, which we have already encountered in the above discussion) which allow Murphy to stipulate her account. We have seen above that Aquinas holds that the passions are subject to moral evaluation as they are subjects to reason and will and so Murphy argues that “since he maintains that moral evaluation is appropriate only when the agent is responsible for the action or state of affairs being evaluated, the conditions which he takes to be sufficient for moral evaluation are sufficient for responsibility.”³³² Murphy’s account, then, rests on the argument that when passions are in communication with reason and the will we can discuss our responsibility for them. To put it in a nutshell, Murphy argues that:

Passions are subject to the rational part of the soul (both reason and will) – that is, we are responsible for our passions – because they are capable of being affected by reason and will in different ways. It seems to me that Aquinas describes two broad ways in which passions are capable of being affected by reason and will: externally – when a passion is already occurring, it can be affected by reason and will – and internally – when reason’s or will’s activity gives rise to a passion. Both internal and external capacities for being affected yield responsibility for the passion.³³³

³³⁰ Murphy thinks that Aquinas’s category of the passions alone cannot be equated with a contemporary category of the emotions as she sides with the contemporary philosophy that conceives emotions as involving cognitive states. She argues, however, that “Aquinas’s passions, taken together with their proximate cognitive cause, make up a complex that could match our understanding of ‘emotions.’” Murphy, “Aquinas on Our Responsibility for Our Emotions,” 168. Thus the core arguments of Aquinas’s account on the passions can be applied to our contemporary concept of emotions. We should also note that all three authors – Lombardo, Cates, and Miner utilize Murphy’s article as an important source. Miner explicitly engages a presentation of Murphy’s article (Cf. Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 100-106). Since it does not move far away from the main argument, we will present the original source only.

³³¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 173.

³³² *Ibid.*, 174.

³³³ *Ibid.*, 175.

Murphy argues that the passions that are moved by reason seem to fit the category of both, internal and external responsibility and the passions that are subject to the will yield only an internal kind of responsibility.³³⁴

4.2.2.1 *Classifying the Passions: The Reason-Dependent Passions*

Now we have already encountered some contours of Murphy's arguments in our discussion on the relationship between the passions and reason.³³⁵ Murphy's core argument stems from a conviction that the passions cannot only be responsive to reason after their activation, they themselves can be responses to our reasoned judgments and volitions. The passions that stem from their own mechanisms (imagination and sense impressions) can be at a later point, responsive to reason, but the passions which occur through mediation of cogitative power already are responses to reason internally. Murphy claims: "He [Aquinas] holds, rather, that when they [the passions] are caused by a reasoned judgment, we are responsible for them in the intrinsic way, whereas when they are caused by the imagination and the sensory cognition, if we are responsible for them at all, it will have to be in a different way: that is, because they could have been controlled by reason's influence, because they are constitutionally responsive to reason."³³⁶ She thus classifies the passions into two major groups: the reason-dependent passions and reason-independent passions – the first group implies the account of internal responsibility and this means two things for Murphy: "[T]hat passions can be aroused spontaneously by a reasoned judgment or a volition, and that this constitutes a sufficient condition for our being responsible for those passions."³³⁷

³³⁴ Murphy uses the following text as a paradigm of the way the passions and reason are connected: "The lower appetites, that is, the irascible and the concupiscible, are subject to reason in three ways. (1) First, of course, in connection with reason itself. For since the same thing considered under different descriptions, can be made either pleasurable or horrible, reason proposes to sensuality, through the mediation of imagination, some thing under the aspect of a pleasurable or a sad thing, in accordance with the way it seems to reason, and thus sensuality is moved to joy or sadness...(2) Second, in connection with the will. For in human beings, powers that are connected and ordered to one another [are such that] an intense movement in one of them, and more especially one that is higher, overflows in the other. That's why, when the movement of the will, through a choice, is focused on something, the irascible and concupiscible follow the movement of the will...And in this way, it's clear that the irascible and the concupiscible are subject to reason, as well as sensuality." Murphy, "Aquinas on Our Responsibility for Our Emotions," 174 quoting *ST I-II 6.2 ad 3*. Murphy notes that Aquinas is not entirely consistent in explaining his categories when it comes to the passions being subject to the will – sometimes the passions are portrayed as subject to the will as they overflow from intense movements of the will and in other passages the passions are said to be subject to the will in terms of execution – no external action can stem without consent of the will. Murphy chooses to interpret that "the passions' being subject to the will (2), on the other hand, seems to fit only the category of passions' being subject to reason internally. The will's activities somehow, through some mysterious psychological connection, yield passions of various sorts." Murphy, "Aquinas on Our Responsibility for Our Emotions," 175. The extrinsic account of responsibility points to reason moderating the passions after they have occurred; intrinsic account points to the passions as responses to the acts of reason and will – they occur because of these activities.

³³⁵ See section 2.1.2 *Apprehensive Powers of the Sensitive Soul* of this chapter.

³³⁶ Murphy, "Aquinas on Our Responsibility for Our Emotions," 177.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 175.

Murphy suggests a careful and in-depth interpretation of the reason-dependent passions. She bases her suggestion on the following paradigmatic passage from Aquinas's writings:

A passion of the lower appetite can follow from something apprehended by the intellect in two ways. [1] In one way insofar as that which is understood by the intellect as a universal is represented in the imagination as a particular thing. And in this way the lower appetite is moved—e.g., when a believer accepts with his intellect the intelligible notion of future punishments and forms phantasms of them by imagining the fire burning, the worms gnawing, and other things of that sort, from which there follows the passion of fear in the sensory appetite. [2] In another way, insofar as the intellectual appetite is moved by an intellectual cognition, from which, by some sort of overflow (*redundantia*) or command, the lower appetite is moved along with it.³³⁸

Murphy construes the first instance [1] of the reason-dependent passions as a conscious construal of evaluations of object/situation in imagination which follows a general evaluation. These passions are reason-dependent in an obvious way, Murphy claims, as they “will be caused by a judgment or volition as an object of the judgment or the volition.”³³⁹ This is not a case of spontaneous passion as a response to the object of intellect, but it is a conscious response to reasoned judgment by having volition to experience such a passion. Murphy additionally argues that these types of passions do not always need to be consciously evoked; they can also arise without conscious effort as a response spontaneously translating the general judgment into a particular one. These kinds of passions, she argues, are barely distinguishable from the second type [2] occurring through the overflow. Murphy writes: “Since all acts of will are based on judgments of reason, a passion of type (2) will depend not only on a volition but on the judgment of reason upon which the volition depends. As far as I can see, a passion that follows on a volition through overflow is no different than a passion that spontaneously arises on the basis of a reproduction of a reasoned judgment in imagination.”³⁴⁰

In addition, Murphy offers some further classifications of the reason-dependent passions. Firstly, they depend on a final judgment and not on a tentative judgment.³⁴¹ Murphy comes to this conclusion because Aquinas usually associates reason-dependent passions with volitions (as the overflow doctrine illustrates, they come to be through the strong affections of the will or are commanded by reason or will), but volitions depend precisely on our final and not on the tentative conclusions and preliminary reasoning about an object. In other words, Murphy's argument is that in Aquinas's thought only final judgment and not the reasoning process will yield a volition. By consequence, the passions that can be called truly reason-dependent will follow the same mechanism. She furthers that Aquinas additionally holds the reason-dependent passions to be caused by the judgment of reason, which also indicates that they tend not to be aroused by provisional reasoning, but by a conclusive judgment. Murphy indicates one extra qualification for a passion to be considered reason-dependent – it has to relate to volition *per se* and not *per*

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 178. Here Murphy quotes *QDV* 26.3 *ad* 13.

³³⁹ Murphy, “Aquinas on Our Responsibility for Our Emotions,” 178.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 178-179.

³⁴¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 180.

accidens. A *per se* relationship is the relationship of similarity, thus the attitude of the passion resonates with the attitude of the volition. A *per accidens* relationship signifies incompatibility – where the content of the passion is in dissonance with the content of the volition. A passion, hence, is reason-dependent “when it is related *per se* to a volition, that is, when the evaluative cognition that is the proximate cause of the passion is a particularization of the deliberated judgment of reason.”³⁴² In this case, the passion and the volition are both responses to judgments that differ only in their generality. In a nutshell: “A reason-dependent passion, then, is one that is psychologically caused by a reasoned judgment or a volition, in such a way that the judgment of particular reason is a particularization of the reasoned judgment, and the attitudes produced by each judgment respectively in the will and the sensory appetite are alike.”³⁴³

Murphy further briefly points out that Aquinas seems to argue that a passion can be reason-dependent even when it is not caused by an act of reason. She quotes Aquinas claiming that a passion can be consequent to a reasoned judgment in these two ways: “In one way, through overflow...In the other way, through choice – I mean when a human being chooses, on the basis of reasoned judgment, to be affected by some passion, so as to act more promptly, with the cooperation of the sensory appetite.”³⁴⁴ Murphy’s interpretation is that here Aquinas is not describing a causal relationship but rather points to a mechanism of choosing to be effected by a passion because one approves of an already occurring passion which is different from choosing to elicit passion. Murphy concludes: “Rather, in this case, the passion is reason-dependent because it is the object of an approving or endorsing judgment from reason, and of an endorsing volition from the will. So passions can be reason-dependent either by being caused by a reasoned judgment, or by being the object of an endorsing judgment and volition.”³⁴⁵ In discussing the reason-dependent passions, we could claim, Murphy’s aim is not to attempt to show that all passions are reason-dependent (on the contrary, she argues that some are elicited independently by imagination and sense cognition, as we have seen) – she wants to demonstrate that at least some of the passions are, indeed, related to our cognitive capacities in complex and delicate ways. Consequently, in the case of these particular passions we can speak of moral responsibility for them in quite univocal terms.

4.2.2.2 Responsibility for the Reason-Dependent Passions

Murphy stipulates her account of the intrinsic responsibility for the reason-dependent passions basing it essentially on Aquinas’s thoughts on human freedom of choice. To capture the core of Murphy’s argument:

This should make it obvious why Aquinas thinks showing that passions are reason-dependent is sufficient for showing that we are responsible for them. A passion that is reason-dependent is caused *per se* by a free judgment (a judgment that is the product of reason’s capacity for deliberation, or could have been modified as a result of such deliberation). Unlike the will, which responds to free judgments directly, the sensory appetite responds indirectly, through the

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 182.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 183.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 183. *ST* I-II 24.3.

³⁴⁵ Murphy, “Aquinas on Our Responsibility for Our Emotions,” 183.

mediation of the particular reason and the imagination. But I don't see why this mediation would make a difference where the freedom of our volitions and passions is concerned. Therefore, we are responsible for reason-dependent passions because they are caused *per se* by evaluations sensitive to deliberation.³⁴⁶

The above claim rests on several presuppositions. Firstly, Murphy equates the freedom of human choice with the freedom of deliberation about what should be done or pursued. Thus, elicited acts of the will are free if judgments that give rise to them are free. Murphy continues:

What guarantees that all human beings have such freedom of judgment is that all human beings have the ability to deliberate about objects and actions and their own judgments. Because we have the ability to deliberate, we can see and weigh the good and bad features of things, actions, and judgments. Because we have the ability to deliberate, we can revise our bad values. All rational agents have the ability to deliberate and to come to the (or one of the) correct decision.³⁴⁷

Now we can say that free human acts are those over which we have control, thus our willed acts (the things we choose, want, intend), they are our direct choices. This group of acts, Murphy argues, represents consciously commanded phenomena. She furthers that Aquinas seems to include in the group of commanded acts of will the “acts that follow from elicited acts of will without being the objects of the act of will.”³⁴⁸ The overflow doctrine is a paradigm of such acts and Murphy groups them as acts of unconscious commands (the passions in question, we should highlight for clarity, are caused by reasoned judgment and a volition but they are not themselves objects of the will, they share the same object with an act of the will). Murphy argues that Aquinas's texts show that the passions are subject to both – conscious and unconscious commands. It is more clear how we are responsible for consciously commanded acts of will and passions (in this case, the object of the will is a passion itself). When it comes to the case of the unconscious command, Murphy explains: “If we are responsible for the movements of the will themselves, which are reactions to intellectual judgments, then it seems probable that we will be responsible in the same way for movements of the sensory appetite that are responses to reason-dependent evaluations (that is, to evaluations that are themselves caused by intellectual judgments). So our responsibility for unconsciously commanded acts of will should be similar to our responsibility for elicited acts of will.”³⁴⁹

4.2.2.3 Responsibility for the Reason-Independent Passions

Murphy continues her account by suggesting a delicate and multilayered interpretation of how we could be responsible for those passions that were not caused by an act of reason. Her starting point is to show that we can still talk meaningfully in terms of responsibility even when we discuss the spontaneous reason-independent passions. Murphy points to the

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 188.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 187.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 185.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 186.

fact that Aquinas claims that spontaneous passions can be sinful.³⁵⁰ Sinful is a moral qualification, Murphy argues, thus we can talk about our responsibility for the reason-independent passions. In what sense can we say that we can be held accountable for something which was not caused by deliberation? Murphy quotes another piece of textual evidence from Aquinas's writings: "A movement of the sensory appetite is sometimes aroused suddenly, in response to imagination or sensory cognition. And in that case, such a movement occurs without the command of reason, although it could have been prevented by reason if it had been foreseen."³⁵¹ Thus Murphy argues that we can see from Aquinas's texts that he holds that we can still be responsible for the passions that could not have been altered before their occurrence. Thus in this case, she stipulates an account of counterfactual control based on Aquinas's teaching on indirectly voluntary acts.³⁵²

In addition, Murphy works out an account of the foresight of an occurrence even of a spontaneous passion: 1) one can foresee what kind of objects one is likely to encounter; 2) one can foresee how one will react when/if he/she will encounter these objects. A person who has both kinds of foresight will have a very strong degree of an ability to manage his/her spontaneous responses and this strong foresight consequentially will yield a strong degree of responsibility for them. The case of possessing both kinds of foresight not only depends on a good self-knowledge, it also cannot occur very often because in many cases we do not know what we will encounter.

In addition to an account of the strong foresight, Murphy suggests insights on the weaker form of foresight which is based on self-knowledge – one can foresee how he/she will react to certain objects. If one knows that he/she possesses a habit of certain excessive passions one can try to manage it – one can willfully attempt to break the vicious pattern by particularizing a new, deliberated judgment and so attempt to gain a new virtuous, emotional habit. Murphy puts her account in a nutshell:

Therefore, the consequence of weak foresight is that we are (at least partly) responsible for any of our passions that arise because of our habitual disposition to feel such passions (they are indirectly voluntary because we have counterfactual control over them). The consequence of strong foresight is that in the rare cases where we can foresee our future circumstances, we are (somewhat more fully) responsible for the passions that arise as a result of the combination of these circumstances with our habitual dispositions to undergo passions in such circumstances.³⁵³

Murphy, however, is quick to nuance her account – yes, it seems to her that many of our emotional reactions are the way they are because of the habitual disposition we acquire or, in other words, they depend on our moral character. Yet she also acknowledges that passions can be products of momentary dispositions and moods and in this sense we do not have even a weak sense of foresight. Additionally, the foresight itself, weak or strong, does

³⁵⁰ Murphy quotes Aquinas's writing: "We don't say that there's sin in sensuality because of the implied consent of reason, since when a movement of sensuality [that is, a passion] precedes the judgment of reason, there is no consent, whether implied or expressed. But because sensuality can be subjected to reason, it has the defining characteristic of sin even if its act precedes reason." *QDV 25.5 ad. 5* quoted in Murphy, "Aquinas on Our Responsibility for Our Emotions," 191.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 191 quoting *ST I-II 17.7c*.

³⁵² Indeed, Aquinas claims that "something can be called voluntary directly or indirectly. That which the will seeks is directly voluntary; that which the will can prevent but does not is indirectly voluntary." *ST I-II 77.7*.

³⁵³ Murphy, "Aquinas on Our Responsibility for Our Emotions," 193.

not yield an automatic counterfactual manageability – even if the person possesses a foresight in a weak sense there are cases where he/she cannot do anything about the disposition and this is a consequence of the fallen, injured human nature. Murphy writes: “In fact, Aquinas recognizes that even the ideally moral person, one who is completely virtuous in both secular and religious senses will, upon coming across unexpected situations, undergo irrational emotions. In such cases where foresight does not guarantee control, the person is not responsible for her reason-independent spontaneous passion.”³⁵⁴ Murphy’s account, then, accommodates a large range of passions and suggests levels of responsibility for them, including a possibility that in some cases we just cannot alter our spontaneous passions. Her account allows that a person would not be held responsible for the first stirrings, movements of the disorderly passions (yet Murphy adds that while some reason-independent passions are genuinely beyond our control, if they last longer than just a moment and we do not act against them, they enter the domain of our accountability).

Murphy argues that when spontaneous reason-independent passions are already occurring, we can find a conviction in Aquinas’s texts that we have a very limited possibility to manage them. At this point we can see that Aquinas suggests that to calm the already occurring spontaneous reason-independent passions, we need to calm our imagination. This is done by reviewing our general evaluations so the particular reason could suggest a new particularized evaluation to the sense appetite. This mechanism, we can experience, does not work easily and fluently in real life circumstances. Aquinas acknowledges that the power to manage one’s own imagination can be deformed by some defect or illness;³⁵⁵ it can also be an outcome of vicious habits.

Yet the lack of rational manageability of the already occurring reason-independent passions can also be episodic. Precisely due to the influence of this kind of passion, we have a very limited chance to alter our imagination. Murphy argues that Aquinas’s account suggests two reasons for this: firstly, once we are undergoing this sort of passion our ability to reason is reduced; secondly, when we are undergoing a passion and are still able to reason – the logics and evaluation of imagination offer themselves to ground our reasoned judgments.³⁵⁶ Aquinas explains that an ability of a person to reason clearly when undergoing a strong, unruly passion is weakened due to this passion subsuming his/her awareness and attention. Murphy explains:

[W]e have a certain amount of attention or capacity for consciousness, and when a lot of attention is demanded for one object, there is less to give to others. Because passions involve not only a psychological state, but also a physiological one, they tend to demand and obtain more immediate attention than other psychological activities (and the more intense they are, the more attention they command). As a consequence of this hijacking of the person’s attention by the reason-independent passion, not much attention or psychic energy is left to the person for

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 194.

³⁵⁵ “The apprehension of the imagination is subject to the ordering of reason in proportion (*secundum modum*) to the strength or weakness of the imaginative power. For that a human being cannot imagine what reason considers occurs either because what reason considers cannot be imagined (e.g., incorporeal things), or because of a weakness in the power of the imagination which comes from some defect in the organ.” Murphy, “Aquinas on Our Responsibility for Our Emotions,” 197 quoting *ST I-II 17.7 ad 3*.

³⁵⁶ We have already encountered Cates making a similar argument in section 4.1 *The Influence of the Passions on Reason and the Will and a Possibility of Affective Knowledge in Aquinas’s Thought* of this chapter explaining the mechanism of the reciprocal influence between the passions and reason.

reconsidering the evaluation or examining the data rationally to see whether the passion is justified.³⁵⁷

Murphy further explains that our power to manage the occurring reason-independent passions is weakened not only by a passion claiming all our attention, but also by the inherent logics of that passion. “It is always the case that an imaginative sensory evaluation of an object,” Murphy writes, “is part of the data considered in the formation of a final reasoned judgment of a situation.”³⁵⁸ Thus my sensory evaluation can serve as a source to ground my reasoned judgment. In a negative case, one can form a reasoned final judgment on a basis of a vicious passion. “So the sensory appetite, when it is undergoing a passion, is much less sensitive to the all-things-considered judgments of reason”³⁵⁹ – this means that when I am caught in a passion of irrational anger, I may act upon the judgment of this passion only and say hurtful words as a person appears punishable in the evaluation of a passion. If my particular reason is taken over by a reason-independent passion in such a way, it will not be able to present the judgments of universal reason to my sense appetite (as in, all things considered, a person who is an object of anger still deserves basic respect).

Murphy concludes her investigation of the reason-independent passions by suggesting that we can judge according to Aquinas’s texts that in some cases we cannot do anything about the way we feel. The main source of responsibility for our passions does not rest on the experience of a particular passion but on our attitude toward it.³⁶⁰

We have seen that Murphy recovers a complex account of emotional experiences from Aquinas’s texts. She argues that Aquinas suggests two main ways to view the passions: the first group is the reason-dependent passions caused by free beliefs and judgments of an evaluative nature; we are fully responsible for these passions; the second group is constituted by reason-independent passions. A person is held responsible for these sorts of passions when he/she could have avoided them and when they can be directly or indirectly managed by our reason and will. The second group also accommodates spontaneous reason-independent passions and spontaneous, but prolonged reason-independent passions which are genuinely out of our control (yet, in the case of the latter we are responsible for our attempts to deal with them). This means, according to Murphy, that Aquinas distinguishes when we are responsible for the emotions we undergo and when we are free from such responsibility. We use Murphy’s interpretation of Aquinas’s account of the passions to advance some illuminating comments on the nature of the passions themselves and the way we can manage them. Additionally, it offers some comments to highlight the complexity of interior moral life. Murphy wants to argue that Aquinas’s account on responsibility for our passions is multi-layered and does not provide one single answer that can be utilized universally in each particular case – yet “it provides us with a

³⁵⁷ Murphy, “Aquinas on Our Responsibility for Our Emotions,” 198.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 198.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 200.

³⁶⁰ She bases her claim on the following text by Aquinas: “When there is an illicit movement in sensuality, reason can be related to it in three ways. (1) In one way, so that reason resists it; and in that case there is no sin, but rather the meriting of a crown. (2) In a second way, so that reason commands it, as when one elicits a movement of illicit desire on purpose. And then, if the illicit movement is in the genus of mortal sin, [reason’s eliciting the illicit movement] will be a mortal sin. (3) And, in a third way, so that reason neither forbids nor commands, but consents. And then [reason’s consent] is a venial sin.” Murphy, “Aquinas on Our Responsibility for Our Emotions,” 200 quoting *QDM 7.6 ad 6*.

principled way to make sense of and clarify our intuitions about our responsibility for emotions.”³⁶¹ Murphy also suggests that a particular case may contain emotions of a different nature (as in, reason-dependent and reason-independent emotions simultaneously) and they may have different claims for our responsibility. She furthers, however, that even though in some cases it is difficult to determine the degree of mastery one has over his/her emotions – it will be sufficient to determine the attitude one has over them; since in Aquinas’s thought one is entirely responsible for it. “Examining someone’s attitude,” Murphy writes, “as expressed in his actions, his reasoning, his whole-heartedness in ridding himself of bad tendencies, will reveal something about his moral accountability, if not for the emotions themselves, then at least for his attitude to his emotions.”³⁶²

Murphy’s account, then, building upon Aquinas’s thought on the passions suggests an insightful strategy on how to think of our own emotional experiences even today as it articulates some important moral intuitions on our own responsibility for the way we emote. Furthermore, it suggests some strategies of thinking and accessing our own and others’ moral emotions and attitudes about them. This, we argue, is of particular importance not only to the lives of particular individuals, but also to any adequate ethical projects that attempt to discuss moral life in all its aspects. The patterns of our emotions and attitudes disclose who we are at a very deep and personal level and without any doubt they do not only motivate our actions – they can be, indeed, evaluated on their own right. Murphy’s account suggests some valuable insights on trying to approach this topic and incorporate it especially in the agendas of moral education.

4.3 THE PASSIONS, HABIT, AND VIRTUE

The above discussion guides us to touch, at least briefly, on the relationship between the passions and our character as those are deeply entangled phenomena – as we have seen, our moral character can determine our emotional patterns and those, in turn, are part of what constitutes our character. We will address the question of human affectivity and its Christian formation through the lens suggested by Lombardo as he is the only one from our main interlocutors directing the discussion on the passions to inquire directly into their relationship with the categories of virtue and vice. This, without a doubt, constitutes a large area of theological discussion in itself and thus we will touch upon it only briefly and only in essential aspects directly relevant to our prime interest – the passions themselves.

Aquinas addresses the question of a person thinking, intending, choosing, feeling, and acting in established ways under the category of *habitus*. It is a concept of Aristotelian origin and Aquinas describes it in the following way: “As was explained above (a. 3), habit implies a certain disposition in relation to a thing’s nature and to its operation or end, in accord with which the thing is either well disposed or badly disposed toward this.”³⁶³ Lombardo explains that Aquinas makes the category of *habitus* necessary because it determines our rational powers toward particular actions as naturally as they are inclined

³⁶¹ Murphy, “Aquinas on Our Responsibility for Our Emotions,” 205.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, 204. Murphy uses the possessive pronoun ‘his’ because she describes a particular example where the agent is male.

³⁶³ *ST I-II* 49.4.

toward many.³⁶⁴ “*Habitus* shape our entire psychological structure,” Lombardo notes, “not just the rational powers: they modify all faculties that have some capacity for being shaped by reason, and actually penetrate and subsist in them.”³⁶⁵ And, indeed, because sense appetite is capable of being shaped by reason, Aquinas writes: “[T]he sentient powers are apt by their nature to obey reason’s command, and so habits can exist in them. For as *Ethics* 1 says, they are called rational to the extent that they obey reason.”³⁶⁶ By the acts of reason and will the passions can be shaped into *habitus* – stable dispositions of emotional reactions.

Lombardo moves on to show that in their very definition *habitus* are informed by reason, but that does not entail that they will be informed by correct reason. Our rational choices and decisions penetrate into our sense appetite and this disposes our character to be in one or the other way – we can be, for instance, either short-tempered or patient and react to certain situations according to these dispositions. Once our passions are informed and formed by the right reason they incline us to virtue. When the *habitus* are informed by the right reason and incline us to perfection according to our nature they are virtues and when they are not – they become vices.³⁶⁷ Now this means that virtuous *habitus* can be perfective to our passions too, according to Aquinas. As far as the passions are participating in reason, Aquinas argues rather univocally:

[T]he irascible power or concupiscible power can be the subject of a human virtue, since insofar as these powers participate in reason, they are a principle of a human act. Moreover, it is necessary to posit virtues in these powers, since it is clear that some virtues exist in the irascible and concupiscible powers...Therefore, in those matters with respect to which the irascible and concupiscible powers operate insofar as they are moved by reason, it is necessary that a habit that perfects one for acting well should exist not only in reason, but also in the irascible and concupiscible powers. And because the good disposition of a power that is a moved mover involves a conformity with the power that effects its movement, it follows that a virtue that exists in the irascible or concupiscible power is nothing other than a certain habitual conformity of that power with reason.³⁶⁸

Lombardo explains that “[f]or Aquinas, the various moral virtues are holistic character traits with passion and reason inclined (and mutually inclining) toward our

³⁶⁴ Cf. Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 102 with a reference to *ST I-II* 55.1.

³⁶⁵ Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 103.

³⁶⁶ *ST I-II* 50.3 *ad.* 1.

³⁶⁷ Much of what Aquinas writes about virtue applies to vice, just in reverse. Vice is a type of *habitus* just like virtue and it can also reside in the sense appetite. It shapes sense appetite in negative ways. Lombardo notes that in Aquinas’s writings we can see that vices incline one to enjoy disordered objects, to lose sensitivity to spiritual goods, they dull rational powers. If a passion is a consequence of evil acts, its intensity is indicative of intense vice. Lombardo points out that Aquinas gives more attention to virtue than vice in the *Summa* (Aquinas does not discuss virtues and vices in separate sections, but instead discusses vice within his treatment of relevant virtue). Lombardo argues that this approach is chosen not only to avoid repetition – he suggests that Aquinas focuses on virtues in order to frame moral life in terms of happiness and not in terms of avoiding vice. See Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 107. Lombardo furthers that Aquinas’s treatment of vice is also indebted to his ontology of appetites as a good creation of God. He argues: “The anthropological foundation established in the *Treatise on the Passions* gives Aquinas a platform to present vice as the corruption of something good, and not something unremittingly evil. It also gives him the tools to isolate exactly where each vice takes a wrong turn and corrupts something otherwise good.” Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 191.

³⁶⁸ *ST I-II* 56.4.

telos.”³⁶⁹ Furthermore, Aquinas holds that perfection of an action can be achieved if both rational powers and a passion are being virtuous:

Nor can there be a perfect operation that proceeds from two powers unless each of the powers is perfected by an appropriate habit – in just the same way that an agent’s action through an instrument is not perfect unless the instrument is well disposed, no matter how perfect the principal agent is. Hence, if the sentient appetite, which is moved by the rational part, is not perfect, then no matter how perfect the rational part is, the action that follows will not be perfect. Hence, neither will the principle of the action be a virtue.³⁷⁰

Passion thus is an essential component of a moral virtue and virtue in turn does not eradicate it.³⁷¹ In addition, Lombardo draws our attention to the fact that Aquinas argues that a well-ordered intense passion is an indication of a more perfect virtue: if the will is strongly seeking good, its affections overflow to the sense appetite and by this are suffused by a right reason.³⁷² Thus Lombardo aids our discussion by concluding that our passions and affections as an essential part of our moral character consequently also reveal it.

4.4 THE PASSIONS, SIN, AND GRACE

Lombardo highlights the fact that Aquinas’s anthropology cannot be understood adequately apart from the Christian narrative of creation, the fall, and redemption. Humanity was created to be in harmonious community with God – man and woman sinned and knowingly rejected God, by consequence losing sanctifying grace.³⁷³ The communion with God was lost, human nature became undone and the condition was passed to the entire human race.

The nature of original sin and its effects on the human condition in itself constitute a large area of theological debates – Lombardo’s aim is to illustrate that the topic was equally controversial in the thirteenth century and Aquinas also advanced some original thoughts here. Lombardo suggests an interpretation of the Thomistic account on the sin-injured human nature which allows one to think of human affectivity without suspicion. He

³⁶⁹ Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 105.

³⁷⁰ *ST I-II* 58.3 *ad* 3.

³⁷¹ Cf. *ST I-II* 59.4 and *ST I-II* 59.5. Lombardo claims that to make a passion seat of a moral virtue was a controversial position back in his time as many of his contemporaries such as Hugh of St. Cher, John of La Rochelle, and Bonaventure disagreed and held that virtue can be located only in reason and will as the passions are fundamentally irrational. Cf. Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 104-105. Paul Gondreau confirms this interpretation of Lombardo and on his behalf argues that Aquinas adopted a unique approach in thinking of the role of the passions in the practice of virtue. Gondreau writes: “[T]his position helps corroborate J.-P. Torrell’s qualification of Aquinas’s view on the virtuous life as ‘one of the most original pieces of the spiritual theology of Friar Thomas.’ This unique teaching is that moral virtue actually resides *in* the sensitive appetite, i.e., that the passions are *themselves* virtuous, as owing to the limited autonomy enjoyed by the lower appetites.” Paul Gondreau, *The Passions of Christ’s Soul in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Scranton and London: University of Scranton Press, 2009), 276-277. Here, Gondreau quotes Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas d’Aquin, maître spirituel*. “Vestigia 19,” (Fribourg, Switz: Éditions Universitaires, 1996) 349. Gondreau’s argument is that Aquinas’s moral theory builds on a radical synergy of reason and sensibility. Here, sense appetite is viewed “with all the inclinations of nature, as reason’s propitious companion on the path toward an authentic expression of human freedom and perfection.” Gondreau, *The Passions of Christ’s Soul*, 278.

³⁷² Cf. Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 106-107.

³⁷³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 120.

argues that Aquinas's account on original sin "provides a foundation to trust the basic inclinations of the passions and affections in spite of their partial unreliability."³⁷⁴ Aquinas, according to Lombardo's argument, then, firmly reaffirms the Catholic doctrine of the goodness of human nature.

Lombardo furthers that for Aquinas the removal of grace and leaving nature by itself together with a combination of the habitual disorder that the privation of grace introduces is the essence of original sin (*ST I-II 82.1 ad 1*). Human nature is thus injured by original and personal sins – but its principles and the powers of the soul that results from them remain intact, even though weakened. "According to Aquinas," Lombardo argues, "before the fall of man, in the state of original justice, each human appetite instinctively moved toward goodness in harmony with the others, and there was complete freedom from internal temptation and antecedent passions. Sin destroyed the state of inner harmony called original justice, and sin impedes human nature from attaining its perfection, but 'sin does not diminish nature itself.'"³⁷⁵ The main argument here is that the various principles of human nature lack inner coordination; they also lack the subjection to God and the intellect (and only grace can aid in these matters) – but human nature with all its powers (thus appetites also) essentially remains what God created it to be. The chaos of the fallen human condition, hence, is located not in corruption of the basic human tendencies, but in their disintegration which incline the human person to different directions causing confusion. "No matter how much internal chaos reigns, all human appetites retain their basic character and, according to the Creator's design, cannot help inclining fallen humanity toward the good, at least under some guise, and therefore to the perfection of the human person, which is virtue."³⁷⁶

Now we should not be too sanguine about Aquinas's treatment of the fallen state – the original and personal sins have real effects on the inner equipment of a human being. Lombardo writes: "Reason, will, the irascible power, and the concupiscible power – the four principal powers perfected by virtue – are each wounded by original sin."³⁷⁷ But precisely because sin wounds and not destroys completely there is a possibility of restoration. The renewal of a human person in his/her entirety, in both, intellectual and affective dimensions, is made possible through the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Lombardo interprets that for Aquinas redemption does not mean a legalistic pardon of sins – "Christ comes to restore and renew the Father's work of creation."³⁷⁸ The sanctifying grace is infused into the soul through the sacraments of baptism and penance. Lombardo furthers that re-infusion of grace contains two main elements – it elevates human nature so we can have union with God and it heals fallen human nature.³⁷⁹ He claims: "Whether grace's task is the infusion of virtuous *habitus* from scratch (such as in the case of a baptized infant), and thus the uninterrupted development of those virtues over time, or the more difficult

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 124.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 121 quoting *ST I-II 85.1-2*.

³⁷⁶ Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 123.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 124.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 125. Gondreau in his in-depth study on the affectivity of Christ notes that Jesus' affectivity has a soteriological and exemplary dimension for us. See Gondreau, *The Passions of Christ's Soul*, 324-333. Lombardo in his discussion of Christ's affectivity echoes these dimensions, he argues that for Aquinas, Jesus was a model and example of graced human affectivity. See Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 223.

³⁷⁹ Here Lombardo bases himself on *ST I-II 109.2*.

task of eradicating the remnants of vicious *habitus*, and then transforming them into virtues, the gracing of human affectivity unfolds over time.”³⁸⁰ Lombardo wants to demonstrate that Aquinas suggests a view on graced human affectivity which contains a balanced understanding of the relationship between nature and grace, and between human and divine freedom. The transformation by grace Aquinas imagines is an organic process which joins the ordinary psychological development; it is not intrusive and it deepens only through our free action to cooperate with God’s grace.³⁸¹

4.5 CONCLUSION

Aquinas presents us with a multifaceted account on the passions. We, together with the authors discussed above, are convinced that such an account still has contemporary relevance as we will illustrate in the next chapter. Not to deny that Aquinas is at times ambiguous in his treatment of the passions,³⁸² we claim that overall he presents a positive picture of human affectivity and its vital role in endeavors for a good human life. Passions are an integral part of our created human nature and, as everything created, they follow a

³⁸⁰ Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 126.

³⁸¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 137.

³⁸² Murphy captures this accurately by stating that: “Aquinas’s account of the passions is an attempt to reconcile two very different views. On the one hand, passions are recognized as the natural and necessary consequences of the fact that the human rational soul is in a body. Viewed in this light, passions are manifestations in a person’s sensory, bodily self of her rational evaluative judgments and volitions. As Aquinas puts it, ‘will cannot be intensely moved to anything without some passion’s being aroused in the sensory appetite.’ On this view, then, passions seem to be integral aspects of the person, the natural expressions of what is most clearly herself: her judgments and volitions. But there is a different view of the passions, one prevalent in both Greek and Christian thought, according to which they are the importation into the rational person of her material or animal nature, with its own source of evaluation and motivation, independent – and sometimes even antithetical to – reason. . . Aquinas himself symbolizes the tension between these two views[.]” Murphy, “Aquinas on Our Responsibility for Our Emotions,” 165. We add that this tension can be demonstrated with the following example: In Question 59 article 5 Aquinas firmly chooses the Aristotelian interpretation over the Stoic and argues for moderation and not the extirpation of the passions. He claims: “If, as the Stoics posited, what we are calling ‘passions’ are disordered affections, then it is clear that a perfect virtue exists without any passions. On the other hand, if what are calling ‘passions’ are all the movements of the sentient appetite, then it is plain that those moral virtues that have to do with the passions as their proper matter cannot exist without the passions. The reason for this is that, given the Stoic view, it would follow that moral virtue renders the sentient appetite altogether superfluous. But it does not pertain to virtue that the powers that are subject to reason should be deprived of their own acts; rather, what pertains to virtue is that those powers should execute reason’s command by engaging in their proper acts. Hence, just as a virtue orders the members of the body toward the appropriate exterior acts, so it orders the sentient appetite toward its own well-ordered movements.” *ST I-II* 59.5. On the other hand, while discussing the beatitudes in the Question 69, Aquinas seems to lean more toward the Stoic interpretation of extirpations of the passions. We can find him claiming the following in discussion about the blessing for the meek: “Second, the pleasurable life consists in following one’s passions, whether the passions of the irascible part of the soul or the passions of the concupiscible part. Virtue draws a man away from following the passions of the irascible part by keeping them from abounding in him, in accord with the rule of reason; the gifts, on the other hand, do this in a more excellent way, viz., in such a way that the man is rendered wholly undisturbed by them, in accord with God’s will. Hence, we have the second beatitude, ‘Blessed are the meek.’” *ST I-II* 69.3. And while we argue that the *Treatise on the Passions* and Aquinas’s subsequent discussion of virtue clearly manifest the Aristotelian line of interpreting the passions, one should be aware of the tensions inherent in the *Summa* as a whole.

certain kind of logic. Despite the condition of the fallen human nature our passions, according to Aquinas, are still fundamentally oriented toward the good.

The passions, moreover, have a delicate relationship with our intellectual capacities in Aquinas's thought. They are subject to reason, but they stand as free subjects of a democratic ruler. There is a certain discrepancy in the interpretations which argue that Aquinas thought that reason (through the act of the cogitative power) participates in activation of every passion, and those that held it was just some passions (we have argued that the latter seems to be the case). But reason comes to aid and manages all of the passions independently of their formation process (note, this manageability is real, but limited). Aquinas construes the passions as embodied states of awareness that depend on our sense apprehension (understood broadly) and bear significance for our well-being. In this regard Cates further notes that Thomistic ethics "provides us with a way of highlighting certain dimensions of our experience so that these dimensions can become objects for reflection and conversation."³⁸³ And thus Cates solidifies the argument that emotions are intelligible elements of ethics by claiming that: "Given the fact that most of our emotions are, to some extent, intellectually penetrable and thus amenable to deliberate formation and re-formation, in light of our understanding of (or our wondering about) the final end of human life, emotions are fitting subjects for ethical reflection."³⁸⁴

Aquinas's account on the passions can be an aid to ethics, even today, because of its suggestion to look at the patterns of our emotional lives, to think of their roots, the way we have acquired them and assess whether we, in fact, benefit from them. Aquinas views passions as intentional phenomena and various emotional experiences may indicate the way we relate with various objects. By consequence, discovering the objects of our emotions and thinking of the deep patterns in which we are immersed in our daily lives may aid the way we feel.

Because of the aforementioned relationship with our intellectual capacities, Aquinas opens a space to think of the responsibility we bear for the ways we emote. Cates insightfully notes that studying Aquinas's texts on the passions builds the space of reflection and freedom concerning our emotions which is not evident neither in contemporary agendas of ethics nor in some particular cultures.³⁸⁵ This inquiry opens the possibility for thinking that we can and, indeed, should take responsibility for the way we interpret what is happening in our interior lives and in our exterior relations with others and our surroundings. We could say that the authors we have discussed endeavored to demonstrate that we can find a conviction in Aquinas's thought that the patterns of our emotions reflect the moral quality of our lives. Aquinas, thus, speaks of the moral life for which we can take various degrees of responsibility.

At this point, we should also remember that Aquinas allows the passions, especially, the passion of love through its natural 'fit' between the object and the subject to enrich the way we know our world. Indeed, in Question 60 of the *Secunda secundae* in the context of knowing the goodness of God, Aquinas claims that there are two ways of knowing: the

³⁸³ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 255.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 253.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 255.

speculative and affective, and the experience way.³⁸⁶ This means, Maguire interprets, that “correct judgment can come about in two ways, says Aquinas: either by a perfect use of reason or in another distinct way, through a connaturality with the subject being judged.”³⁸⁷ And we know that this kind of connaturality comes through love. In this way we can say that the love of an object alters the way we know and adds to our fuller understanding of it. This in turn encourages one to cultivate his/her emotional capacities to engage in a full relationship with one’s personal and professional environments and finally even oneself. In Aquinas’s thought, we can find inspiration to argue that love illuminates the mind and, in their own right, our cognitive capacities protect our loves from going astray, thus the ideal relationship between our distinct capacities is that of mutuality – both nurturing and enriching each other.

Ryan furthers our argument and adds that precisely because Aquinas holds that our affective powers are capable of moral value, he also locates virtue in them.³⁸⁸ Our emotions can be gradually transformed to become virtuous habituations. Thus Aquinas’s ethics is an ethics of transformation and growth (but note, Aquinas is always building on the natural equipment we already possess). Ryan concludes:

The affective capacity of the person can be modified and hence grow in sensitivity, intensity, and scope. The affective virtues, then, are not primarily about actions (though they may lead to actions). Their primary habitual disposition as virtues (their condition of possibility, their attunement to being itself as good) is toward the fitting emotional response, namely one that is according to right reason. Hence, to adapt Aristotle, the virtuous person is disposed to respond emotionally, to the right things, at the right time, and to the right degree. This is how they exercise their rationality and contribute to human well-being and growth both personally and in the realm of our relationships.³⁸⁹

We should not forget that Aquinas’s account on the passions is also a theological account and so we can encounter elements that are particularly important to theological ethics and Christian community. Aquinas is convinced that divine grace comes to aid in transforming our affectivity – our emotions are healed and changed not only by our deliberate, habituated actions, choices, and thoughts, but also through our life of prayer, sacraments and participation in liturgy.

³⁸⁶ “There is a twofold knowledge of God’s goodness or will. One is speculative and as to this it is not lawful to doubt or to prove whether God’s will be good, or whether God is sweet. The other knowledge of God’s will or goodness is effective or experimental and thereby a man experiences in himself the taste of God’s sweetness, and complacency in God’s will, as Dionysius says of Hierotheos (Div. Nom. ii) that ‘he learnt divine things through experience of them.’ It is in this way that we are told to prove God’s will, and to taste His sweetness.’ *ST II-II 97.2 ad 2* Fathers of the English Dominican Province translation available at <http://dhsprory.org/thomas/summa/SS/SS097.html#SSQ97A2THEP1>

³⁸⁷ Maguire, “*Ratio Practica*,” 27.

³⁸⁸ Cf. Ryan, “Revisiting Affective Knowledge,” 56.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 57.

CHAPTER IV. BUILDING BRIDGES: A BRIEF CASE STUDY OF ANGER AND INTERSECTIONS OF NUSSBAUM'S AND AQUINAS'S THOUGHT ON THE EMOTIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

We have already encountered Nussbaum's and Aquinas's accounts on the nature of emotions/passions and in this chapter we will bring those accounts together. The aim of this chapter is not to compose a third account on the ethical nature of emotions that would merge the insights of Nussbaum and Aquinas. Rather, our aim is to bring the two accounts into conversation and see what they can offer to the discipline of ethics. We will achieve this goal through the twofold structure of this chapter – the first part will discuss the emotion of anger and the second will highlight the elements which we judge to be the most obvious meeting points of the accounts. The discussion on anger will be the first bridge where Nussbaum and Aquinas suggest views on the same subject matter. We will discuss anger through the lenses of Aquinas's interpretation, situate it within the contemporary debate on the moral character of emotion and conclude with Nussbaum's critical evaluation of anger. We will encounter opposing interpretations of anger given by Aquinas and Nussbaum that will nonetheless, be reconciled in the consideration of this emotion as transitional in nature. After building this bridge, we will search for further meeting and divergence points starting with a discussion on Nussbaum's and Aquinas's ethical frameworks in general and moving on to the most recognizable aspects of their accounts of emotions/passions in particular. This will highlight the distinctiveness of both accounts *vis-à-vis* each other. The chapter will culminate in the reflection on the specific achievement each account brings to ethical thought with a focus on theological ethics.

2. CONTINUING THE CASE OF ANGER

We have already begun to explore the topic of anger in Chapter II. *Martha C. Nussbaum on Compassion* where we inquired into some aspects of Nussbaum's thought on this emotion and its connection to compassion as an answer to political injustice.¹ We now want to resume the discussion and press it further to dwell upon the moral character of anger especially having Aquinas's evaluation of this passion in mind. We also want to highlight that this discussion is particularly useful in illustrating that in the context of ethical thinking it is not enough to talk about 'the emotions' in a general manner. Once we attempt to think of the ways a particular emotion functions in our moral experiences, we are unavoidably confronted with the complexity of the task and the consequences our standpoints entail – a defense or encouragement of a particular emotion promotes a certain vision of moral character. Anger is a retributive emotion,² also depicted in contemporary

¹ See sections 4.1.1.4 *The Case of Anger*; 4.1.1.5 *Concluding Remarks* and section 5.4 *Is Compassion the Only Political Emotion We Owe to Others?* with all its subsections of Chapter II.

² We should note that in contemporary philosophical/ethical discussions anger is largely discussed by using its Aristotelian conceptualization. Anger, Aristotle argues, is "defined as an impulse, accompanied by pain, to a conspicuous revenge for a conspicuous slight directed without justification towards what concerns oneself or towards what concerns one's friends." Aristotle, *Rhetoric, Book II*, 1378b. Thus anger is understood as a

discussions as an emotion that aims at relationship with others, uses self-defense mechanisms and motivational power to overcome obstacles, regulates social interactions, but crucially needs regulation itself and above all – learning forms of appropriate expression.³ Anger of an adult human being⁴ is thus described as

a highly social emotion. Common elicitors of anger involve actual or perceived insult, injustice, betrayal, inequity, unfairness, goal impediments, the incompetent actions of another, and being the target of another person's verbal or physical aggression[.] One of the most prominent reasons for anger involves direct or indirect actions that threaten an individual's self-concept, identity, or public image[;] insults, condescension, and reproach represent these threatening actions[.]⁵

Our own task is to look at the moral meaning of anger by continuing the line of discussion found in the second chapter of this work – we will divide the discussion into two main groups: pro and contra anger.⁶ The pro-anger group will consist of Aquinas's insights on anger and the views of contemporary thinkers who generally agree with Aquinas's line of thought, though they do not address him directly (with one exception). This approach is chosen to illustrate that Aquinas's views on anger still resonate with contemporary debates on the nature and consequences of this emotion. The section addressing contemporary pro-anger views will consist of touching upon perspectives of Aaron Ben-Ze'ev who argues that anger, indeed, can be considered as a moral emotion, and insights of Amia Srinivasan, Victoria L. Henderson, and Krista K. Thomason who consider anger to have a positive epistemic role which is significant in both personal and political lives. We will then move to Nussbaum's negative evaluation of anger and conclude this section by suggesting that love and compassion present themselves as reliable guides to sustainable personal and political relationships. We will however point out that the absolute dismissal of anger would mean dismissing an alert signal which might direct us to important considerations of an ethical nature concerning situations we find

reaction to undeserved insult or harm inflicted upon oneself or the ones one cares about which includes a desire to exact things upon others.

³ Cf. Elizabeth A. Lemerise and Kenneth A. Dodge, "The Development of Anger and Hostile Interactions," in *Handbook of Emotions*, 3rd Edition, eds. Michael Lewis, Jeannette M. Haviland-Jones, and Lisa Feldman Barrett (New York/London: The Guilford Press, 2008), 730-742 – the article discusses anger from a developmental point of view, depicting stages of its development in young infants and children and focusing on the processes of socializing anger. See also Scott Schieman, "Anger," in *Handbook of the Sociology of Emotions*, eds. Jan E. Stets and Jonathan H. Turner (New York: Springer, 2006), 494-510 – the article discusses the social causes and social contexts and processes in which anger appears.

⁴ We should also note that anger is largely classified among six basic emotions. This is not without dispute, however. As a telling instance Schieman indicates Ekman's research and its reception. See Schieman, "Anger," 494. Lemerise and Dodge make a similar observation about an undefined status of anger and indicate that there is no agreement among emotion theorists over whether anger is a primary emotion or whether it is differentiated from a generalized distress state. See Lemerise and Dodge, "The Development of Anger," 730. This means that, speaking broadly, we can think of anger as being able to accommodate both relatively low cognitive triggers (fast reactions to self-preservation threats), to cognitively complex elicitors, such as understanding of the self, concepts of justice and relations to one's environment. The latter is our concern (it is also the concern of Aquinas and the authors we will discuss).

⁵ Schieman, "Anger," 495.

⁶ See sections 4.1.1.4 *The Case of Anger*; 4.1.1.5 *Concluding Remarks* and section 5.4 *Is Compassion the Only Political Emotion We Owe to Others?* with all its subsections in Chapter II.

ourselves in. More importantly, dismissing the political significance of anger may lead to insensitivity for the most vulnerable; in some cases anger is the only voice available to them.

2.1 AQUINAS ON THE PASSION OF ANGER

2.1.1 Defining Anger and Its Object

Aquinas's discussion on anger is largely influenced by Aristotle's views on this passion. He takes up the task to present it in the usual threefold structure he utilizes in the discussions of particular passions: first of all he addresses anger in itself (Question 46), then he moves to inquire into anger's cause (Question 47), culminating his analysis of anger in the discussion of its effects (Question 48). Aquinas, generally speaking, offers a positive account on anger and connects it with reason, nature, and justice⁷ – elements that are of interest in contemporary discussions on the discerning role of emotions.

Aquinas locates anger in the irascible power of the sense appetite and construes it as a complex passion which is caused by the occurrence of several other passions. He claims that anger "rises up only because some sort of sadness has been inflicted and only insofar as the desire for retribution is present, along with the hope of exacting it."⁸ Aquinas thought anger to be caused by contrary passions – sadness the object of which is evil, and hope the object of which is good. Owing to this inner contrariety, anger is not conceived as having a contrary passion (normally, all the passions are composed of contrary pairs).⁹ Moreover, this threefold constitution of contrary passions is unique only to anger and does not appear in the *Treatise* in any other instance.

After presenting us with a definition of anger, Aquinas proceeds to the investigation of the moral quality of anger's object. Anger is a passion that follows a complex apprehension:

For whoever gets angry seeks to exact retribution from someone (*quaerit vindicari de aliquo*). And so the movement of anger tends toward two things, viz., (a) toward the retribution itself, which it desires and hopes for as something good, and hence takes pleasure in, and also (b) toward the one against whom it seeks retribution as against someone who is opposed to him and harmful, and this involves the character of something bad.¹⁰

That means that Aquinas conceived of anger as following upon a twofold object – retribution that is perceived as something good and the person who is perceived as

⁷ Cf. Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 268.

⁸ *ST* I-II 46.1. Following Damascene, Aquinas divides anger into three species (anger is accorded a particular species according to the particular situation): wrath (*fel*), bitterness or rancor (*mania*), and fury or rage (*furor*). Wrath is an eruptive kind of anger, bitterness or rancor is a kind of anger that lingers for a long time in the memory, and fury or rage is an anger that is particularly desirous of retribution and does not die until the punishment is achieved.

⁹ See sections 3. *Structure of the Passions: The Concupiscible and the Irascible Division* and 3.1 *The Relationship between the Concupiscible and the Irascible Passions* of Chapter III.

¹⁰ *ST* I-II 46.2. In the original text Aquinas uses the term *vindicta* which is translated by Fredosso as retribution, Miner translates it as vindication (See Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 268-286.), and Lombardo translates it as revenge, See Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 66.

something evil. Now the good that anger seeks is arduous good and Aquinas furthers that both objects – the retribution and the person, have to register with ‘a certain degree of magnitude’ in order for the passion of anger to arise. That means that the perceived hurt has to be of importance for the person undergoing the passions of anger.

2.1.2 Anger, Reason, and Human Nature

Article 4 of Question 46 inquires into the relationship anger has with reason. Miner argues that we can perceive the middle section of this question as ‘as *an apologia pro ira*’¹¹ – anger is not simply an irrational passion, on the contrary, it requires an act of reason. Aquinas argues that in order for anger to occur a mechanism similar to what takes place in the act of reasoning happens. Anger desires retribution, but it requires, Aquinas thinks, an act of collating whereby the desired retribution would be proportionate to the harm done. He states: “But collating and inferring are acts of reason (*conferre et syllogizare est rationis*). And so anger in some sense involves an act of reason.”¹² Aquinas reminds us that there are two ways in which an appetite can involve an act of reason. In the first instance, reason commands and in this way an act of will is called a rational appetite. In the second instance, reason makes something known and in this way an act of reason is involved in anger. Reason here works as a light-shedding device by “manifesting an injury.”¹³ In Aquinas’s thought on anger, reason does not command it directly but uncovers the hurt. Anger, moreover, does not listen to reason perfectly, “since it does not observe the rule of reason in measuring out the retribution (*in rependendo vindictam*).”¹⁴

Aquinas continues to present his views on anger by arguing that this passion is rooted in human nature. Aquinas discusses the naturalness of anger *vis-à-vis* concupiscence. Now he thinks that we can attribute something to our nature by looking into the causes of an item in mind – thus by discovering its object and its subject. If we look at anger and concupiscence from the angle of their objects, then concupiscence appears to be more natural, because self-preservation (especially the drives for food and sex) is more natural for humans than the desire for just retribution. If we were to look at a human being not from the perspective of its genus and insofar as he/she is an animal, but from the perspective of the species – that is, our rational nature – then anger appears to be more natural than concupiscence, “since anger involves reason more than concupiscence does.”¹⁵ In addition, Aquinas thinks of anger from the point of view of our temperament, he reasons that our natural dispositions make us more prone to certain passions and from this perspective anger also appears to be part of human constitution (and this is especially the case with someone of a choleric temperament, he thinks). “Reason itself is part of human nature[,]” Aquinas emphasizes, “[h]ence, from the very fact that anger involves an act of reason it follows that it is in some sense natural to a man.”¹⁶

¹¹ Cf. Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 269.

¹² *ST I-II* 46.4.

¹³ *ST I-II* 46.4 *ad.* 1.

¹⁴ *ST I-II* 46.4 *ad.* 4.

¹⁵ *ST I-II* 46.5.

¹⁶ *ST I-II* 46.5 *ad.* 2.

2.1.3 Anger, Hatred, and Justice

Aquinas furthermore urges us not to confuse anger with hatred, which appears to be a common conceptual mistake. A passion gets its species from its object. We can now see that anger's subject is the same thing as hatred's object. Thus the one who hates desires something bad for the one he/she hates, and the one who is angry also desires something bad for the person he/she is angry with. Yet, there is a conceptual distinction in this seeming similarity – the person who experiences the passion of hatred desires something bad for the hated person in itself, while the person who is angry desires something bad for the person insofar as it has the character of something good.¹⁷ Reason, for the perceived good in this case, is an inquiry for justice (as a part of retribution) in the angered person. Hence, says Aquinas, “hatred has to do with the application of what is bad to what is bad, whereas anger has to do with the application of what is good to what is bad.”¹⁸ We can see further that for Aquinas anger can participate in a virtue of justice if it works in accordance with reason, while the only way it can fall short from this participation is when it does not listen to reason and seeks for more than a just retribution. Aquinas considers hatred to be graver than anger; moreover, it has less mercy. He argues:

For since hatred desires what is bad in its own right (*malum secundum se*) for another, there is no measure of badness that satisfies it. By contrast, anger desires something bad only under the concept *just retribution*. Thus, when the bad thing that has been inflicted exceeds the measure of justice in the judgment of the one who is angry, at that point he has mercy.¹⁹

Aquinas also considers hatred to be more stable than anger. Anger, he thinks, is more like a mental commotion caused by a perceived injury. Hatred, on the other hand, proceeds from a disposition to see the hated thing as harmful/opposed to oneself. And from this perspective, hatred is more like a disposition and anger is more like a passion which vanishes quicker.

Aquinas goes on to establish a firmer link between anger and justice and claims: “both on the part of its cause, which is an injury inflicted by another, and on the part of the retribution that is desired by the one who is angry, it is clear that anger pertains to the very same individuals with respect to whom there is justice and injustice (*ad eosdem pertinet ira ad quos iustitia et iniustitia*).”²⁰ An injury that triggers anger is always a perceived injustice and its aim is to ‘set things right.’ At this point Aquinas reminds us that passions can arise through imagination or through a mediated act of reason.²¹ If anger arises through imagination, then one can get angry at irrational things or non-living things. If anger arises through reason making the injury known, then one cannot get angry at non-sentient things, Aquinas argues – this kind of anger is directed only at a person. Non-sentient things cannot inflict a perceived injustice and thus there is no retribution toward them, thus Aquinas

¹⁷ Cf. *ST I-II* 46.6.

¹⁸ *ST I-II* 46.6.

¹⁹ *ST I-II* 46.6 *ad.* 1.

²⁰ *ST I-II* 46.7.

²¹ This confirms our chosen path of interpretation in Chapter III where Aquinas holds that passions can be triggered through these two distinct ways. See especially sections 2.1.2 *Apprehensive Powers of the Sensitive Soul* and 2.1.3 *Role of the Cogitative Power*.

thinks that truly human anger involves reason and a sense of justice. Aquinas furthers that in the same vein one cannot get properly angry with oneself; anger directed at oneself is metaphorical (one cannot, he thinks, exact a just retribution from oneself). He furthers that following the same logic one cannot get angry with a genus of things only with one singular person. Aquinas argues that anger is always caused by a particular injury, that is, by a particular act of injustice that is directed at us. He claims that when we are angry with something which is not a person (Aquinas gives an example of a city), we construe that group as a singular person committing an injury against us personally. In other words, an object that causes truly human anger has to be perceived as an object acting wilfully.²²

2.1.4 Causes of Anger: Personal Injury

Aquinas has already indicated the formal cause of anger – anger is a perceived injury with an accompanied desire for retribution. Miner points out that in Question 47, Thomas is inquiring into the efficient cause of anger, in other words, he asks – what, in fact, makes us angry?²³ Aquinas explains that one can get angry only for the things done to oneself:

For just as each thing naturally desires what is good for itself (*proprium bonum*), so, too, each thing naturally repels what is bad for itself (*proprium malum*). Now an injury done by one individual pertains to another individual only if the former has done something that is in some sense against the latter. Hence, it follows that the moving cause of someone's anger is always something done to himself.²⁴

Aquinas holds that if we get angry about the injury inflicted to others, they have to belong to us in some sense – by kinship, friendship or at least by shared nature. One needs to perceive a personal connection with the injury done to the victim.

Aquinas also holds that all the causes triggering anger can be traced fundamentally to disdain. Anger always rises under the concept of injustice and we are moved by this passion if we think that someone is violating our image of the self, something that should be treated respectfully. Aquinas furthers that the other can inflict injury by choice, out of passion or out of ignorance. If we perceive that an individual inflicted the unjust harm on purpose – this gives rise to a most intense anger. Aquinas argues that if we think that others harmed us out of passion or ignorance – we either will not get angry at all or will get much less angry and we will be more prone to mercy.

Aquinas finishes Question 47 by inquiring into whether excellence is something that makes us prone to get angry more easily. He argues that considering anger from one angle can surely lead us to conclude that excellence is a disposition at the root of anger – one is more prone to get angry about the things one excels in. This is why, Aquinas argues, a rhetorician will get more easily angry if he is disdained in matters of rhetoric. Miner aids our exposé by pointing out that the excellence that Aquinas has in mind is an excellence abstracted from moral virtues: “Thus we may account for the odd (but very real) susceptibility to anger displayed by talented artists, musicians, writers, actors, and athletes who lack the moral virtues. Insofar as *excellencia* does not reside in a great soul, it

²² Cf. Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 278.

²³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 278.

²⁴ *ST I-II* 47.1.

increases the likelihood that its possessor will be made angry by those who scorn him in precisely the respect in which he excels.”²⁵ Now Aquinas also argues that because anger involves sadness and because defectiveness is especially saddening, it also moves one to get angry more easily. In this way, Aquinas explains, people who are sick or suffer from something get angry more easily because they are saddened more easily. He adds that the perceived defect is also a reason why we can get more angry with our offender. Inappropriate disdain is the first reason for anger and if we perceive the person who insults us as possessing some defect, this will increase the level of the inappropriateness of the disdain. This is the reason why “the wise get angry if they are looked down upon by the foolish,”²⁶ Aquinas states.

2.1.5 Effects of Anger

In the very last question of the *Treatise on the Passions*, Aquinas discusses the effects of anger. He enumerates, pleasure, fervor, impediment of reason, and silence as the phenomena that can follow upon the movement of anger. We shall not discuss the last element, silence, at length since Aquinas simply indicates that “the disturbance of anger can be so great that the tongue is altogether prevented from exercising speech.”²⁷

Pleasure, somewhat surprisingly, is an effect of anger and it can follow anger in two ways; both however, are connected to anger’s desire for retribution. In the first instance, pleasure follows anger when retribution occurs in reality. In this way the movement of anger comes to rest and one experiences a complete pleasure. The second instance of pleasure appears before the occurrence of retribution in reality. This mechanism, Aquinas argues, works in two ways. In the first case, the pleasure can occur through hope as anticipation for a possible retribution. The second way is a continuous thought – here the lingering thought filled with desired images brings about pleasure. Both ways of this kind of pleasure, which occur prior to a real retribution, are not complete pleasures because the movement of sadness is still not at rest.²⁸

Fervor is another effect of anger named by Aquinas. Explanations of it rest on a medieval understanding of human physiology and the movements of liquids in the human body. But what is interesting is that Aquinas once more affirms the connection between the passion and the body. He repeats that “the bodily changes involved in the passions of the soul are proportioned to the appetite’s movement.”²⁹ Anger is a forceful passion because it implies desire, the movement for retribution. Aquinas continues, “And since anger’s movement does not have the mode of a withdrawal (*non est per retractionis*), which is what cold is proportioned to, but instead has the mode of an incursion (*est per modum insecutionis*), which is what heat is proportioned to, the result is that anger’s movement is a cause of a certain fervor in the blood and spirits that surround the heart, which is itself an instrument of the passions of the soul. And from this it follows that because of the great disturbance of the heart that occurs in the case of anger, certain indications become

²⁵ Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 281-282.

²⁶ *ST I-II* 47.4.

²⁷ *ST I-II* 48.4.

²⁸ Cf. *ST I-II* 48.1.

²⁹ *ST I-II* 48.2.

especially apparent in the exterior members of those who get angry.”³⁰ Aquinas also adds that anger seems not to be a very stable passion – because of the intensity of the fervor it is quickly consumed and dies out rapidly. Metaphorically, then, we can tell that in Aquinas’s thought anger sets our heart on fire, yet it is also important to pinpoint that the movement of the passion, for Aquinas, resonates with our bodies.

A particularly important effect of anger is the impediment to reason. Is it possible to say that one of anger’s effects is an impediment to reason, even in light of Aquinas’s thought that anger is triggered by reason revealing the injury made? Aquinas answers this question positively. His answer, however, is remarkably related to material effects of anger. Anger is a particularly strong movement of an appetite that involves strong bodily change. This causes the body-soul composite to focus on those material effects of anger and so the usage of reason is impeded.³¹ Aquinas, however, has to explain how an act of reason can be part of anger’s cause and at the same time how anger can impede reason. To justify this Aquinas brings in a formal-material distinction. We are told that “the source of anger (*principium irae*) lies in reason as regards the appetitive movement, which is what is formal in anger.”³² The movement of anger, nonetheless, can prevent reason from adequate judgments “because of the commotion caused by the rapidly moving heat, which is what is material in anger. And on this score, anger impedes reason.”³³ It seems that Aquinas finds an act of reason in the immaterial sense to inform the passion of anger, while anger as manifested in the material change of the body is an impediment to reason as it captures the whole attention of the body-soul composite.

We should also note that we should not confuse the passion of anger with the sin of the same name. In the discussion on the virtues of fortitude and temperance in the *Secunda secundae* – Aquinas solidifies the view that anger is not evil in its species. He discusses anger *vis-à-vis* the passion of envy which, he confirms once more, is an evil passion in its species because it is directed at displeasure at someone’s good. But when it comes to anger, Aquinas argues that “if one is angry in accordance with right reason, one’s anger is deserving of praise.”³⁴ He furthers that if a passion is not evil by its genus, then we can measure its moral quality by its quantity – “that is in respect of its excess or deficiency; and thus evil may be found in anger, when, to wit, one is angry, more or less than right reason demands.”³⁵ That means that Aquinas explicitly indicates that there is something morally wrong in getting excessively angry, but he also claims that it is also wrong not to get angry in situations where our reason requires it. Furthermore, Aquinas urges us to distinguish between zealous anger and sinful anger – the desire of anger for just retribution is praiseworthy, he repeats. “On the other hand,” Aquinas explains, “if one desires the taking of vengeance in any way whatever contrary to the order of reason, for instance if he desires the punishment of one who has not deserved it, or beyond his deserts, or again

³⁰ *ST I-II* 48.2.

³¹ Cf. *ST I-II* 48.3.

³² *ST I-II* 48.3. *ad.* 1.

³³ *ST I-II* 48.3. *ad.* 1.

³⁴ *ST II-II* 158.1. Translations of the *Secunda secundae* in this chapter come from the Fathers of the English Dominican Province translation available at <http://dhsprory.org/thomas/summa/SS/SS158.html#SSQ158OUTP1>.

³⁵ *ST II-II* 158.1.

contrary to the order prescribed by law, or not for the due end, namely the maintaining of justice and the correction of defaults, then the desire of anger will be sinful, and this is called sinful anger.”³⁶

Aquinas further nuances that even in the case of anger where the just retribution is desired – the movement of the passion should not be too fierce internally and externally; if this is disregarded then the passion will be sinful. At this point, Aquinas also points out our responsibility for our emotional reactions. He writes that we cannot foresee all the arising passions, yet we have the power to revise them using our cognitive capacities and from this perspective – “since this movement is somewhat in his power, it is not entirely sinful if it be inordinate.”³⁷ Passions are manageable to some extent and we are not free from responsibility from the disorderly passionate reactions.

Aquinas is well aware that non-regulated anger can turn into sin with grave consequences. He thus warns against the sin of anger: “It does not follow from the passage quoted that all anger is a mortal sin, but that the foolish are killed spiritually by anger, because, through not checking the movement of anger by their reason, they fall into mortal sins, for instance by blaspheming God or by doing injury to their neighbor.”³⁸ Sin of anger is grave, but Aquinas firmly finishes Question 158 by indicating that it is also vicious to be without a passion of anger. He claims:

Anger may be understood in two ways. In one way, as a simple movement of the will, whereby one inflicts punishment, not through passion, but in virtue of a judgment of the reason: and thus without doubt lack of anger is a sin. This is the sense in which anger is taken in the saying of Chrysostom, for he says (*Hom. xi in Matth.*, in *the Opus Imperfectum*, falsely ascribed to St. John Chrysostom): ‘Anger, when it has a cause, is not anger but judgment. For anger, properly speaking, denotes a movement of passion:’ and when a man is angry with reason, his anger is no longer from passion: wherefore he is said to judge, not to be angry. In another way anger is taken for a movement of the sensitive appetite, which is with passion resulting from a bodily transmutation. This movement is a necessary sequel, in man, to the movement of his will, since the lower appetite necessarily follows the movement of the higher appetite, unless there be an obstacle. Hence the movement of anger in the sensitive appetite cannot be lacking altogether, unless the movement of the will be altogether lacking or weak. Consequently lack of the passion of anger is also a vice, even as the lack of movement in the will directed to punishment by the judgment of reason.³⁹

The above claim results from Aquinas’s conviction that there can be no mistakes inherent in our nature which is fundamentally good. Sensitive appetite has its own purpose and in the case of anger, it is to execute the dictate of reason in a prompt way. Thus Aquinas concludes: “Wherefore just as the removal of the effect is a sign that the cause is removed, so the lack of anger is a sign that the judgment of reason is lacking.”⁴⁰

Aquinas presented us with a remarkably positive evaluation of the passion of anger – he connected it with the good, reason, and the concept of justice. This passion has a strong personal character and resonates deeply in our bodies. Aquinas makes a very clear

³⁶ *ST II-II 158.2.*

³⁷ *ST II-II 158.2. ad. 3.*

³⁸ *ST II-II 158.3. ad. 1.*

³⁹ *ST II-II 158.8.*

⁴⁰ *ST II-II 158.8. ad. 3.*

distinction between anger as a passion and anger as a sin. The latter is considered from the perspective of an undue object or from an inordinate quantity of the passion. Sinful anger affects our minds, words, and deeds (*ST II-II 158.7*) gravely, but the danger sinful anger holds does not prompt Aquinas to disregard anger as a passion. He considers the passion of anger to be a worthy part of what it means to be truly human; moreover, it is indicative of a proper judgment of reason in the situations of injustice. We should also remember that anger, as an irascible passion, is never an absolute terminus of the sense appetite; it always has to lead to something beyond itself since the irascible passions necessarily culminate in the passions of the concupiscible power.⁴¹

Aquinas's thoughts on anger as a passion and a sin still have intuitive and experiential appeal for consultation in our daily situations. It is also interesting to consider ethically – since anger appears to be a passion indicating that we might be in a particular kind of situation, a situation where a personal kind of injury is done by the unjust act of an other. Thinking of the ethical relevance and meaning of anger is not a conceptually easy task because of anger's ambiguity; a fact also noted by Aquinas. But reflection on the nature and the appropriate boundaries of anger seems to be the labor of an ethics that attempts to shape our characters and our rational and emotional judgments and reactions.

2.2 CONTEMPORARY THINKERS ON ANGER: ANGER AS A MORAL RESPONSE TO AN IMPERFECT WORLD

“Be angry, but sin not.” Ephesians 4:26

The above quotation is an epigraph of Amia Srinivasan's paper questioning the aptness of the emotion of anger.⁴² The basic intuition behind this biblical line points to the spirit of the ideas of the authors whose work we will further discuss. Moderate anger, in this case, is described as an appropriate and, in fact, ethical response in certain situations. Our chosen thinkers, who we have opted to use because of the common link of accepting basic lines of an Aristotelian definition of anger, advance some of the claims we have seen Aquinas defending in contemporary discussions on the moral status of anger. The following discussion will locate anger as having an explicitly moral concern (an argument defended by philosopher Aaron Ben-Ze'ev) and will point to the areas of ethical concern where reasonable anger can be a first indication that something is amiss. Researchers in philosophy and human geography, Amia Srinivasan and Victoria L. Henderson respectively, consider anger from a political perspective and suggest that anger can serve as an insightful voice in situations of injustice. Furthermore, both thinkers advance an argument that silencing anger experienced by victims may signal a certain ethical insensitivity. Srinivasan asserts one's capacity to be sensitive to injustices and get angry about them as a morally upright quality, while also recognizing that anger, in often cases, can worsen the situation of the victim. Henderson, on the other hand, proposes anger as

⁴¹ See sections 3. *Structure of the Passions: The Concupiscible and the Irascible Division* and 3.1 *The Relationship Between the Concupiscible and the Irascible Passions* of Chapter III.

⁴² Cf. Amia Srinivasan, “The Aptness of Anger (2014),” 1. http://users.ox.ac.uk/~corp1468/Research_&_Writing_files/Aptness%20of%20Anger_current.pdf [accessed March 15, 2015].

being able to form and empower our moral identities, moreover, prompting us to an actual political action seeking change. Lastly, Krista K. Thomason, a professor of philosophy, considers anger *vis-à-vis* forgiveness and suggests that we do not have to consider retributive emotions and emotions traditionally favored as morally positive as necessarily being mutually exclusive. Concretely, anger does not need to exclude a general sense of respect and benevolence toward our offender.

Aaron Ben-Ze'ev considers the nature of the emotion of anger in general terms. He affirms Aquinas's claims that anger can, indeed, qualify as a moral emotion (as opposed to immoral or morally neutral emotions). Ben-Ze'ev acknowledges that the criteria for determining the moral character of emotion is a matter of debate, but in his view there are two measurements against which we can attempt to assess emotions – the morality of its core evaluative concern and the positive moral consequences it yields.⁴³ Ben-Ze'ev utilizes the same Aristotelian working definition of anger as an emotion which rises from a subjective perception of something that one considers to be an unjustified harm inflicted upon oneself or someone one cares about which, in often cases, is perceived as a personal insult that yields a desire for retaliation. Precisely because anger registers the possible undeserved harm its content is explicitly moral, Ben-Ze'ev argues. Anger refers to the feeling of down-grading, placing one in an inferior position. This down-grading however, is caused by the perceived unjust activity of the other and does not involve a comparative stand as envy⁴⁴ does – rather, it signals how our relationships with others should be. When it comes to the possible consequences of the emotion of anger, Ben-Ze'ev argues that this issue is more difficult to answer because it is an empirical question requiring observational studies. His assessment, however is “that a moderate intensity of anger and resentment may typically have positive consequences.”⁴⁵

The meaning, normativity, and the practical consequences of anger are also the ideas Amia Srinivasan wrestles with. This area of Srinivasan's thought focuses on the political dimension of anger. Her argument starts with the presupposition that when we think of anger in that context, contemporary philosophical discussions tend to focus on the possible negative consequences of anger and so dismiss it as dangerously counterproductive. In fact, as we have already mentioned in the second chapter, Nussbaum is one of the main thinkers arguing that from a pragmatic point of view, anger is destructive. Furthermore, she argues that some of anger's normative claims are simply irrational.⁴⁶ Anger is considered to be a weapon of self-harm and its counter-productivity is a reason not to get

⁴³ Cf. Aaron Ben-Ze'ev, “Are Envy, Anger, and Resentment Moral Emotions?,” *Philosophical Explorations: An International Journal for the Philosophy of Mind and Action* Vol. 5, No. 2 (2002): 148.

⁴⁴ Ben-Ze'ev claims that relative unfavorable comparison is a cause of envy and the subject's perceived inferiority is its main evaluative concern. Envy also sees the inferiority as undeserved thus it argues about the situations of fortune, but this, according to Ben-Ze'ev, is not a moral claim because it does not address how we should treat other people. See Ben-Ze'ev, “Are Envy, Anger, and Resentment Moral Emotions?,” 149-152.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 153.

⁴⁶ See sections 4.1.1.4 *The Case of Anger* and 4.1.1.5 *Concluding Remarks* where we begin to introduce Nussbaum's views on anger; also see section 5.4 *Is Compassion the Only Political Emotion We Owe to Others?* with all its subsections where we present Srinivasan's discussion on the nature of anger *vis-à-vis* Nussbaum's concept of compassion, all found in Chapter II. We will go on to present Nussbaum's evolved views on anger in the upcoming section, 2.3 *Nussbaum Against Anger*.

angry regardless of the circumstances.⁴⁷ But Srinivasan wants to shift the focus to argue that anger cannot be normatively evaluative solely on the basis of its effects; we also have to look at its intrinsic reasons. Thus, her suggestion is to look into the cognitive content of anger which in itself contains justification of it, a claim similar to that of Ben-Ze'ev.

Anger, for Srinivasan, is also responsive to the harm done. She argues that when we communicate what we are angry about, we at the same time communicate the reasons for our anger. Srinivasan furthers that “[w]hat makes anger intelligible as anger, and distinct from mere disappointment, is that anger implies that its object involves a *normative violation*: not just a violation of how one wishes things were, but a violation of how things *ought* to be.”⁴⁸ Anger has its reasons and we can consider our anger apt when it is a response to a genuine moral violation. However, even apt anger can make an angry person worse off; thus Srinivasan considers that apt counterproductive anger is a reality of our political times.⁴⁹ Due to this possibility we have to think about the meaning of anger with a great amount of responsibility. Because anger seems to be genuinely epistemically productive, it reveals the world to us and Srinivasan considers this pursuit to be legitimate. We cannot obligate someone to feel anger about witnessed injustice, but to merely permit this emotion also seems to miss the target. For Srinivasan, we lose something of the intrinsic worth when we can no longer get angry about the injustices plaguing our societies. Thus she suggests “that our capacity for apt anger is a good thing in itself, like a virtue or a capacity to be compelled by the beautiful or the sublime. It is not something we are obligated to possess, nor are merely permitted to possess; it is simply a good thing if we are such that we are disposed to respond to injustice with apt anger.”⁵⁰

Arguing for aptness of anger for Srinivasan does not only entail defending our capacity to appreciate the way the world is, it is also venerating the reality of the victim. There is something morally insensitive in quieting the victim, even in an attempt not to worsen the situation. Srinivasan opines that arguing against anger shifts the focus from the atrocity and the responsibility of the perpetrator and leaves it in the hands of the victim. The pragmatic perspective, that is, advice to focus on something one has control over (in other words, pacifying the situation, looking into one’s own responsibility, even as victims of the behavior of others), can in itself be oppressive. It indicates the lack of care for the suffering victim.

Wrestling with the normativity of anger is a delicate task because of the practical implications it entails. Nonetheless, anger in itself seems to suggest positive epistemic effects and this seems to be of intrinsic value, a genuine good – “it is an intrinsically worthwhile thing not only to know but also to *feel* the ugly facts that structure our political

⁴⁷ Cf. Srinivasan, “The Aptness of Anger,” 4.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴⁹ Srinivasan grants that anger at injustice can be largely counterproductive to its victims. She considers that there are cases where the eloquent anger of a leader or even angry solidarity that erupts in political protests can have persuasive power. Yet she highlights that “[i]t is naïve to think that anger is always productive in this way, that getting angry at injustice does not often result in great personal cost, that it does not often result in a worsening of one’s life chances, that it does not often invite more violence against already beaten bodies. Indeed, I think we do not arrive at a full understanding of injustice and oppression if we do not acknowledge that our political arrangements provide ample occasions for anger that is at once apt *and* counterproductive: anger that is the justified response to the political facts, but nonetheless makes the angry person worse off.” Srinivasan, “The Aptness of Anger,” 7.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 15.

reality.”⁵¹ Thus in Srinivasan’s thought anger is a source of a real moral and political knowledge and reflecting upon it can disclose the structure of our surroundings. Anger is a real response to that structure; furthermore, it can be a response to what can sometimes be a very immoral reality. Not dismissing anger means focusing on the reality of the victim, acknowledging the truth of his/her suffering, Srinivasan argues. Additionally, not dismissing the anger of the victim is a way to recognize that one’s injury and pain is real and that one is justified in being angry. This seems a way to encounter the other in the situation he/she is and to respect its gravity. Does Srinivasan suggest encouraging the anger of the victim or fostering our own? No, this is not the aim of her reasoning. Her purpose rather, is to encourage our moral sensitivity to the atrocities happening in the contemporary political world and to be reactive to it, be moved by it. She also does not suggest stimulating the anger of the suffering, but attending to it sympathetically, not focusing on the anger exclusively but on the reasons behind it. Thus, Srinivasan insightfully concludes her reflection on anger by stating:

A recognition of anger’s aptness might seem to threaten a return to the petulant and vengeful Achilles, a backwards slide into a form of life in which justice is not the business of the state, but the personal lot of each man. With the spectre of the raging Achilles in mind, we counsel against anger. But in so doing we forget, as we have always forgotten, those who were never allowed to be angry, the slaves and women who have the power of neither the state nor the sword.⁵²

Victoria L. Henderson unpacks anger in a similarly positive fashion looking to the voice it brings in situations of social/political injustices. She discusses anger *vis-à-vis* the emotion of hope which is often contrasted with anger (as we will see shortly, hopeful compassion is an emotion that Nussbaum pleads for as an alternative to the politics of anger). In a nutshell, Henderson pleads for bringing to the fore of our academic reflections the realization that human ethics is out there, on the field. This is the reason adequate ethical projects should take into account the emotions that resonate with the experience of a large part of our societies. “Hope may nourish contemporary academic theory,” Henderson argues, “but as the May 2008 issue of *NGO World* makes clear, people in the throws of precarity are, practically speaking, hungry and angry.”⁵³ She, similarly to all the aforementioned thinkers, construes anger in an Aristotelian fashion, as a dominant emotional response to a perception of injustice “that tends more than other emotions, to impel punitive and/or preventative demands”⁵⁴ and “can fortify resolve to endure in the struggle for accountability.”⁵⁵ Henderson also argues (as Ben-Ze’ev and Srinivasan) that these descriptions of the nature of anger, in turn, represent the three intrinsic reasons why we should offer a guarded defense of anger. First of all, if anger *is* indeed a response to perceived injustice – it is not only its excess that should worry us, but also its deficiency (Henderson, in fact, quotes Aquinas while suggesting this argument). Secondly, anger’s

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵³ Victoria L. Henderson, “Is There Hope for Anger?,” *Emotion, Space and Society* 1 (2008): 29. *NGO World* is a development research magazine published in Lahore, Pakistan.

⁵⁴ Henderson, “Is There Hope for Anger?,” 28.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 28.

objective is correction of the perceived injustice (it has punitive and/or preventative demands), that means it will also focus on the perpetrator. Henderson considers it to be a positive motivational power which more than sympathy tends to result in an active political action against the source of injustice.⁵⁶ “The third and final reason to defend anger,” Henderson writes, “is that it ‘puts fire in the belly and iron in the soul’ (Gamson, 1992: 32), discharging ‘*emotional in-process benefits*’ (Wood, 2001: 272) that can fortify resolve to endure in the struggle for justice and accountability.”⁵⁷ Providing an example of the fieldwork in ethnographic literature conducted on the topic of the post-civil war in El Salvador, Henderson suggests that anger instilled a sense of agency that was truly transformative for the El Salvadorian peasant communities.⁵⁸

Henderson furthers that our affective responses are not fully autonomous processes as they are deeply embedded in the socio-political contexts that we find ourselves in. Our societies have feeling rules and there is an ongoing debate about the legitimacy of certain emotions. Here Henderson makes a similar observation to Srinivasan’s concern that the sanctioning of anger is usually directed at particular groups and individuals (women, ethnic minorities, working class, the disabled, etc.) and by blaming someone for being angry we shift the

attention away from blameworthy behavior to the mode of expressing blame, and by shifting the responsibility from the people who could do something about the blameworthy behavior to the expresser herself, who is now meant to account for her behavior. The expresser cannot account for or defend her intended anger, however, because her interpreters are no longer listening. ‘You’re so bitter’ is meant to be not challenging but silencing.⁵⁹

One could add that often we want to listen to eloquent rhetoric of hope and a common future, but at times we forget that those victims who express their anger at great social injustices come from vulnerable social circumstances and their emotional resources are also limited because of the injuries they have suffered. Henderson’s main argument is

⁵⁶ Henderson’s point is that anger motivates us to remove the obstacle ‘to the way things ought to be.’ She refers us to the study arguing that anger tends to motivate one to more explicitly political activities such as signing a petition or participating in a protest. See Leo Montada and Angela Schneider, “Justice and Emotional Reactions to the Disadvantaged,” *Social Justice Research* Vol. 3, No. 4. (1989): 313–344. Henderson also compares anger’s motivational power *vis-à-vis* compassion’s and quotes the study arguing that “[a]lthough sympathy for the unfortunate may provide the motivation for personal helping when a person is in a direct relationship, sympathy for the unfortunate (or an emotional connection with them) *does not appear to provide the motivation necessary for people to take a political action that requires effort*. Such righteous behavior – behavior to secure justice in indirect relationships – is motivated by anger at injustice, by moral outrage, rather than sympathy[.]” Henderson, “Is There Hope for Anger?,” 30 quoting Joseph De Rivera et al., “The Emotional Motivation of Righteous Behavior,” *Social Justice Research* Vol. 7, No. 1 (1994): 91–106.

⁵⁷ Henderson, “Is There Hope for Anger?,” 30 quoting William A. Gamson, *Talking Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 32 and Elisabeth Jean Wood, “The Emotional Benefits of Insurgency in El Salvador,” in *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, eds. Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 272.

⁵⁸ Henderson quotes: “The interviews generally suggest that moral outrage provided initial motivation early in the war [...] and that pride and pleasure of agency later supplemented or replaced outrage for those participating as well as motivating participation for others (Wood, 2001: 273).” Henderson, “Is There Hope for Anger?,” 30 quoting Wood, “The Emotional Benefits of Insurgency in El Salvador,” 273.

⁵⁹ Henderson, “Is There Hope for Anger?,” 31 quoting Sue Campbell, “Being Dismissed: The Politics of Emotional Expression,” *Hypatia* Vol. 9, No. 3 (1994): 51.

that there are some things about which we should get angry; furthermore “that the task of the social scientist, and especially one committed to building a participatory academy, is to ensure that not only voices but also emotions transition from the field to the academic forum, then it is not unreasonable to expect anger to have a place in social science research. Moreover, I would argue, it is both reasonable and necessary to question whether the absence of anger is symptomatic of *failed* contagion, and whether this, in turn, may be read as a breach of emotional – and political – solidarity with (angry) others.”⁶⁰ We should also note that Henderson does not argue that hope and anger are oppositional or mutually exclusive. There cannot be any politics or ethics without hope, after all, since these are endeavors directed at a common and, indeed, better future. Yet we should be suspicious of the reasons why anger is silenced. Furthermore, we should inquire whether the absence of anger in the face of someone facing an injustice does not in fact signal an absence of actual, moving care in us and our communities.

Krista K. Thomason also offers a positive evaluation of anger. While dwelling on the nature and relationship between retributive emotions and emotions which are traditionally attributed a positive moral character, specifically forgiveness, she suggests they do not have to necessarily exclude each other. Generally speaking, anger is often discussed *vis-à-vis* emotions that have a positive moral evaluation such as compassion, hope, and forgiveness. The latter are conceived as emotions which are aimed at building and sustaining relationships and anger alerts us that something is going wrong within that relationship. We have seen Henderson making similar claims in the case of anger and hope. We would now like to further look into the dynamics of the relationship between positive emotions, concretely, forgiveness and the dimensions of compassion and humility it entails and retributive emotions.

Thomason argues that a forgiving person is praised because he/she shows some good character traits, namely, compassion and humility.⁶¹ She broadly defines compassion as a recognition of humanity in others (thus, when we forgive the offender that entails us still seeing him/her as a fellow human being and not reducing him/her to a one dimensional trait – the offense). She defines humility as the recognition of our own moral imperfection which includes the fact that we can ourselves be in the position of the offender. Thus Thomason argues that forgiveness ultimately offers facilitation and expression of our compassion and humility. Retributive emotions are considered to be hostile feelings that make one more prone to see himself/herself as superior to others. Yet, philosophical tradition also recognizes retributive emotions (Thomason is interested in anger and resentment in particular) to be responses to the unjust harms done to oneself and as such they express the self-respect of an agent. From this perspective, both our ability to forgive and our ability to get angry present themselves as integral parts of our moral agency.

⁶⁰ Henderson, “Is There Hope for Anger?,” 32. Elsewhere in the text Henderson insightfully comments that in some particular situations our experience, our lives cannot be thought of apart from the emotions we carry. Thus there are moments of particular injury where anger defines the sufferer and this is important to acknowledge: “[A]t particular times and in particular places, there are moments where lives are so explicitly lived through pain, bereavement, elation, anger, love and so on that the power of emotional relations cannot be ignored.” Henderson, “Is There Hope for Anger?,” 30 quoting Kay Anderson and Susan Smith, “Editorial: Emotional Geographies,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* Vol. 26, No.1 (2001): 7.

⁶¹ Cf. Krista K. Thomason, “Forgiveness or Fairness?,” *Philosophical Papers* Vol. 44, No. 2 (2015): 237.

Thomason points out that retributive emotions do not express compassion and humility and thus they are thought to be alienating (casting a gap between me and the offender) and judgmental (it is ‘downward-looking’ because we presume that we actually can judge the other).⁶² Thomason tackles the first argument that anger is alienating and prevents us from seeing the common humanity we share with our offender. Anger fails to demonstrate to the offender the care and concern that we would otherwise show for our fellow human beings. “Given that we can be angry with friends, family members, and spouses, this conclusion seems not to follow[.]”⁶³ Thomason argues. She points out that we, indeed, can get most angry with people whose well-being we care about the most (precisely because of this emotion invested), and at times forgiveness becomes rather difficult in such situations. We might not be able to feel love while being angry, but this does not entail the fact that anger precludes love. Thomason’s aim is to demonstrate that anger does not preclude basic moral consideration – that is, seeing someone as a moral agent in the first place. After all, “[i]t is the special moral dignity of the wrongdoer that makes the injury we sustained at her hand not simply an unfortunate harm, like a natural accident, but an offense against us[.]”⁶⁴ Thomason furthers that if we want to think of basic moral consideration not only in terms of moral agency, but also in terms of benevolence, anger still does not preclude it. She points to the same argument as in the case of love and anger – being angry with someone and not *feeling* benevolent toward the wrongdoer does not mean that we gave up *being* benevolent and gave up all the moral considerations we owe him/her.

Furthermore, Thomason also rejects the consideration that anger is judgmental (in the sense of ranking oneself above the offender). “But to see someone as an offender does not entail that we see him as an inferior[.]” Thomason writes, “[i]n resentment, the victim protests the trespass, affirming both its wrongfulness and the moral significance of both herself and the offender[.]”⁶⁵ Thus she argues that the perception, that is, the registration of an offense entails a confirmation of a moral standing of the offender; it acknowledges that “the offender is a moral agent like herself who speaks the same moral language.”⁶⁶ If one understands herself and the offender as moral agents then anger is not a real threat to a proper humility because humility requires understanding that one can also make the same missteps as the offender, but it does not demarcate what kind of attitude we should take against the offense, including that of our own. “If an agent believed that undeserved injuries deserve anger,” Thomason writes, “she would still be properly humble as long as she accepted that her moral mistakes also deserved anger.”⁶⁷ Thomason furthers that anger can imply the notion of superiority, but it does not have to – if we judge someone to be significantly beneath us, in often case, the injury will not register (precisely because of the lack of care). The mechanisms of trying to cool someone’s anger by proclaiming ‘it is not worth it,’ point precisely to the fact that getting angry with someone attaches a significant

⁶² Cf. *Ibid.*, 244.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 245.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 246 quoting Pamela Hieronymi, “Articulating an Uncompromising Forgiveness,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 62, No. 3 (2001): 553.

⁶⁵ Thomason, “Forgiveness or Fairness?,” 246 quoting Hieronymi, “Articulating an Uncompromising Forgiveness,” 530.

⁶⁶ Thomason, “Forgiveness or Fairness?,” 247.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 247.

amount of importance to the person.⁶⁸

Retributive emotions such as anger and resentment while not necessarily constituting positive feelings toward others, do not exclude our compassion and humility – which forms a general framework of regard for the other. This is rather evident in our personal relationships and there is no reason to think that the same mechanisms cannot apply to distant others.

2.3 NUSSBAUM AGAINST ANGER

“Even God prays. What is His prayer? May it be My will that My love of compassion overwhelm my demand for strict justice.”⁶⁹

Though we maintain a general interpretation of Nussbaum’s philosophy as aiming at the betterment of society in the here and now while contributing to the formation of more just and compassionate imaginations of individuals,⁷⁰ we could say that the preceding quotation captures the spirit of her evolving view on anger. We have already presented the contours of Nussbaum’s argument in the second chapter of this work where she moved from a limited appreciation of ‘justified anger’ as a force in a fight for social justice to becoming very critical of the emotion and admitting only something she calls ‘transitional anger.’⁷¹ In her recent article Nussbaum declares: “I am hereby renouncing a range of things I said in earlier work about the constructive role of anger, and I am now saying something very radical: that in a sane and not excessively anxious and status-focused person, anger’s idea of retribution or payback is a brief dream or cloud, soon dispelled by saner thoughts of personal and social welfare.”⁷² Nussbaum’s views on anger developed into a very critical stance, but we should also note that in the works on emotions previously examined, she did not comment extensively on anger. Her comments involved identifying anger as an ambivalent emotion and even though she admitted to a possible ethical advantage of a ‘justified anger,’ she nonetheless, advocated for compassion as a constructive and reliable guide to approach questions of justice.⁷³

This section will unpack her further developed views on anger and her suggested alternative – compassionate hope.⁷⁴ Nussbaum now takes up the task of defining anger explicitly and does so within an Aristotelian framework, in similar vein to the discussion on anger above. Anger, Nussbaum claims, is “a desire accompanied by pain for an imagined retribution on account of an imagined slighting inflicted by people who have no

⁶⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 247.

⁶⁹ Jeffrie G. Murphy and Jean Hampton, *Forgiveness and Mercy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 4 quoting Mahzhor for Yom Kippur. The Rabbinical Assembly of New York, 439 from Berakhot 7a; the emphasis is ours.

⁷⁰ See section I. *Introduction to Martha C. Nussbaum’s Ethical Project* with all its subsections in Chapter I.

⁷¹ See sections 4.1.1.4 *The Case of Anger* and 4.1.1.5 *Concluding Remarks* in Chapter II.

⁷² Martha C. Nussbaum, “Transitional Anger,” *Journal of the American Philosophical Association* Vol. 1, No. 1 (2015): 51.

⁷³ Again, see our analysis in section 4.1.1.4 *The Case of Anger* in Chapter II.

⁷⁴ We should note that Nussbaum’s views on anger developed during the production of this work, thus it was an interesting process following up and adjusting our own interpretation. Her extended work on the emotion of anger – *Anger and Forgiveness* – is not yet published, but we can look into her recent article on the matter for some core ideas and arguments.

legitimate reason to slight oneself or one's own."⁷⁵ Nussbaum notes that the target of anger is the *person* who inflicted the perceived damage and the focus of it is an *act* done by the person perceived as wrongful damage. We should be attentive at this moment as Nussbaum is starting to design her main argument concerning the nature of anger – unlike the previous thinkers (Aquinas included), she points out that it is not the unjust harm that is the focus of anger, but rather the act through which it is inflicted, that is, slighting or down-ranking. Furthermore, Nussbaum interprets that slighting or down-ranking is not an omnipotent element of anger, and opines that Aristotle might have made a small mistake with this understanding. Nonetheless, the concept is very characteristic to how anger 'reasons.' Even though, Aristotle makes the reference to down-ranking in connection to his own honor culture, Nussbaum argues that it is naïve to think that in contemporary Western culture, people are not concerned with their standing. She wants to construe the perceived down-ranking of anger as a status injury and suggests that while it is not always the case, very often anger is about it. "And status-injury has a narcissistic flavor[,] Nussbaum writes, "rather than focusing on the wrongfulness of the act as such, a focus that might lead to concern for wrongful acts of the same type more generally, the status-angry person focuses obsessively on her own standing vis-à-vis others."⁷⁶

Now the other element of anger's judgment that Nussbaum distrusts is its retributive desire which she conceives as a desire seeking to compensate for the damage which was inflicted to the perceiver. Nussbaum suggests that the idea that a payback can in some way lessen or undo our own damage is irrational and grounded in a kind of magical thinking – "The fantasy that payback restores is magical thinking, abetted by ideas of cosmic balance that are deeply engrained in many cultures, but not the less irrational for that."⁷⁷ Yet, if we think of payback not in a sense of undoing damage, but as a retaliation of an injured status, then it is not based on magical thinking (in this case, retaliation can be achieved through a juridical system or some other way). Nussbaum furthers: "Notice that things make sense only if the focus is *purely* on relative status, rather than on some intrinsic attribute (health, safety, bodily integrity, friendship, love, wealth, good academic work) that has been jeopardized by the wrongful act. Retaliation does not confer or restore those things."⁷⁸ Nussbaum's aim is to demonstrate that things connected to human dignity are not that easily damaged and if our injury concerns matters that are not of a purely relative status there is no justification for the thought that payback will restore it. Her core argument is that anger focuses on the act of slighting (if such down-ranking is perceived) at which point our anger is about status injury – which is essentially narcissist – we can retaliate our status. In this way Nussbaum unhooks anger from the concept of human dignity since in most cases our anger is about relative matters. If we get angry about the matters of intrinsic importance – anger's desire for payback is illusionary because inflicting damage on the wrongdoer does not restore our own damage. Framing anger's desire in that way Nussbaum detaches anger from the concept of fighting for justice.

Throughout her text Nussbaum illustrates her views on anger by tackling an example of possible reactions of a young woman when she learns that her close friend was raped.

⁷⁵ Nussbaum, "Transitional Anger," 42 quoting Aristotle, *Rhetoric, Book II*, 1378b.

⁷⁶ Nussbaum, "Transitional Anger," 45.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 49.

Nussbaum thinks that there are several ways this woman can deal with the situation:

Three paths lie before her. Either she goes down the path of status-focus, seeing the event as all about her and her rank, or she focuses on payback and imagines that the offender's suffering would actually make things better, a thought that doesn't make sense. Or, if she is rational, after exploring and rejecting these two roads, she will notice that a third path is open to her, which is the best of all: she can focus on doing what would make sense in the situation and be really helpful. This may include the punishment of O, but in a spirit that is ameliorative rather than retaliatory.⁷⁹

The first path involves a narcissistic error or status error for Nussbaum. Here the idea of payback is intelligible, but it seems morally flawed. This path perceives all the injuries as issues of relative personal rank making the world revolve around our desires of control. The second path focuses on the damage done to the genuine good (in the case of the rape, the bodily integrity), but considers that the suffering of the offender somehow atones that loss. This is not a moral error, Nussbaum opines, but an error of rational thinking.⁸⁰ If we truly want to improve society and offenders we have to turn to the third path – a path of compassionate hope.

Nussbaum considers anger to be a bad adviser and she wants to focus on thoughts that are genuinely concerned with advancing personal and social wellbeing, even in the face of great injury. She calls those forward-looking thoughts, the movement from anger to compassionate hope, the Transition. We have already encountered Nussbaum's recent views on advancement of questions of social justice where she takes such political leaders as Martin Luther King and Gandhi, among others, as exemplary figures. The Transition, even in the face of great injustice, maintains a future-looking, not a retributive perspective. Justice can be achieved only through intelligent and imaginative movement and this constitutes the core of Nussbaum's concept of the Transition. The Transition wants reconciliation and shared effort; even forgiveness, understood in classical terms, is not its aim:

We notice something else: once the Transition gets underway, there is no room for forgiveness as classically conceived in transactional terms, namely, as a waiving of resentment because of an expression of contrition. The payback mentality wants groveling. The Transition mentality wants justice and brotherhood.⁸¹

One could wonder what the justice and brotherhood the Transition seeks is based on if the initial relationship is broken and not yet mended. But Nussbaum moves on with her exposé and attempts to indicate a peculiar species of anger she finds legitimate in the process of the Transition. The only kind of emotion that recognizes injury and urges that something needs to be done to change it is Transition-Anger. And this is entirely the cognitive content of this emotion – recognizing how outrageous the situation is and feeling

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁸⁰ Nussbaum's argument in a nutshell is as follows: "To put my radical claim succinctly: when anger makes sense, it is normatively problematic (focused on status); when it is normatively reasonable (focused on the injury), it doesn't make good sense, and is normatively problematic in that different way. In a rational person, anger, realizing that, soon laughs at itself and goes away." Nussbaum, "Transitional Anger," 51-52.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 53.

the urge to do something about it without a retributive desire:

Transition-Anger does not focus on status; nor does it want, even briefly, the suffering of the offender as a type of payback for the injury. It never gets involved in that type of magical thinking. It focuses on future welfare from the start. Saying ‘Something should be done about this’, Transition-Anger commits itself to a search for strategies, but it remains an open question whether the suffering of the offender will be a strong candidate.⁸²

How can we define Transition-Anger conceptually? Is it a species of anger as we commonly understand it? Nussbaum leaves this question open, because of the conviction that such borderline cases as the Transition-Anger are seldom treated well while attempting to conceptualize them. Nussbaum thinks this is clearly an emotion and it is delicately separate from compassionate hope because it is focused on outrage and the offender is its target; but instead of seeking retribution it looks forward. This is a rare emotional reaction to have from the start regarding human injustices, Nussbaum declares, as it is more common in the beginning to get angry and gradually to move toward the thoughts of social welfare. The Transition-Anger also typically requires self-discipline over a long period. Nussbaum further suggests that we manage our anger and move toward Transition-Anger by a sympathetic understanding of the other person’s positions and motives – “if you see the other person’s point of view, by that very act you are no longer exclusively focused on your own status, and therefore you are less prone to make the status error. You are also less prone to make the payback error, for you will see the future as one involving other people, and your tendency to think of welfare in general social terms will be assisted.”⁸³

Nussbaum finishes her analysis of anger by acknowledging that despite the ethical problems inherent in anger’s outlook this is a deeply human reaction which has its roots in evolutionary mechanisms of ‘fight or flight.’ When it comes to her own theory of emotions, Nussbaum is still willing to recognize anger as a signal that something is amiss and “[w]hile one could have that idea of significant injury without anger – with, and through, grief and compassion – those two emotions do not contain the idea of wrongfulness, which is anger’s specific focus.”⁸⁴ From that point of view anger is a useful wake-up call, but we should always be aware of the signal it sends because of its conceptual connection with the idea of payback which is misleading. Because of this danger, a person is always advised to move beyond anger into the process of the Transition. Nussbaum also agrees that anger is motivational because it encourages people to act in the face of perceived injury, but once we are energized to act for a change – we should not fall back on anger’s retributive fantasies. Thus Nussbaum claims that we can affirm this very limited role of anger – as a signal and a motivational power, but we should insist that the payback element is misleading and emotion in general is very likely to lead us astray. Anger is also a deterring emotion, Nussbaum points out, and a common future of stability and peace is not very likely to be built on the spirit of fear it seeds. Thus Nussbaum concludes: “As Aeschylus notes, however, forward-looking systems of justice

⁸² *Ibid.*, 54.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 54.

have to a great extent made this emotion unnecessary, whether in personal or in public life. Like Athena's citizens, we are now free to attend to its irrationality and destructiveness, and we should do so, focusing first on intimate personal relations, and then on the political realm."⁸⁵

2.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Nussbaum seems to choose the Stoic interpretation of the emotion of anger.⁸⁶ Anger, like all the emotions, has epistemic value, but we should be attentive to the presence of the emotion, to its alert signals indicating that there might be something wrong with a situation we are in. The cognitive content of the emotion is too problematic to be trusted as a good adviser in any moral situation. Anger can also motivate one to act for a change, but once we are set to do something about the situation – we should not be lured into the payback fantasy. The aim of Nussbaum's article is to argue, as we have seen her arguing in the *Political Emotions*, that in "this day of torment, of craziness, of foolishness – only love can make it end in happiness and joy."⁸⁷ Anger is at best a useful wake-up call, but the perspective it suggests is flawed either ethically or rationally – it either suggests that our own ranking is what matters in situations of injustice or that if we get angry about genuine goods, it is irrational to think that a payback will somehow vindicate the situation when in reality it does not restore the lost good. Nussbaum thinks that anger does not provide a sustainable perspective for building personal and political relationships. We are sympathetic to her perspective – anger alarms, it does not build. Nussbaum has built a robust account on how emotions such as love and compassion aid toward one's own moral growth and growth of our political communities and this account promises itself to be a wise guide.⁸⁸

Yet even when we acknowledge the need for a loving and compassionate outlook in our societies, Aquinas working out of an Aristotelian concept of anger and the contemporary voices arguing for the legitimacy of this emotion leave one wrestling. Aquinas's distinction between anger as a passion and anger as a sin is insightful as he makes us attentive to anger's epistemic worth when it is a reaction to an unjustly inflicted injury, but he is very particular about anger's grave consequences when one is excessively angry. Aquinas, nonetheless, also considers that a lack of anger where the passion is appropriate is morally flawed. Contemporary thinkers Srinivasan, Henderson, and Thomason also argue for aptness of anger with a special attention to the context of social justice. They suggest that by proclaiming anger as ethically useless we take away an important voice, an insightful perspective from our ethical thought. The slight, the injury

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁸⁶ Seneca, for instance, argued for a total elimination of anger because the emotion inevitably leads to evil. See Seneca, "On Anger," in *Moral Essays, Vol. 1*. Translated by John W. Basore, Loeb Classical Library (London: W. Heinemann, 1928).

⁸⁷ Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 176.

⁸⁸ See section 2.4 *Roots of Emotional Experience in Infancy* with all its subsections in Chapter I. Chapter II is generally devoted to presenting that position.

perceived by anger is understood here as a perception of the self as valuable and has to do with self-respect instead of having a strong link with holding onto one's ego and one's social standing as we have encountered in Nussbaum's arguments. Additionally, anger is a perception of how one relates with his/her surroundings. Furthermore, there is something particularly ethically moving in the argument that anger usually provides the voice for the most vulnerable, most deprived, most injured. To dismiss their moral emotion without looking into its background reasons does not seem ethically correct. Do Aquinas, Srinivasan, Henderson or Thomason encourage anger? Our interpretation is that they do not – they suggest complementing our own anger with discernment. The contemporary thinkers, additionally, encourage us to look into the anger of others sympathetically. Dismissing the anger of someone who has suffered a serious injustice or harm seems to be a breach of the relationship of solidarity and does not take someone's pain seriously. Nussbaum's suggestion that her treatment of anger is pragmatic and serves as a vision for sustainable political communities might be true, but the authors arguing pro-anger want to remind us that our political communities are constituted of particular individuals. From that point of view, if we are confronted with a particular emotionally injured and angry individual, the dismissal of his/her anger as either narcissistic or irrational does not seem to lead to any practical consequences. Nussbaum only accepts something she calls Transition-Anger which is left conceptually undefined in her exposé; it may be a species of anger traditionally understood, but it is also close to compassionate hope. It is anger without actually getting angry, one could conclude. It recognizes that the situation is outrageous; it wants to move to change it, yet without the ambivalence of the retributive emotions and it does not desire payback. This philosophically constructed emotion is the reaction of a well self-disciplined person, a leader like King and Gandhi to whom Nussbaum often refers. Is it then reasonable to argue that it is not possible for just any and everyone to achieve a compassionate state of mind? That is not the case; it is quite the contrary. We do think that the goal of any adequate ethical project is to encourage one to change for better in practical terms, in our daily lives. What we want to highlight however, is the view that reacting to injustice with an outrage that strives for change, yet with a loving mind requires prior emotional resources often unavailable for people who come from the most vulnerable social contexts. This is precisely why such people are owed recognition of the aptness of their anger. Anger, oftentimes, is an indication of real suffering which needs to be recognized in all its profoundness in order to build a relationship of trust and solidarity. This enables us to steer beyond our anger to a path of healing in subsequent courses of action.

Finally, we could say that emotions like hope, love, and compassion suggest a perspective that can be used to build the world we want to live in. Anger, we can claim, is a response to the world we live in, the world of imperfect politics and social relationships. We want to argue that anger offers a useful alert to reflect about the reasons behind it and, in so doing, disclose situations that were not obvious to us. When it comes to the anger of others, especially those coming from fragile life circumstances, recognizing their anger as apt shows solidarity with their experience which is sometimes defined as and entangled with anger in very intimate ways. While ethical projects should not encourage anger, they should not shy away from reflections on this emotion and should instead suggest ways to access its possible meanings. That being said, we do believe that the emotions of love and

compassion are reliable aids in building sustainable relationships with the self, others close to us, and our larger communities. This is evident from the structural arrangement of our own work which is devoted in large part to contemplating the nature and possible ethical benefits of compassion. It is also important to note that for both Nussbaum and Aquinas ethically acceptable anger signifies transition, an emotion that is not a final answer (remember, for Aquinas anger is an irascible passion which never signifies a last movement of the sense appetite) but always has to move beyond itself. While we argue that a sustainable perspective which aims toward the flourishing of personal and political relationships focuses on what is beyond anger, it is also particularly important to create space in ethics to reflect on what anger signals and discloses, especially in the lives of those who suffer injustices.

3. NUSSBAUM'S AND AQUINAS'S THOUGHT: SEARCHING FOR THE COMMON GROUND AND THE POINTS OF DIVERGENCE

In the upcoming sections we will present the main points of convergence and divergence in Nussbaum's and Aquinas's accounts. We will start by highlighting the similarity of their general universalist ethical framework which is attentive to human desires. We will then demarcate the delicate line separating Nussbaum's ethics of well-being and Aquinas's ethics of happiness. Thereupon, we will identify the main elements of Nussbaum's and Aquinas's accounts of the emotions/passions. Additionally, at this juncture, we will search for points of similarity and departure. Firstly, we will identify both accounts as presenting the emotions/passions as intentional phenomena that locate us in a relationship with our environment. We will continue by differentiating Nussbaum's and Aquinas's suggestions for describing the kind of responses emotions/passions are to our environment – Nussbaum advocates the view that the emotions are forms of thought and Aquinas considers the passions to be the movements of the sense appetite. After this discussion we will present how both thinkers treat the bodily element in the emotions/passions and we will further illustrate how they treat some troublesome tendencies inherent in human affective experience. After laying this basis we will present what we consider to be a culmination of Nussbaum's and Aquinas's accounts – their proposals for training and cultivating our human affective dimension.

3.1 UNIVERSALIST ETHICS GROUNDED ON INNER EQUIPMENT

When thinking of the general ethical frameworks within which Aquinas and Nussbaum conceive the passions/emotions, we cannot ignore a certain similarity between the two which can be partially attributed to a common source they both greatly value – Aristotle. The emotional dimension constitutes a significant portion of their thought precisely because they consider ethics to be based on human cares. In the previous chapter we broadly situated Aquinas's ethical thought highlighting that

for Aquinas, normative principles are always conditional upon certain facts about what we desire. There is nothing about these principles that makes them true in the abstract,

independently of facts about human nature. Instead, those acts are morally right that best allow us to achieve the various ends that human beings all desire.⁸⁹

We have seen that Aquinas's metaphysical principles allow him to trust human desire as a source of ethics – his theistic vision of a created good human nature is a guarantor and the basis of his thought. Nussbaum does not presuppose a theistic or, in fact, as she argues, any metaphysical background to her ethical approach. At the outset of her argumentation for the capabilities approach, she states that her suggested principles are 'free-standing' and "not provided with any particular set of metaphysical or epistemological foundations."⁹⁰ Yet, in a manner uncommon to a liberal thinker, she also defends a universalist ethical account of human good which is anchored in certain observable human capacities.

Nussbaum argues that she builds her claims on the premise that there are some universally recognizable human capabilities which ought to be protected and promoted – and a partial justification of this is grounded in the fact that people typically desire those things.⁹¹ Nussbaum is attentive to human desire in the political conception of the good for two reasons. First, it plays an epistemic role by being indicative of the fact that the chosen conception can prove itself a likely guarantor of political stability and it also "plays a limited and ancillary role in justifying the political conception."⁹² What is more, for Nussbaum, desire in itself is valuable. "I have argued," Nussbaum writes, "that desire is an intelligent part of the human being that deserves respect in itself in any procedure of justification we would design. Thus it seems to me that it is not only on account of stability that we refer to desire, but also because we respect that aspect of the human personality."⁹³ "Similarly," Nussbaum furthers, "I would argue that the emotions, desires, and even appetites of a human being are all humanly significant parts of her personality, deserving of respect as such. The personality is a unity, and practical reason suffuses all of its parts, making them all human rather than animal."⁹⁴ This is also essentially an argument we found in Aquinas.⁹⁵

It is, therefore, not surprising that ethical frameworks attentive to human cares also offer substantive discussions on human emotions – as we witness from both Nussbaum's and Aquinas's accounts.

⁸⁹ Pasnau and Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas*, 222.

⁹⁰ Martha C. Nussbaum, "Political Objectivity," *New Literary History* Vol. 32, No. 4 (2001): 887.

⁹¹ Cf. Nussbaum, *Women and Human Development*, 112.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 152.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 154.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 155.

⁹⁵ This is also Aquinas's reasoning when he defends the view that virtues directed at the passions also reside in the passions themselves. Nothing is superfluous in human nature and by our capacity of defining ourselves by practical reason we render our distinct faculties the dignity they deserve: "On the other hand, if what we are calling 'passions' are all the movements of the sentient appetite, then it is plain that those moral virtues that have to do with the passions as their proper matter cannot exist without the passions. The reason for this is that, given the Stoic view, it would follow that moral virtue renders the sentient appetite altogether superfluous. But it does not pertain to virtue that the powers that are subject to reason should be deprived of their own acts; rather, what pertains to virtue is that those powers should execute reason's command by engaging in their proper acts. Hence, just as a virtue orders the members of the body toward the appropriate exterior acts, so it orders the sentient appetite toward its own well-ordered movements." *ST I-II* 59.5.

3.1.1 Human Flourishing: Between Well-Being and Happiness

Both Aquinas and Nussbaum also frame their ethics around the concept of desirable end of human life – to put it in contemporary terms – human flourishing. Neither account, however, equates it with a subjective state of being content. Both thinkers declare, as we have seen, that human beings share basic forms of functioning and that fulfilling those are essential to living a truly human life.

We want to state, together with moral theologian Lisa Sowle Cahill, that the method utilized in this kind of ethics represents an inductive approach to universal human values and ethical principles. In constructing Nussbaum’s universalism, an argument of the inductive nature, Cahill follows Hilary Charlesworth, a feminist international law scholar, and suggests that Nussbaum’s argument can also be labeled as ‘transversalism’ – “The term suggests a method of inquiry in which agreement does not come from pre-existing premises, but is built up by empathetic and mutually critical dialogue. Partners cross back and forth into one another’s territories, expressing their own values and claims, listening to others, modifying their own perspectives, discovering together the moral nonnegotiables, and adopting an appreciative yet critical approach to their different realizations in different cultures.”⁹⁶ We should, however, note that Aquinas’s ethics is grounded in fixed metaphysical principles; the ethical method he suggests is, indeed, inductive observation. Lombardo suggests looking at it as an investigation of the structural features of human psychology and action – Aquinas identifies the constitutive elements of a given nature and then observes what brings that nature to fulfillment.⁹⁷ Lombardo argues:

[B]ecause our inclinations are oriented toward the perfection of the human person, they are fundamentally trustworthy. We can discover something about human flourishing by reflecting on our subjective experience of desire. Our experience of desire cannot be taken entirely at face value, due to the possibility of disordered desire and self-deception, but it does provide a legitimate, if incomplete, basis for determining how we should live.⁹⁸

While both Aquinas and Nussbaum are Aristotelian in considering that human flourishing consists of good activity – Nussbaum, unlike Aquinas, does not provide one with a ‘thick,’ comprehensive account of it, and for the reasons of political applicability chooses to define the human good in the language of capabilities. We have already indicated that Nussbaum, in her account of well-being, consults human desires, emotions, appetites to demarcate the boundaries of human capabilities; moreover, since she construes emotions as value appraisals – our educated emotions are perceived as normative to such a pursuit. Looking at the epistemic knowledge that the emotion of compassion offers, Nussbaum concludes that a truly flourishing human life is impossible without it – “the

⁹⁶ Lisa Sowle Cahill, “Justice for Women. Martha Nussbaum and Catholic Social Teaching,” in *Transforming Unjust Structures. The Capability Approach*, eds. Séverine Deneulin, Mathias Nebel, and Nicholas Sagovsky (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006), 87.

⁹⁷ Cf. Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 232.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 233.

teaching of painful compassion is the beginning of social change and of the possibility of real happiness.”⁹⁹ It is, indeed, from our weakness that our fragile happiness is born.¹⁰⁰

Jean Porter highlights the delicate line that separates Nussbaum’s ethics of well-being and Aquinas’s ethics of happiness. Porter argues that even though the concepts are commonly understood as ‘human flourishing’ and though they have some relationship to each other, they, nonetheless, should not be entirely equated.¹⁰¹ In the ethics of well-being, the human needs, desires and regularities are seen as ‘raw,’ ‘neutral’ materials out of which we can construct various ethical systems. Porter, however, is wary of such an approach and she is thus critical of Nussbaum’s attempt to construct a universally persuasive account which would derive its conclusions from a morally neutral account of well-being. As we have seen, Nussbaum claims that capabilities should be regarded as a result of cross-cultural observation and experience and their ethical evaluation rests on a ‘freestanding moral idea.’ Porter objects to such an argument and asserts that an attempt to ground capabilities on a ‘freestanding moral idea’ is “reminiscent of the claims of Grisez and Finnis to derive moral conclusions on the basis of self-evident intuitions of value without any need to appeal to empirical or metaphysical claims.”¹⁰² Furthermore, Porter suggests, an attempt to base ethical accounts on a neutral conception of human well-being may not do the work Nussbaum hopes it to do:

Capabilities are not developed and exercised in isolation; rather, they are exercised in an orderly and reciprocally conditioned way, in and through the pursuit of a way of life which will always necessarily be to some extent culturally specific. Our moral intuitions about the claims attached to these capabilities will always be conditioned, to a greater or lesser degree, by our moral judgments regarding an overall way of life.¹⁰³

Thus Porter points out that life is never ‘neutral;’ people conceive their ideas contextually and they are always guided by particular philosophical (be it explicitly understood or intuitively felt) premises. Nussbaum is explicit that her approach is liberal – this means, Porter asserts, that it is already shaped by specific, not neutral moral values. One may debate the content of capabilities, but what Nussbaum essentially argues for is the moral significance of indication and creation of spaces and possibilities for functioning; the functioning itself being a choice. This move in itself, Porter claims, “reflects a moral judgment about the overriding value of autonomy that is itself, at least arguably, culturally specific.”¹⁰⁴ Defining capabilities is already a moral task, Porter argues, and in choosing some over the other we already suggest a normative anthropological picture. She thus concludes: “In the process of moving from an account of well-being to moral theory, it seems that we will inevitably find ourselves making the kinds of value judgments about the proper form of human life that we were hoping to avoid.”¹⁰⁵

⁹⁹ Martha C. Nussbaum, “Who Is the Happy Warrior? Philosophy Poses Questions to Psychology,” *Journal of Legal Studies* Vol. 37, No. 52 (2008): 98.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 598. Here Nussbaum alludes to Rousseau’s argument found in *Emile*.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Porter, *Nature as Reason*, 146.

¹⁰² Cf. *Ibid.*, 149-150.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 150.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 151.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 152.

We should point out once again that Nussbaum is rather explicit in centering her account of capabilities on liberal democratic values. She wants to present the ethical evaluations as detached from any specific metaphysics in order to suggest that these evaluations rest, rather, on cross-cultural intuitions that the life of a human being, indeed, matters. Nussbaum indicates that her aim is not a comprehensive, but a political account with a pragmatic goal – that people defending particular comprehensive ethical accounts could have a common ground and in the broad lines of capabilities would find some overlapping points of agreement. This, Nussbaum thinks, may be a practical solution for plural contemporary societies that acknowledge that human beings across the world do not often have a chance to live a dignified life and desire more justice. Cahill, on her behalf, credits Nussbaum for such an attempt and her thought-provoking account. Furthermore, Cahill indicates that there are a number of instances where Catholic social teaching and Nussbaum’s capabilities approach can meet, most notably in the stride against moral relativism, as well as the insistence upon the method Cahill labels as moral realism which focuses on the inductive approach. Here, Cahill further credits Nussbaum for her incorporation of emotions into the process of gaining moral knowledge and evaluation. Indeed, “[u]nlike many liberal philosophers, Nussbaum believes it is not only possible but also necessary to talk about ‘universal obligations,’ living a life that is ‘truly human,’ and about specific types of social organization that are or are not compatible with ‘human dignity.’”¹⁰⁶ Yet, like Porter, Cahill indicates that the largest point of divergence between Catholic social thought and Nussbaum is Nussbaum’s insistence on autonomy and liberty as overarching criteria. Nussbaum persistently defines justice in terms of liberal criteria and Cahill insightfully comments that there are areas where Nussbaum’s thought could benefit from Catholic social teaching:

There is something missing in the liberal scheme that can be provided by Catholic social teaching, and whose recognition is necessary for social change toward genuine equality. This missing factor is the intrinsically social nature of the person. The autonomy focus neglects precisely those social conditions of belonging, recognition, and access to material and political goods that Nussbaum wants to secure[.]¹⁰⁷

Catholic social teaching points to the social nature of human freedom and individuality. Furthermore, and very essentially, it highlights “the necessary role of participatory community in changing both individuals and social structures so that they are more just.”¹⁰⁸ Those are the areas that ethics based on Aquinas’s insights can provide. While Aquinas’s ethics of happiness bases itself on the same ‘data’ as the ethics of well-being, it is construed around the life of virtue – that is, it is based on a particular understanding of perfection. Thus Aquinas presents us with a substantive, ‘thicker’ account of happiness stemming from the Christian narrative. For Aquinas, the notion of happiness is central to his “theory of the natural law because it provides a framework within which to integrate two dimensions of human existence, namely, human nature comprehensively understood and the distinctive human character of natural existence, that is to say, human

¹⁰⁶ Cahill, “Justice for Women,” 87.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 98.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 89.

reason.”¹⁰⁹ Thus, happiness holds together two concepts – natural law and virtue – which sometimes can be perceived as standing in opposition to each other. Now the virtues themselves are dispositions perfecting our capacities for knowing and loving and they are exercised through a range of activities necessary for sustaining human life. In this sense, virtues considered as normative ideals “stem from and are ineliminably shaped by the natural inclinations and needs of the human organism. Hence, our paradigms for virtuous behavior, together with the reflective ideals grounded in those paradigms, represent the point of connection between well-being and the norms of the natural law – between nature as nature, in Albert’s words, and nature as reason.”¹¹⁰ Theological ethics is frequently appealing to the discussions on virtue (and, indeed, the discussions on how specific virtues bring human beings to full flourishing) – our task was to highlight the moral psychology from which Aquinas’s view on virtue stems and to show that the discussion on the passions is essential to ethics.¹¹¹

Aquinas and Nussbaum share similar baselines in the construction of their ethical projects. Nussbaum is a liberal thinker whose thought on human well-being aims to be part of contemporary political discussions; thus she does not offer ethics defined in terms of strict human functioning since she considers this to be a matter of choice in our pluralistic societies. Aquinas, on the other hand, was a thirteenth-century theologian who understood true human happiness to be the result of fulfilling one’s Christian way of living. Yet the approach of the two thinkers defines the human good in practical terms of universal desires and their ethics follow from it – be it fleshed out in a form of capabilities or broadly-construed inclinations. If we think of ethics from this perspective it suggests a platform for various ethical conceptions to meet and debate the possible meaning of those inclinations and capabilities and the moral claims they evoke. Lombardo suggests that accounts inspired by natural human equipment and desire that genuinely see human good as their goal seem to be able to join an open discussion. He furthers:

Anchoring ethics in questions of desire opens up many possibilities for fruitful conversation between ethical systems. The universal experience of desire, when deployed as a common point of reference, can bridge vastly different perspectives. Regardless of their ethical system or vocabulary, all participants in ethical discourse have personal experience of desire and direct observations about human tendencies and the structure of the human person. In consequence, they can all appeal to the same points of reference and have intelligible discussions... When our arguments are rooted in desire, there is always something concrete that we can reference: our experience and our observations (scientific or otherwise). Furthermore, arguing about what we truly desire and the nature of happiness is much more interesting than reciting reasons why we

¹⁰⁹ Porter, *Nature as Reason*, 143.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 163.

¹¹¹ Lombardo adds: “In the *Prima secundae*, Aquinas presents an overview of human psychology and its development through virtue and its deformation by sin. In the *Secunda secundae*, he builds on this foundation, and offers a detailed description of how specific virtues bring the human person to full flourishing... There is no need to strain to see how Aquinas’s discussion of virtue and vice relates to human affectivity. Quite the opposite: affectivity is a central concern of the *Secunda secundae*. Throughout Aquinas seems intent to show how the passions and affections are brought to perfection through virtue and grace and how they are put into disarray by vice. By contrast, he hardly ever discusses the role of precept or commandment in shaping human affectivity (or indeed in ethics more generally).” Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 148.

are, or are not, morally obliged to perform or avoid a certain action.¹¹²

Finally, we should conclude that despite the differences between Nussbaum's account of human well-being, an account meant for political purposes with a 'thinner' definition of the good, and Aquinas's comprehensive account of ethics suggesting concrete ways of functioning, culminating in the ultimate happiness of beatific vision, we judge that both ethical proposals contain strong aspects. These aspects constitute the universal scope of their ethics, the inductive approach to ethical methodology, and attentiveness to human cares, desires and emotions. Particularly attractive in both accounts is the potential of such ethical projects for dialogue in the search for common ground in discussions on the content of the good.

3.2 NUSSBAUM'S AND AQUINAS'S ACCOUNTS ON THE PASSIONS: INTENTIONAL PHENOMENA SITUATING US IN THE WORLD

If we understand the intimate link between Aquinas's and Nussbaum's moral psychology and their accounts of ethics, we should not be surprised with the positive evaluation of the passions/emotions they suggest. The previous chapters endeavored to present the positive vision of those accounts. Once again we encountered some common elements in the way Aquinas and Nussbaum described the nature of passions/emotions. Both describe them as intentional phenomena which indicate how we are relating to the world surrounding us. Aquinas's passions and Nussbaum's emotions are always about something, they are triggered by an object. Both accounts also suggest that often when we are experiencing different emotions, they, in fact, indicate the different ways we are relating with the same object. For Nussbaum, this process represents a judgment about the object we have. For Aquinas, the passions are movements of the sense appetite that depend on the sense apprehension which in turn can be influenced by cognitive evaluation on various levels (or, indeed, rise only by stimuli of sensation). This is also one of the attractive elements of Aquinas's account in light of what we know about emotion from a contemporary state of research.¹¹³

3.2.1 Reason and Emotion: Intelligent Responses and Apprehension-Appetite Distinction

Neither Nussbaum nor Aquinas renders emotions/passions to be irrational phenomena; in fact, they both consider them to be connected to our cognitive capacities. Nussbaum, as we have seen in Chapter I and Chapter II of this work, considers emotions to be intelligent, discriminating responses of the world around us.¹¹⁴ She suggests that the cognitive aspect is part of the emotion's constitution and thus we can think of them as forms of thoughts about the value of external goods.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 246.

¹¹³ See Chapter I, section 3. *Thinking of Nussbaum's Account of Emotions: Some Critical Reflections*, especially subsections 3.1 *A Distinction Between Basic and Complex Emotions* and 3.2 *Emotions, the Body, and the Brain*.

¹¹⁴ See especially Chapter I, section 2.2 *The Neo-Stoic Theory of Emotions* with all its subsections.

Aquinas does not locate the passions in the intellective appetite, but this does not mean that he considers them to be brute and non-discriminating. The particular line of interpretation we used suggested that the Thomistic passions could be distinguished as reason-independent and reason dependent – the latter is a response to reasoned judgment and the connection with reason here is rather straightforward. While the passions of the first group arise spontaneously by being triggered by sense and imagination, they still naturally obey reason, Aquinas asserts. Indeed, “[o]ne of the most crucial elements of Aquinas’s account of emotion is the premise that the passions naturally obey reason and naturally tend toward conformity with reason.”¹¹⁵ We have seen that this guidance does not mean complete subjection because reason has political rule over the passions; secondly, the reality of sin and its consequences make this inclination imperfect.¹¹⁶ Nonetheless, Aquinas’s account suggests that the intimate relationship between the passions and reason is real. This relationship is manifest by persuasion and formation of the intentional object of the passions. Aquinas thinks that a passion presents itself to our consciousness motivating us to act, but it waits for our decision to agree or disagree with it; thus we can guide our passions to a certain extent. Reason also shapes the intentional objects that passions respond to – if we change the evaluation of the situation about which we emote, the intensity of the passion will change or it will be replaced by another passion or cease altogether. In this instance, Lombardo adds that the natural obedience of the passions to reason grounds Aquinas’s thought on the virtuous and graced affectivity:

Since the passions naturally incline toward reason’s guidance, virtue does not imply any internal violence. Furthermore, grace does not transform affectivity by the imposition of something foreign to human nature, nor is grace a *deus ex machina* that magically solves the problem of internal disorder. Virtue and grace bring natural inclinations to fruition; they do not beat them into submission or eradicate them and replace them with something else. This account of virtuous and graced affectivity is nonviolent and humane, especially in contrast to those accounts that see virtue and grace in constant tension with our natural inclinations.¹¹⁷

Though both authors highlight that emotions/passions cannot be thought of completely independently of intellective cognition, it is here that their accounts diverge. Nussbaum considers emotion to be a vivid form of intellective cognition and Aquinas considers the passions to be movements of the sense appetite. A passion always depends on the sense apprehension, but apprehension is not part of a passion for Aquinas. We have argued that the sense apprehension in Aquinas’s thought should be understood broadly – in some cases a passion is a response to sense impression, in others, a response to cognitive judgment of various complexity levels mediated to the sensory power by the particular reason.¹¹⁸ Yet Aquinas is always very clear about the apprehension-appetite distinction. The distinction also enables him to account for the urgent-felt, often heated character of the passions – they are ultimately the movements of the sense appetite. Furthermore, the

¹¹⁵ Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 238.

¹¹⁶ The reason-passions dynamics is discussed in Chapter III, section 4. *The Passions, Reason, and Will* and reoccurs in all its subsections.

¹¹⁷ Lombardo, *The Logics of Desire*, 239.

¹¹⁸ See Chapter III, section 2.1 *Activation of a Passion: Sense and Intellectual Apprehension*, especially, subsections 2.1.2 *Apprehensive Powers of the Sensitive Soul* and 2.1.3 *Role of the Cogitative Power*.

distinction between apprehension and appetite is an important conceptual tool to illustrate that the sense apprehension grasps a thing as suitable or unsuitable in its particularity, but it is only through the power of the appetite the move toward or away from that object takes place. “It is the act of being moved by an object of apprehension (which is thus also an object of appetite) that constitutes an emotion[.]”¹¹⁹ Cates writes. She furthers that in Aquinas’s account we do not only hold the object of the passions in our minds, the object gets a hold of us – “[t]he power of appetite makes it possible for a person to be gripped by an object in a way that apprehension alone does not. Aquinas says that “the operation of the apprehensive power is completed in the very fact that the thing apprehended is in the one that apprehends: while the operation of the appetitive power is completed in the fact that he who desires is borne toward the thing desirable.”¹²⁰ It is the object that draws “us out of ourselves; it compels us to attend to it, to resonate with it, perhaps to approach it inwardly, to dwell within it, and to enjoy the pleasure of being with it.”¹²¹ Interestingly, in Aquinas’s account, as in Nussbaum’s, the object of the passion depends on one’s subjective perception of it; Aquinas also thinks that inasmuch as the object or certain of its features exist in reality, the object relates us to something outside ourselves.¹²² Cates suggests that we should think of apprehension in Aquinas’s thought as caused, at least partially, by the object being out there and having the qualities it has. Though a passion hangs on our apprehension, its dynamic character owns its source to the fact that a passion is a movement of our appetitive part. Aquinas’s account on the passions is flexible as it allows one to think of various dimensions of our emotional experience:

It allows us to attend to the cognitive dimension of emotion, if we choose. It allows us to attend also to the appetitive and, by extension, the motive dimensions. It allows us to isolate different apprehensions (from intellectual and general to sensory and particular), and it allows us to conceive their relationships to different kinds of appetitive motion (from those whose objects are intelligible and general to those whose objects are sensible and particular).¹²³

We have to highlight, once more, that for Aquinas, powers of apprehension and appetite in the reality of human experience always function in tandem with each other; that means, that if we judge an object to be good and attractive, we will also be attracted to it on some level (we also know that in the case of some most basic emotions, some perceptions trigger the emotion immediately).¹²⁴ Yet Cates points out that “strictly speaking, being attracted to an object is something more than apprehending it and judging it to have good or attractive properties. If we are actually attracted to an object that we judge to be good, it must be because the powers of both apprehension and appetite are engaged.”¹²⁵ Thus we can also say that thinking something to be good will not necessary lead us to be attracted to it or judging something to be bad will not necessary amount to our being repelled by it.

¹¹⁹ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 67.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 68. Here Cates quotes *ST I* 81.1.

¹²¹ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 67.

¹²² Cf. *Ibid.*, 67.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹²⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, 68-69.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 69.

It is precisely the apprehension-appetite distinction that enables the flexibility of Aquinas's account. Nussbaum, as we have seen, considers all emotions to be forms of intellectual apprehension. The emotion-thought still represents a kind of movement for Nussbaum, but she associates it with the movement of the thought embracing an appearance of a particular importance. Thus Nussbaum does not consider knowing to be a static process and she accepts the Stoic conception of reason as a dynamic faculty.¹²⁶ When we feel the tension between the ways we think about a particular matter and how we emote about it, Nussbaum explains it as an intense, heated conversation between the thoughts of different sorts about what we truly value in our lives.¹²⁷ If the conflict appears to happen between the emotions, between the ways we find ourselves emoting about a certain object, Nussbaum also suggests seeing it as a clash of judgments emotions entail.

Though we want to credit Nussbaum for the tremendous work she does to make one aware of the intentionality of the emotions, their connection to cognition, and their ethical worth, we should also note that Aquinas's account of the passions gives one more wide-ranging tools to think of the emotional experiences. For instance, it allows one to assess the situations of emotional turmoil from various angles. In certain cases, an emotional conflict can be seen as a conflict of apprehension – our cognitive and sense impressions suggest different evaluations of an object, sometimes it can be caused by different desires competing with each other.¹²⁸ Because of the distinction Aquinas makes between apprehension and the appetite and consequently, due to the flexibility such a view creates, Aquinas's account seems to be more faithful to the ordinary experience of the emotions and the contemporary psychology/neuroscience findings by incorporating cognitive and affective elements in his views on the passions.¹²⁹

3.2.2 Nussbaum and Aquinas on the Bodily Element of Emotions/Passions

Another important and related point of divergence between Nussbaum's and Aquinas's thought on the emotions/passions is in their treatment of the bodily element. Nussbaum opines that for a sentient being having an emotion always feels like something and in many cases concrete emotions will have characteristic bodily expressions. Yet she also believes that these may vary and that what constitutes the essence of a concrete emotional experience is the judgment of a situation – we recall her example of grief – it is not the physical expression that forms the core of the emotion, not the trembling of the hands or whatever other physiological change constitutes grief; grief is a thought of irrevocable loss. We believe that one has to credit Nussbaum for her exegesis of emotional experiences, their connection with our cognitive capacities and their meaning dimension that she so forcefully brought to the academic discussions. Her insights are powerful explanatory tools to help us to think about and cope with our emotions meaningfully. Nonetheless, to separate the emotions from the body also seems not entirely faithful to their nature. An

¹²⁶ See Chapter I, sections 2.1 *The Stoic Roots*; 2.2.6 *Feeling and Kinetic Properties of the Emotion*.

¹²⁷ See Chapter I, section 2.2.10 *Emotional Conflict*.

¹²⁸ Cf. Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 73-74.

¹²⁹ See again Chapter I, section 3. *Thinking of Nussbaum's Account of Emotions: Some Critical Reflections*, especially, subsections 3.1 *A Distinction Between Basic and Complex Emotions* and 3.2 *Emotions, the Body, and the Brain*.

emotion is also a bodily experience; the more complex ones can be responses to our cognitive appraisals of certain situations, but the bodily change cannot be seen as accidental to what emotion is.

In this respect the flexibility of Aquinas's account of emotions seems to do adequate work in highlighting the intentionality of emotion, its connection to sense and intellective apprehension and its bodily element. A passion is a motion of the body-soul composite and it occurs "through the exercise of one's sensory appetite. As such it has a material element. It is composed, in part, of patterned bodily changes that can be subtle, but are often noticeable in the form of felt bodily sensations."¹³⁰ A passion for Aquinas is an embodied experience and this includes the fact that our bodies can also serve as a source of information indicating how we are faring with our environment – if we attend to the condition of our own bodies it can signal the emotion we are experiencing. The way Aquinas's account accommodates the cognitive and the bodily elements is another strong aspect of it in comparison to the lack of the embodiment of emotions in Nussbaum's account.¹³¹

3.2.3 Troublesome Affectivity: Nussbaum on the Concept of Radical Evil and Aquinas on Sin

¹³⁰ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 62.

¹³¹ A recent study in cognitive neuroscience acknowledges that the mechanisms that give rise to the conscious experience of emotional feelings are still unresolved, but that in often case we experience emotions directly in the body. The study indicated that "[n]umerous studies have established that emotion systems prepare us to meet challenges encountered in the environment by adjusting the activation of the cardiovascular, skeletomuscular, neuroendocrine, and autonomic nervous system (ANS)[.]" Lauri Nummenmaa, Enrico Glereana, Riitta Harib, and Jari K. Hietanend, "Bodily Maps of Emotions," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* Vol. 111, No. 3 (2014): 646. The link between emotions and our bodies is also established in our common language – we speak about 'heartbreaks,' 'cold feed,' and 'shivers going down our spines.' Emotions are, indeed, associated with a broad range of physiological changes, yet "it is still hotly debated whether the bodily changes associated with different emotions are specific enough to serve as the basis for discrete emotional feelings, such as anger, fear, or happiness, and the topographical distribution of the emotion-related bodily sensations has remained unknown." Nummenmaa et al., "Bodily Maps of Emotions," 646. The study was conducted using a unique computer based, topographical self-report method. The groups of Western Europeans (Finish and Swedish) and East Asians (Taiwanese) speaking their own respective languages were shown two silhouettes alongside emotional words, stories, movies or facial expressions and were asked to color the body regions in which they felt activity increasing and decreasing during each emotional stimulation. The outcomes of the study suggest "that consciously felt emotions are associated with culturally universal, topographically distinct bodily sensations." Nummenmaa et al., "Bodily Maps of Emotions," 646. The researchers further that these discrete yet partially overlapping maps of bodily sensations accompanying emotional feelings may indicate that embodiment plays a critical role in emotional processing. It is particularly interesting to observe the visualizations of these bodily maps of emotions having Aquinas's discussion on the particular passions in mind. While discussing the nature of the particular passions, Aquinas often indicates the particular bodily change that comes with it and while it is more interesting today as a kind of archeological knowledge because Aquinas's insights are based on the medieval understanding of human biology, in a certain sense, his ideas serve as a witness to the universality of human emotional experiences. For instance, in our discussion on anger we have encountered Aquinas describing anger's movement causing 'a certain fervor in the blood and spirits that surround the heart' (*ST* I-II 48.2). The respondents of Nummenmaa's study also indicated the increased sensation in the upper part of the body across the area of the chest, arms, and head during the experiences of anger. We have also discussed some findings of neuroscientific research *vis-à-vis* Nussbaum's philosophy of emotion in Chapter I, section 3. *Thinking of Nussbaum's Account of Emotions: Some Critical Reflections*. See especially, its subsections 3.1 *A Distinction Between Basic and Complex Emotions* and 3.2 *Emotions, the Body, and the Brain*.

One of the main premises of our work is the conviction that the possible danger of emotions is overemphasized in discussions on their ethical role¹³² over and against the moral achievement they are capable of offering. One must, however, address the question of troublesome propensities of human affectivity in order to embark upon an adequate ethical appraisal of it. Both Nussbaum and Aquinas address this issue. Their accounts suggest that our emotional reactions depend on and in turn influence our moral characters. Likewise, both accounts address the disorders of our affective dimension which are present at a deeper level than mere character formation. This approach should not be particularly surprising to find in Aquinas's account, since he is rooted in the Christian tradition, where the innate fracture of the human condition is explained by the doctrine of the fall, which highlights the realities of original and personal sins. Nussbaum, writing from the liberal perspective, constructs an account parallel to that of original sin and addresses the question of an innate human disposition to a morally disturbing behavior that occurs prior to any socialization.

We have seen in Chapter II that Nussbaum connects these propensities to disordered human behavior to a concept of radical evil she borrows from Kant.¹³³ The concept itself refers to an intuition, "a set of presocial tendencies to bad behavior, tendencies that go beyond those rooted in our shared animal heritage and which lie beneath cultural variation."¹³⁴ Nussbaum holds that the bad tendencies are not released by a lack of something, a deprivation – we can observe in our environments and from the history of human social relations that even at the moments when basic human needs are satisfied, humans still behave badly and violate each other's rights. Nussbaum identifies these bad human propensities as a desire to subordinate the other and locates the source of them in the dynamics of human developmental process, namely, in the interaction between a young infant's bodily weakness and sophistication of its cognitive abilities. This primitive narcissism, as Nussbaum labels it, leads infants (and later adults, if one does not overcome it) to desire the subordination of others to one's own needs. Nussbaum adds two elements to expand her account – the human tendency to give in to peer pressure and obeying authority even at the cost of ethical concern. These two tendencies, Nussbaum asserts, are deeply rooted in human nature and they contain real threats to moral behavior. Lastly, after addressing the notion of radical evil, Nussbaum suggests that our common animal heritage is also part of the problem of evil because it is the cause of the narrow scope of our sympathies (yet, this shared heritage is also a source of good tendencies and some proto-ethical achievements).¹³⁵ Chapter I extensively discussed Nussbaum's suggested vision of emotional and moral development¹³⁶ and Chapter II is devoted to addressing the disordered inner tendencies and limits of our concern by way of the emotion of compassion and

¹³² See the discussion on the treatment and the evolution of the concept of the passions in philosophy in Michel Meyer, *Philosophy and the Passions. Toward a History of Human Nature*, translation, preface, introduction, and bibliography by Robert F. Barsky (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), especially, chapter 3 *From Sickness to Sin*, 59-91.

¹³³ See section 3.1 *Radical Evil* in Chapter II.

¹³⁴ Nussbaum, *Political Emotions*, 164-165.

¹³⁵ See sections 3.2 *Radical Evil: What Lies Behind It?*; 3.2.1 *Animal Heritage: Problems for Morality*; 3.2.2 *Animal Heritage: Positive Contributions to Morality*; 3.2.3 *Concluding Remarks* in Chapter II.

¹³⁶ See 2.4 *Roots of Emotional Experience in Infancy* with all its subsections in Chapter I.

humanistic education¹³⁷ – those two concepts basically constitute Nussbaum’s solution to the problem of evil.

In Chapter III we advanced Lombardo’s interpretation of Aquinas’s views where sin is viewed as the cause of a traceable disorder in human affectivity.¹³⁸ Lombardo commends Aquinas’s account of the sin-injured human nature for still allowing human affectivity to be trusted without suspicion.¹³⁹ The main argument here appeals to Aquinas’s focus on the fundamental goodness of creation and in this respect original sin is viewed as privation of grace which is furthered by personal sins – original sin wounds human nature but does not destroy its goodness. Lombardo suggests interpreting Aquinas’s views on sin as a lack of inner coordination which is introduced – after the fall human capacities lack sound communication and subjection to the intellect and God. Even though there is a fracture, an injury in the human nature, our capacities remain as God created them – fundamentally good and seeking their fruition.¹⁴⁰

We have also already encountered Aquinas’s suggestion that human cognitive and affective capacities are renewed through sanctifying grace.¹⁴¹ Here again, Lombardo encourages us to think of the work of grace as something that joins ordinary human development instead of breaking it. Aquinas’s theology stands on the conviction that “[h]uman nature is naturally ordered to God as its end, but is unable by its natural powers alone to attain this end in a way that fully actualizes these powers.”¹⁴² Furthermore,

¹³⁷ See a large segment of Chapter II starting with section 4. *Education of Compassion* and going through all its subsections.

¹³⁸ See section 4.4 *The Passions, Sin, and Grace* in Chapter III.

¹³⁹ Similar intuition can be found in Servais Pinckaers’ thought where he argues that in Christian ethics one should focus on the reality of grace rather on the reality of sin (without dismissing its existence and consequences): “[W]e have deliberately set out to reestablish in all its fullness the primacy of grace, which is more powerful than sin, and the primacy of our spiritual nature, which renders us ‘capable of God’ and at the same time is that which sin erodes. For us, in spite of its gravity, sin remains a parasite which attacks and opposes the work of God in creation and redemption, without ever being able to destroy it.” Servais Pinckaers, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, 464.

¹⁴⁰ Aquinas claims that the good of human nature is threefold: first, the principles of which human nature is constituted (and the properties that have root in it, namely, the powers of the soul); secondly, the natural inclination to virtue; thirdly, the gift of original justice. He furthers “[a]ccordingly, the first-mentioned good of nature is neither destroyed nor diminished by sin. The third good of nature was entirely destroyed through the sin of our first parent. But the second good of nature, viz. the natural inclination to virtue, is diminished by sin.” *ST I-II* 85.1 Because of the lack of inner order, the powers that are naturally directed to virtue, namely, the intellect, rational and sense appetites are wounded in the following way: “Again, there are four of the soul’s powers that can be subject of virtue, as stated above, viz. the reason, where prudence resides, the will, where justice is, the irascible, the subject of fortitude, and the concupiscible, the subject of temperance. Therefore in so far as the reason is deprived of its order to the true, there is the wound of ignorance; in so far as the will is deprived of its order of good, there is the wound of malice; in so far as the irascible is deprived of its order to the arduous, there is the wound of weakness; and in so far as the concupiscible is deprived of its order to the delectable, moderated by reason, there is the wound of concupiscence.” *ST I-II* 85.3. Aquinas firmly assures us that the wound does not mean destruction “[n]ow sin cannot entirely take away from man the fact that he is a rational being, for then he would no longer be capable of sin. Wherefore it is not possible for this good of nature to be destroyed entirely...Consequently its diminution may be understood in two ways: first, on the part of its root, secondly, on the part of its term. In the first way, it is not diminished by sin, because sin does not diminish nature, as stated above. But it is diminished in the second way, in so far as an obstacle is placed against its attaining its term...and yet it cannot be destroyed entirely, because the root of this inclination always remains.” *ST I-II* 85.2.

¹⁴¹ See section 4.4 *The Passions, Sin, and Grace* in Chapter III.

¹⁴² Micheal S. Sherwin, O.P., *By Knowledge and By Love. Charity and Knowledge in the Moral Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 124.

Aquinas is convinced that humans are not only naturally ordered toward grace but also have receptivity to it as “human nature’s openness to more perfect fulfillment is part of God’s providential plan.”¹⁴³ Micheal S. Sherwin, O.P., highlights the fact that Christ has a central place in mediating healing and redeeming grace and that He brings about the sanctification of human capacities through action of the Holy Spirit.¹⁴⁴ We should note that Aquinas describes grace as qualitative *habitus* and he claims that:

Hence it remains that grace, as it is prior to virtue, has a subject prior to the powers of the soul, so that it is in the essence of the soul. For as man in his intellectual powers participates in the Divine knowledge through the virtue of faith, and in his power of will participates in the Divine love through the virtue of charity, so also in the nature of the soul does he participate in the Divine Nature, after the manner of a likeness, through a certain regeneration or re-creation.¹⁴⁵

This regenerating and re-creating divine presence saturates human inner equipment with infused dispositions of three types:

First, there are the three theological virtues that perfect the soul’s spiritual powers in relation to God as the ultimate end. There is faith, which perfects the intellect, and there are hope and charity, which perfect the will. Second, there are infused moral virtues that perfect the intellect and will (and the lower appetites) in relation to those things that are ordered to God as the ultimate end...Lastly, there are other infused cognitive and appetitive *habitus* that perfect the intellect and will by rendering them receptive to the guiding action of the Holy Spirit. These *habitus* are the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which the Fathers and the Scholastics find revealed in Isaiah 11. 1-2.¹⁴⁶

Thus Aquinas’s solution to the question of the dissonance found in human nature is the concept of divine aid coming to heal and strengthen human beings in their neediness. The elements of Aquinas’s and Nussbaum’s thought on the brokenness of the human condition are important to fully understand the implications of their visions of formation (or in Aquinas’s case, transformation) of human affectivity and thus moral character. We will address this topic in the upcoming section.

3.3 NUSSBAUM AND AQUINAS: MORALITY, RESPONSIBILITY, AND EDUCATION OF THE EMOTIONS/PASSIONS

As we approach the end of our work, we would like to bring to the fore what we consider to be the culmination of Nussbaum’s and Aquinas’s accounts of the emotions/passions, namely, their visions of educating our affective reactions. In Chapters I and II, we encountered Nussbaum’s suggestion of the moral growth and education of our emotions, especially, by the medium of the humanities and arts as well as instruction of our emotion of compassion.¹⁴⁷ Here, we will re-capture that vision in order to present it *vis-à-vis* the

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 125.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, 125-126 referring to *ST I* 43.7, *ST I-II* 108.1, *ST III* 8.1 *ad. 1*.

¹⁴⁵ *ST I-II* 110.4.

¹⁴⁶ Sherwin, O.P., *By Knowledge and By Love*, 127-128.

¹⁴⁷ See Chapter I, section 2.4.5 *Facilitating Environment and ‘Mature Interdependence:’ From Families to Political Institutions* and Chapter II. see also section 4. *Education of Compassion* with all its subsections.

vision of educating the passions that can be extrapolated from Aquinas's account. Our main interlocutors in accessing Aquinas's account on the passions, namely, Lombardo, Cates, and Miner focused on presenting their interpretations of the nature of the Thomistic passions. They have also demonstrated that the passions rightfully belong in the realm of the ethical and argued that, especially through the guidance of reason the passions can be managed to become virtuous. We, however, inspired by our reading of Nussbaum's suggestion of educating the emotions want to propose an account of education and transformation through prayer which can be constructed from Aquinas's writings.¹⁴⁸ This account is partially inspired by and builds on the suggestions of theologians Daniel C. Maguire, Charles E. Bouchard, O.P., and Thomas Ryan S.M. already encountered in Chapter III – that through more careful reading of *Prima secundae* we can encounter Aquinas's teaching that the Holy Spirit comes to aid human beings in their weaknesses and transforms their affectivity.¹⁴⁹ We also suggest that Aquinas's account on the passions and their education can address those who have a distinctively Christian experience whereby character formation/transformation can be spoken of through Christian symbols – these layers of experience are, however, not addressed and they are even disapproved of by Nussbaum's account.

3.3.1 Nussbaum on Cultivation of Emotions

As we have already indicated above – both Nussbaum and Aquinas consider emotions/passions to belong to the sphere of the moral. Nussbaum asserts that emotions are an essential part of morality because of their nature and subsequently due to the contribution they offer to our moral reasoning. Nussbaum's thesis about the nature of emotions is univocal – they are value judgments directed to the world outside ourselves which indicate the value of external goods. Emotions can judge value wrongly; they can be distorted. However, Nussbaum's main argument maintains the fact that they indicate our neediness, our non self-sufficiency and our lack of control. Generally they disclose our own vulnerability by highlighting something very true of human life itself. This is a great achievement for emotional knowledge which offers a unique perspective to ethical thought, Nussbaum states. If we want ethics that tackles the question of how we should live our life as a whole, an ethics with human significance that empowers people and societies to seek positive change – we need ethics where principle and emotion meet, ethics with a grounded account of objectivity and an account of a rich, particular perception.¹⁵⁰ In this way ethics will deal with the whole person – living and loving – and

¹⁴⁸ To address the question of transformation of affectivity through grace and prayer we will build on Aquinas's insights found in the *Summa*. One can find similar intuition in G. Simon Harak's, *Virtuous Passions*. In this work Harak retrieves the Thomistic account of the passions and in the chapter entitled *The Passion for God: The Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola*, he wants to demonstrate the importance of the passions in the *Spiritual Exercises*. His main argument is that the *Exercises* are aimed at education and transformation of the passions in a way that they would eventually accord with those of Christ. See Harak, *Virtuous Passions* 99-122.

¹⁴⁹ See Chapter III, section 4.1 *The Influence of the Passions on Reason and the Will and a Possibility of Affective Knowledge in Aquinas's Thought*.

¹⁵⁰ Nussbaum notes that a substantial account of ethical objectivity is 'internal' and human in mind – "[i]t does not even attempt to approach the world as it might be in itself, uninterpreted, unhumanized. Its raw material is the history of human social experience, which is already an interpretation and a measure. But it is

in turn will aid at forming persons who are passionately involved in thinking and imagining, people who can show personal investment, an ability critical to the flourishing of personal and political lives.

In Nussbaum's exposé of moral education we can truly grasp her vision of human perfection and the ultimate goal of life – her version of a salvific vision. Nussbaum asserts that our emotions are best nurtured and educated by artistic mediums, especially, storytelling.¹⁵¹ This is the reason why Nussbaum is such an advocate for the need for humanities in moral and civic education – through accessing an adequate set of literature sources¹⁵² we get the opportunity to enhance our moral agency which has a direct link to what kind of citizens we are. We have observed that Nussbaum builds much of her views on emotional development in children by utilizing the works of Donald Winnicott. Nussbaum believes that, generally speaking, we have positive psychological equipment as she argues that children are born with a rudimentary capacity for sympathy and concern.¹⁵³ We may also recall from the presentation in the previous chapters that Nussbaum, inspired by Winnicott, advances the position that those rudimentary capacities for sympathy and concern can grow during the activity of play in a created potential space (a space where children and at a later point adults can experiment with the idea of otherness without the

objectivity all the same.” Martha C. Nussbaum, “‘Finely Aware and Richly Responsible’: Literature and the Moral Imagination,” in *Love's Knowledge. Essays on Philosophy and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 164. By perception Nussbaum means “the ability to discern, acutely and responsively, the salient features of one's particular situation.” Nussbaum, “Introduction: Form and Content, Philosophy and Literature,” 37. This is the core of Aristotelian practical wisdom, this is a state of being ‘finely aware and richly responsible’ – this entails three salient features – being receptive to new and unanticipated features of a particular situation, being aware that those features are always embedded in their particular and unique context, and seeing that particular persons and relationships are always salient in ethical situations. The ethical perception Nussbaum suggests presupposes a rich moral imagination, a state of mind where our minds and emotions are ‘fine tuned’ and we possess a discriminating insight toward self and toward the other. To put it in Nussbaum's own words: “This means the ability to think what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person's story, and to understand the emotions and wishes and desires that someone so placed might have.” Nussbaum, *Not for Profit*, 95-96. She furthers: “On this view, there will be certain contexts in which the pursuit of intellectual reasoning apart from emotion will actually prevent a full rational judgment – for example by preventing an access to one's grief, or one's love, that is necessary for the full understanding of what has taken place when a loved one dies.” Nussbaum, “Introduction: Form and Content, Philosophy and Literature,” 41.

¹⁵¹ It is interesting to note that the cognitive neuroscience study of Nummenmaa and colleagues also indicates that one of the most powerful emotion induction techniques is guided mental imagery by reading stories and viewing movies. Cf. Nummenmaa et al., “Bodily Maps of Emotions,” 648.

¹⁵² We should note here once more that Nussbaum is aware that it is relatively easy to manipulate one's emotions, thus cultivation of the imaginative component in democratic education requires a very careful selectivity. The set of literature available in high schools, for instance, should be appropriated to children's ages and their development level and at the same time should address the crucial value questions of contemporary societies: “[T]hat will bring students in contact with issues of gender, race, ethnicity, and cross-cultural experience and understanding. This artistic instruction can and should be linked to the citizen-of-the-world instruction, since works of art are frequently an invaluable way of beginning to understand the achievements and sufferings of a culture different from one's own. In other words, the role of the arts in schools and colleges is two-fold. They cultivate capacities for play and empathy in a general way, and they address particular cultural blind spots. The first role can be played by works remote from the student's own time and place, although not just any randomly selected work. The second requires a more pointed focus on areas of social unease. The two roles are in some ways continuous, since the general capacity, once developed, makes it far easier to address a stubborn blind spot.” Nussbaum, *Not for Profit*, 108.

¹⁵³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 96.

fear of a threat because it does not engage a real encounter with it).¹⁵⁴ As child's play develops, so does his/her capacity to wonder and children's songs, fables, stories also facilitate it – as it allows one to get to know objects and wonder about their nature, their 'inner world.' This is precisely the aim of healthy development – enabling the same wonder but about other people. "Nursery rhymes and stories are thus a crucial preparation for concern in life[,]" Nussbaum writes, "[t]he presence of the other, which can be very threatening, becomes, in play, a delightful source of curiosity, and this curiosity contributes toward the development of healthy attitudes in friendship, love, and, later, political life."¹⁵⁵ What Nussbaum, following Winnicott, suggests is that the potential space of play does not disappear just because one becomes adult – children's play reemerges in adult life through the medium of arts. Thus, arts for Nussbaum serves not only an aesthetic function, it is also didactical. Sharing the nature of children's play, arts continues to teach one how to live with the other without manipulation, it also strengthens our imaginative and emotional resources. The core of it is captioned in the following quotation:

We do not automatically see another human being as spacious and deep, having thoughts, spiritual longings, and emotions. It is all too easy to see another person as just a body – which we might then think we can use for our ends, bad or good. It is an achievement to see a soul in that body, and this achievement is supported by poetry and the arts, which ask us to wonder about the inner world of that shape we see – and, too, to wonder about ourselves and our own depths.¹⁵⁶

Literary pieces especially work as optical instruments "through which the reader becomes a reader of his or her own heart."¹⁵⁷ Nussbaum thinks that merely observing life could never bring us to easily make such conclusions in the way that literary imagination offers simply because "we have never lived enough. Our experience is, without fiction, too confined and too parochial. Literature extends it, making us reflect and feel about what might otherwise be too distant for feeling."¹⁵⁸ Thus Nussbaum concludes that "[l]iterature is an extension of life not only horizontally, bringing the reader into contact with events or locations or persons or problems he or she has not otherwise met, but also, so to speak, vertically giving the reader experience that is deeper, sharper, and more precise than much of what takes place in life."¹⁵⁹ And this is the very essence of Nussbaum's understanding of transcendence within human life. In Chapters I and II we have seen that Nussbaum's ethical vision is a demanding one. In that vision the minds and hearts of people have come together; they are encouraged to make consciously deep, personal and political commitments. Yet this perfection that it seeks is ultimately *human* and Nussbaum utilizes the metaphor of descent as the best way to capture its essence. "Human limits structure the human excellences," Nussbaum writes, "and give excellent action its significance."¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁴ See Chapter I, especially, section 2.4.5 *Facilitating Environment and 'Mature Interdependence': From Families to Political Institutions* and Chapter II, sections 4.4 *The Spirit of Love*, 4.4.1 *Ethics, Compassion, and Play*, 4.4.2 *Concluding Remarks*.

¹⁵⁵ Nussbaum, *Not for Profit*, 99-100.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 102.

¹⁵⁷ Nussbaum, "Introduction: Form and Content, Philosophy and Literature," 47.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 378.

Nussbaum reflects on the fact that there is a great space for transcendence in our ordinary humanity, but this transcendence is of a human sort and it can be reached by cultivating human intellectual and emotive capacities by aid of the humanities:

For I believe it is no accident at all that both James and Proust, apparently independently, compare excellent literary works to angels that soar above dullness and obtuseness of the everyday, offering their readers a glimpse of a more compassionate, subtler, more responsive, more richly human world. That is a view about transcendence. And I believe that it is extremely important to make the aspiration to that sort of transcendence central to a picture of the complete human good. There is so much to do in this area of *human* transcending (which I imagine also as a transcending by a *descent*, delving more deeply into oneself and one's humanity, and becoming deeper and more spacious as a result) that if one really pursued that aim well and fully I suspect that there would be little time left to look about for any other sort.¹⁶¹

Thus Nussbaum reasons that we do not need to add aspiration to a religious transcendence, seeking something more than the 'merely human' for cultivating humanity. There is no such thing as 'merely human' because human aspiration to become better, to seek distinctively human excellence within a human sphere is already a mystical yearning with much potential, depth and space to become the compassionate, loving, mindful human beings we have capacities to be. Nussbaum leaves individuals to achieve this on their own devices – our political systems and educational institutions should ideally provide a facilitating environment, but ultimately it is our own choice and our individual journey.

Nussbaum thus leaves us with a moral vision of high stakes where "acting virtuously requires not only going through the motions of correct action, but doing so with the appropriate thoughts, motives and reactive feelings."¹⁶² In this vision our emotions play an essential role as disclosing something true about life itself through their dimension of neediness and yet at the same time they are remarkable founts of human resourcefulness. Furthermore, our emotional reactions are directly linked to our moral character; this thus entails that we hold a very high degree of responsibility for them (as far as we are ourselves responsible for the people we are). Emotions can themselves be judged and educated and their moral education, for Nussbaum, represents an ultimate vision of human meaning.¹⁶³ Nussbaum leaves us with this vision of approximate religious imagery where the 'sacred' ultimately must reside within ourselves because all there is "is just human life

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 379.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 378.

¹⁶³ One could understand Nussbaum's vision on moral education as a delicate exchange between moral imagination and philosophy. Nussbaum opines that stories teach us to trust, to love, to be open while philosophical endeavor is different in its nature – it requires us to be skeptical. Nussbaum writes: "The attitude we have before a philosophical text can look, by contrast, retentive and unloving – asking for reasons, questioning and scrutinizing each claim, wrestling clarity from the obscure... Before a literary work we are humble, open, active yet porous. Before a philosophical work, in its working through, we are active, controlling, aiming to leave no flank undefended and no mystery undisputed. This is too simple and schematic, clearly; but it says something." Martha C. Nussbaum, "Love's Knowledge," in *Love's Knowledge. Essays on Philosophy and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 282. In thinking and writing ethically, we ultimately need to balance each other to reach conceptual clarity and meaningful depth. Thus Nussbaum's vision of moral education does not make an argument for emotivism.

as it is lived.”¹⁶⁴

3.3.2 Aquinas and the Transformation of Affectivity

“Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.” Ezekiel 36:26.

The biblical quotation represents the main intuition guiding us through the interpretation of Aquinas’s vision of cultivation of human affectivity, and at the same time it is true to the spirit of that vision. The story of Aquinas’s views of the formation and transformation of the passions stands on the argument found in Chapter III, namely, that Aquinas considers the passions to belong to the moral domain and that we can, indeed, be responsible for them.¹⁶⁵ We have presented a retrieval of Aquinas’s account of the responsibility for the passions by Claudia Eisen Murphy.¹⁶⁶ Murphy suggests that another attractive element of Aquinas’s views on the passions is the multilayered account of responsibility that can be retrieved from his writings. This account argues that while, in most cases, we can be held responsible for the way we emote, this responsibility can be external or internal and of various degrees depending of the nature of the concrete passion in question. This more balanced view makes a difference between someone’s prime and more complex emotional expressions (such as, one’s abrupt anger if he/she was suddenly shoved in the back by a stranger and the resentment a male colleague has toward his female co-workers because of a complex relationship with his mother and the subsequent judgments that he projects onto all other females). Even though Aquinas presents a more nuanced account of the responsibility for the passions, he still, like Nussbaum, holds that they reflect on our moral characters.

We should also remember that when Aquinas analyses the passions, he considers their structure to be relative to the structure of reality as such – and Aquinas’s vision of reality is theological. Cates writes: “In interpreting Aquinas, I seek to show that emotions can meaningfully be located along a continuum of appetitive motions within the human being, and that the appetitive motions of humans can meaningfully be thought of in relation to the appetitive motions of other sorts of entities, within the context of a cosmos that is governed by Love as the first and final principle of all appetitive motion.”¹⁶⁷ The passions are the movements of the sense appetite toward the object and at the same time they are the movements that contribute to the attainment of our final *telos*. The fact that Aquinas considers the passions ‘to have something of their own,’ Miner suggests, points not only to the mere sad fact that the passions do not obey our intellect completely – “[i]t also points to the ability of the sensitive appetite to make a contribution of its own in the return of the rational creature to the ultimate end. If directed by reason, the energy provided by the sensitive appetite can deepen the love by which the rational creature is

¹⁶⁴ Martha C. Nussbaum, “Non-Relative Virtues: An Aristotelian Approach,” *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* Vol. 13, No. 1 (1988): 49.

¹⁶⁵ See Chapter III, sections 4.2 *Morality of the Passions*; 4.2.1 *Normativity of the Passions* and 4.2.2 *Responsibility For The Passions*.

¹⁶⁶ See Chapter III, section 4.2.2 *Responsibility for the Passions* with all its subsections.

¹⁶⁷ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 63.

drawn to her end.”¹⁶⁸ This is the logic, the formal structure Aquinas considers the passions to follow.

Because of this metaphysical background holding Aquinas’s views on the passions, his account allows us to access layers of emotional formation for people of a Christian faith and, thus, hope for a life that transcends this one. Charles E. Bouchard describes a person of Christian identity as ‘a *living-breathing-thinking-feeling-intuiting-hoping-believing entity*’ who has multiple capacities and needs, including the hope for the eternal life.¹⁶⁹ In the previous chapter we wanted to demonstrate that Aquinas’s discussion on the passions indicates that he did not consider them to be an extrinsic part of the formation of Christian character – on the contrary, his discussion of affectivity relates directly to his subsequent discussion on virtues (and description of vices). More so, the formation of character in Christian tradition is one of the main tasks of Church communities, to be more precise – Christian community is concerned with its transformation or sanctification.¹⁷⁰ Aquinas’s thought, we suggest, is distinctive because it can accommodate an idea of sanctification of character encompassing multiple dimensions of it – our passions, our behavior, and our intellectual capacities. Aquinas’s account stands on the premise that our distinctive powers, in their very structure, are directed toward flourishing “and that grace will aid the process”¹⁷¹ of achieving it. Aquinas constructed his ethical vision “in terms of the formation of the kind of person who appropriates and develops the gifts required for a moral life in view of the promised enjoyment of divine beatitude”¹⁷² and the aim of the *Secunda pars* was to present Christian community with “a picture of the kind of people God desires.”¹⁷³ Thus, the *Secunda pars* presents the reader with “a systematic consideration of the human being as moral agent, with goals, capacities, emotions, dispositions, and so on, which have to be integrated, with the help of law and grace[.]”¹⁷⁴ Happiness – beatitude, the face-to-face vision of God, is the ultimate end of such a human being, but the notion also accommodates layers of happiness with imperfect perfection already starting here and now:

Destined for eternal life with God, Aquinas sees grace as a vital reality in the human being, ‘not a transitory divine help but a principle for people living in and toward a special destiny’ (ST I q.23 a.2 ad 4). Grace influences how we live now, and at the same time it is a ‘kind of beginning of glory in us’ (ST II-II, q.24 a.3). For Aquinas there is an eschatological perspective to the moral life, without which the Christian moral life has no meaning. This life and the next are intimately connected.¹⁷⁵

¹⁶⁸ Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions*, 94-95.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Charles E. Bouchard O.P., “What Is ‘Prudential Personalism?’ Why Does it Matter?,” *Health Progress* Vol. 88, No. 2 (2007): 24.

¹⁷⁰ Robert C. Roberts, “The Idea of a Christian Psychology,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* Vol. 40, No. 1 (2012): 39.

¹⁷¹ Lisa Sowle Cahill, “Renegotiating Aquinas: Catholic Feminist Ethics, Postmodernism, Realism, and Faith,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* Vol. 43, No. 2 (2015): 213.

¹⁷² Kerr, *After Aquinas*, 118.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 119.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 118.

¹⁷⁵ Fainche Ryan, “Why Do We Still Need Aquinas?,” *New Blackfriars* Vol. 95, No. 1056 (2014): 174.

Christian tradition is embedded in the belief that God is in a relationship with us,¹⁷⁶ thus, the elements of grace coming about through sacramental life and the practice of prayer cannot be overlooked when we think of education and the transformation of character Aquinas's account on the passions implies. God is the source of goodness; Aquinas's account has this in mind when at the same time he asserts, God comes to aid us in the attainment of that good. When we think of the discussion on prayer found in *Secunda secundae* – here we do not encounter Aquinas providing us with a guide suffused with metaphorical language. In fact, he locates prayer in the cognitive and not the appetitive part of the human being and he describes its primary function as a petition.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ In his article Ryan explores Aquinas's understanding of the question of God which, he thinks, could be captured in the statement: "*Deus non est in genere*" (*ST* I 6.2 ad 3). That means that according to Aquinas, God cannot be caught in any category of human thought. Ryan quotes Brad Gregory explaining Aquinas's position: "God shares no genus in common with creatures – not even being – so utterly different is God's literally indefinable...reality from that of anything else, God is not a highest, noblest, or most powerful entity within the universe, divine by virtue of being comparatively greatest. Rather, God is radically distinct from the universe as a whole, which he did not fashion by ordering anything already existent but rather created entirely *ex nihilo*...Although God is radically transcendent and altogether other than his creation, he is sovereignly present to and acts in and through it. There is no 'outside' to creation, spatially or temporally, nor is any part of creation independent of God or capable of existing independently of God." Ryan, "Why Do We Still Need Aquinas?," 162 quoting Brad S. Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation. How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society*. (Cambridge/London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012), 30. Ryan furthers that the distinction between existence and essence Aquinas makes in his theological thought is crucial in understanding how creatures relate to their Creator; it points to the source of our existence that does not belong to us and envisions the very nature of our existence as dependent, thus "God is truthfully addressed as Creator because the world, all of creation, has a real relation to God." Ryan, "Why Do We Still Need Aquinas?," 170. Though Aquinas asserts that God does not have any relation of dependence to His creatures, "[p]aradoxically this mysterious, transcendent Otherness listens to us, relates to us, is intimate to our very being: 'God is not far from us, nor outside us, but rather he is in us, as Jeremiah 14 says: You are in us, O Lord. Thus the experience of divine goodness is called tasting.'" Ryan, "Why Do We Still Need Aquinas?," 172-173 referring to Paul Murray, O.P., *Aquinas at Prayer: The Bible, Mysticism and Poetry* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 258 citing from Aquinas's commentary on Psalm XXXIII.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. *ST* II-II 83.1. Brian Davies summarizes Aquinas's treatment of prayer as a petition in the *Summa* as first of all "an example of practical reasoning. It springs from knowing what we want and recognizing how we might obtain it." Brian Davies, "Prayer," in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, eds. Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 470. He points out that Aquinas does not situate prayer in the appetitive part and by this he does not define it in affective terms. Davies suggests that we should see the dynamics of prayer in the following way: "But he also believes that we can engage in practical reasoning – reasoning with respect to how to achieve our goal, how to get what we want. And, thinks Aquinas, (a) one reasonable way of getting what we want is to ask for this from one who is able to provide it, and (b) prayer is a reasonable practice to engage in given that God is able to provide what we might reasonably ask for." Davies, "Prayer," 469-470. Paul Murray, O.P., whose research focuses on Aquinas's thought on prayer and Aquinas at prayer himself – retrieving Aquinas as a scholar and a silent mystic, suggests some more imaginative interpretations on the meaning of prayer as petition. Murray writes: "Prayer – Christian prayer – by its very nature is born out of an acknowledgment of need, out of an honest recognition of spiritual poverty." Paul Murray, O.P., *Praying with Confidence. Aquinas on the Lord's Prayer* (London/New York: Continuum, 2010), 7. He quotes the reflection of a contemporary Carmelite contemplative Ruth Borrows as an illuminating example to deepen our understanding of the petition prayer: "Isn't Christian existence itself petition?...It is the expression of dependency, of the awareness of our limitation and helplessness in so many areas. One doesn't need to have lived long to know this by experience...Petition, asking, is the practical admission that we are here to receive, to be 'done unto' and the deeper our faith the more we know that this is pure blessedness. We are here to receive all that God, divine Love, has to give. The Church's liturgical prayer is almost all an asking. Even the acts of praise reveal that we depend on divine aid to enable us to praise: God must praise God within us." Murray, *Praying with Confidence*, 7 quoting Ruth Burrows, *Letters on Prayer* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1999), 29. For further

Yet, in the discussion inquiring into whether the personal prayer be vocal, Aquinas opines that it does not have to be, but there are reasons why this is beneficial:

First, in order to excite interior devotion, whereby the mind of the person praying is raised to God, because by means of external signs, whether of words or of deeds, the human mind is moved as regards apprehension, and consequently also as regards the affections. Hence Augustine says (ad Probam. Ep. cxxx, 9) that by means of words and other signs we arouse ourselves more effectively to an increase of holy desires.'...Secondly, the voice is used in praying as though to pay a debt, so that man may serve God with all that he has from God, that is to say, not only with his mind, but also with his body: and this applies to prayer considered especially as satisfactory. Hence it is written (Osee 14:3): 'Take away all iniquity, and receive the good: and we will render the calves of our lips.' Thirdly, we have recourse to vocal prayer, through a certain overflow from the soul into the body, through excess of feeling, according to Ps. 15:9, 'My heart hath been glad, and my tongue hath rejoiced.'¹⁷⁸

Thus Aquinas presents prayer as an act where our mind, affectivity, and the bodily expression come together in order to fully engage in the act of friendship with God. Those are important elements to consider when arriving at Aquinas's views of graced affectivity. At this point, it may be useful to be reminded that Aquinas suggests a broad picture of human moral psychology where the passions, virtues (acquired and infused), the categories of the gifts, the beatitudes, and the fruits of the Holy Spirit have an integral role – they are elements that represent the “‘theory of the divinization of man by grace through the action of the Holy Spirit, teaching, guiding and strengthening’ – not, then, merely a decorative pious appendix.”¹⁷⁹ While it is always difficult to attempt to conceptualize the dimension of mystery, by the very definition it escapes, such attempts, leaving us with more of an intuitive grasp, we suggest that the dimensions of the gifts, the beatitudes, and the fruits can play a role in educating our emotions through the practice of prayer. All three elements follow Aquinas's discussion on the virtue in the *Prima secundae* and are proclaimed to be an intrinsic part of the moral life.¹⁸⁰ Aquinas defines the gifts as a certain sensitivity to God's promptings,¹⁸¹ the beatitudes are closely linked to the virtues and the gifts and

analysis of Aquinas's thoughts on prayer which includes interpretation of Aquinas's own 'inner life,' and his compositions of prayers and hymns, see Murray's, *Aquinas at Prayer*.

¹⁷⁸ *ST* II-II 83.12.

¹⁷⁹ Kerr, *After Aquinas*, 132 referring to Edward O'Connor, in St Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 24: *Gifts and Beatitudes* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1974).

¹⁸⁰ Cf. *ST* I-II questions 68, 69, and 70. Translations of the *Prima secundae* in this part of the text come from the Fathers of the English Dominican Province translation available at <http://dhspritory.org/thomas/summa/SS/SS158.html#SSQ158OUTP1>.

¹⁸¹ “Whether we consider human reason as perfected in its natural perfection, or as perfected by the theological virtues, it does not know all things, nor all possible things. Consequently it is unable to avoid folly and other like things mentioned in the objection. God, however, to Whose knowledge and power all things are subject, by His motion safeguards us from all folly, ignorance, dullness of mind and hardness of heart, and the rest. Consequently the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which make us amenable to His promptings, are said to be given as remedies to these defects.” *ST* I-II 68.2. The gifts of the Holy Spirit, Aquinas argues, extends to our cognitive and affective capacities: “Now just as it is natural for the appetitive powers to be moved by the command of reason, so it is natural for all the forces in man to be moved by the instinct of God, as by a superior power. Therefore whatever powers in man can be the principles of human actions, can also be the subjects of gifts, even as they are virtues; and such powers are the reason and appetite... Now the reason is speculative and practical: and in both we find the apprehension of truth (which pertains to the discovery of truth), and judgment concerning the truth. Accordingly, for the apprehension of truth, the speculative reason is perfected by ‘understanding;’ the practical reason, by ‘counsel.’ In order to judge aright,

because they contain certain items different from them Aquinas considers beatitudes a different category; essentially, they refer to the experience of something already anticipated.¹⁸² Finally, the fruits are ethical attributes that ‘calm the appetite with a certain sweetness and delight.’¹⁸³ The rich images these concepts contain present themselves as objects of our emotions by evoking them in personal and communal prayers and in this way nurturing our moral imaginations (the same holds for the liturgical and sacramental symbols). This does not mean that we can simply take Aquinas’s suggestions on the gifts, the beatitudes, and the fruits and appropriate them without contextualizing them in a contemporary setting; indeed, some of his thoughts about the meaning of these concepts require a careful ethical re-appropriation.¹⁸⁴ Yet, the idea that we can suggest some elements of pneumatology and references to biblical texts to ethical formation of our emotions seems very attractive. Finally, Aquinas’s account can speak of virtuous passions; more than that, it can speak of virtuous graced passions where the mysterious Other comes to aid us in our vulnerability and neediness. If we want to claim firmly that “[i]n his exposition of the good human life, Aquinas describes a long story of patient humanization, in which the virtue of charity, of learning to desire rightly, is central”¹⁸⁵ – we have to take into account that Aquinas’s picture of moral psychology extends beyond a mere discussion of virtues – the passions, the gifts, the beatitudes, and the fruits being integral and not merely a decorative part of that moral psychology. The idea of graced affectivity and, thus, sanctified character represents one of the main divergence points between Aquinas’s and

the speculative reason is perfected by ‘wisdom,’ the practical reason by ‘knowledge.’ The appetitive power, in matters touching a man’s relations to another, is perfected by ‘piety;’ in matters touching himself, it is perfected by ‘fortitude’ against the fear of dangers; and against inordinate lust for pleasures, by ‘fear,’ according to Prov. 15:27: ‘By the fear of the Lord every one declineth from evil,’ and Ps. 118:120: ‘Pierce Thou my flesh with Thy fear: for I am afraid of Thy judgments.’ Hence it is clear that these gifts extend to all those things to which the virtues, both intellectual and moral, extend.” *ST I-II* 68.4.

¹⁸² “Accordingly, those things which are set down as merits in the beatitudes, are a kind of preparation for, or disposition to happiness, either perfect or inchoate: while those that are assigned as rewards, may be either perfect happiness, so as to refer to the future life, or some beginning of happiness, such as is found in those who have attained perfection, in which case they refer to the present life. Because when a man begins to make progress in the acts of the virtues and gifts, it is to be hoped that he will arrive at perfection, both as a wayfarer, and as a citizen of the heavenly kingdom.” *ST I-II* 69.2. Aquinas in the instance of the beatitudes refers us to Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount found in Mathew 5:12 and considers that the beatitudes pertain to sensual (being poor in spirit, blessing for the meek and mourning), active (blessing for those who hunger and thirst after justice, blessing for the merciful, blessing for the peacemakers) and contemplative (blessing for the clean of heart) lives.

¹⁸³ “More is required for a beatitude than for a fruit. Because it is sufficient for a fruit to be something ultimate and delightful; whereas for a beatitude, it must be something perfect and excellent. Hence all the beatitudes may be called fruits, but not vice versa. For the fruits are any virtuous deeds in which one delights: whereas the beatitudes are none but perfect works, and which, by reason of their perfection, are assigned to the gifts rather than to the virtues, as already stated.” *ST I-II* 70.2. When discussing the fruits Aquinas refers to the origin of the concept in the Letter to the Galatians 5: 22, 23. He states that the fruits pertain to good ordering of the mind (charity, joy, peace, patience, long-suffering). They also pertain to our relationship with our neighbor (goodness, benignity, meekness, faith), finally, they pertain to the body (modesty, continency, chastity). Cf. *ST I-II* 70.3.

¹⁸⁴ For instance, his exegesis of the meaning of the blessing of the poor in spirit as either moderation of usage of external goods or, perfectly despising them altogether seems troubling due to some misunderstandings and the ethical consequences this suggestion entails. While this suggestion requires careful, ethical treatment, the first suggestion of moderation seems to provide an insightful perspective that can provide an alternative voice to contemporary cultures. See *ST I-II* 69.3.

¹⁸⁵ Ryan, “Why Do We Still Need Aquinas?,” 173.

Nussbaum's accounts.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The aim of our work was to inquire into the role emotions can play in ethics. The work did not aim at constructing an account in which we would merge Nussbaum's and Aquinas's insights, we rather endeavored to present their insights on the ethical worth of the emotions and observe what new dimensions it can bring to our understanding of ethical agency. Previous chapters presented a detailed discussion on Nussbaum's and Aquinas's accounts on the emotions/passions in order to highlight the value of the accounts themselves and to have a better grasp of the nature of those accounts. Chapter IV in particular has sought to bring Nussbaum's and Aquinas's accounts together by illuminating what we judge to be some of the most important points of intersection which, at the same time, and in delicate ways, are also points of divergence. Both accounts converge in the scope of universal ethics with a significant interest in human desire; they both locate the emotions/passions in the moral sphere, and speak of the responsibility one has for them. We have also sought to demonstrate that both accounts lead to an ethical vision of the cultivation of morally praiseworthy emotions/passions.

When it comes to the nature of the emotions/passions themselves, both accounts describe them as intentional phenomena. Nussbaum provides us with a rich account of the ethical nature and achievement of emotions – emotions are ways of seeing, specifically, they are ways of seeing value in fragile things outside one's own control. Depicting emotions in this way, Nussbaum suggests the very specific anthropological picture of a human being vulnerable to his/her environment. Nussbaum maintains that it is through emotional cognitions that we grasp the deeper layers of our surroundings and their worth and importance. This enables an ethical agency sensitive to the protection of external goods because it fully grasps their fragility and our incompleteness without them. Any ethics which does not incorporate the awareness and knowledge emotions offer is incomplete because it does not assess and reflect on human experience in its fullness – more than that, by lacking emotional insight, it will lack the powerful human interest facilitated by our emotions.

Aquinas's account of the nature and morality of the passions is formulated in a less univocal way, yet we have argued that a close reading of the *Treatise on the Passions* allows a positive retrieval of it. Aquinas considers the passions to be embodied states of awareness that are sensitive to the good or bad qualities of the object. Our main goal was to demonstrate that Aquinas's account of affectivity is intrinsic to his account of ethics and plays a substantial role in it. In Chapter III we suggested moving away from the view that the passions are morally neutral. We argued that this view diverted attention away from the view that the passions are morally normative. We have encountered Aquinas arguing that passions are not morally evil, on the contrary – the presence of an orderly passion increases the moral quality of an action. Furthermore, if we are considering a concrete passion of a particular person, we can speak of its moral character *per se*, Aquinas claims. He judges the moral character of the passions according to their objects and so the passions that tend toward genuine good are good (and so are the passions that withdraw from a genuine evil) and passions seeking evil and withdrawing from the good are bad. We have also suggested viewing the Thomistic passions as directed toward flourishing in their very structure. The suggestion that the passions are also movements toward a human final *telos* and grounding

this in the fundamental goodness of creation enables one to have a liberating view of human affectivity.¹ The passions do not have to be perceived as a sign of brokenness and chaos, but rather as a part of the good creation. The passions need proper education and the aid of sanctifying grace; yet, ultimately, human affectivity is inclined to aid the pursuit of human happiness and not to impair or damage it.

Even though we can assert that Nussbaum's and Aquinas's accounts meet in stressing the importance of affectivity, one also immediately notices that they stand in a certain tension with each other. Nussbaum's vision on cultivating human emotions focuses on moral growth through artistic mediums and rejects any claims that go beyond here and now; in other words, beyond what is strictly human. Despite that, Nussbaum's account presents itself as a demanding description of moral growth where one holds a high degree of responsibility for one's emotional reactions and where emotions themselves are conceived as relatively complex phenomena. Aquinas's account, on the other hand, presents a flexible and multilayered exposé on the nature of the passions and it introduces balance to thinking ethically about emotions – it is able to accommodate emotions that are more basic in their structure as well as emotions that depend on more complex operations/insights. Of particular importance for the Christian community, is the capability of his account to accommodate the discussion on graced affectivity. Nussbaum's account considers all the claims of the faith traditions appealing to transcending the human life as superfluous and even dangerous. She believes such claims encourage apathy, silence to the present reality of an individual or community. She furthers that claims that hope in other worldly aid and reward do not explore the full potential of the human being. Her caution about an ethical perfection that undermines the merely human with no admiration and appreciation for the fragile beauty of the human condition highlights some real tensions within theological ethics, tensions any ethical account which concerns itself with character formation must undertake. Yet by undermining the reality of the faith dimension and its importance for particular moral communities, Nussbaum leaves large areas of human reality unexplored. Our own work is concerned predominantly with the Christian experience and this is where Aquinas's account can help – it approaches human desires in universal terms and suggests concrete ways in which they can come to their fruition through a distinctively Christian life. We should also highlight once more that Aquinas's account on virtuous and graced human affectivity presents itself as a non-oppressive account where the elements of grace join the regular human psychological development. Human beings typically experience their emotions in particular contexts and Aquinas's account facilitates the person who wants to form his/her character in a distinctively Christian way. Yet the starting point of this account in the universally observable human tendencies, desires, and cares also enables it to be communicable to a larger audience.

We have also sought to demonstrate the benefits and challenges that advising the emotions in moral situations might create. There is a substantial difference between presenting a general theory of ethical worth of emotions and engaging in the more delicate task of reflecting on how a particular emotion functions in a concrete moral situation. To illustrate the latter, we engaged in a presentation of two emotions; one traditionally recognized as morally praiseworthy, namely, compassion and the other which has a more

¹ Observation is also made by Lombardo. See *The Logics of Desire*, 234.

ambiguous moral evaluation, namely, anger. Nussbaum provided us with an extensive treatment of compassion which was revealed as an emotion having great ethical potential, especially, in the way it recognizes the common humanity between the other and myself. Yet we have also encountered that without proper education this emotion can go astray in significant ways, mostly, in its naturally limited scope. Nussbaum's account did not remain uncontested and we suggested alternative views by Cates and Srinivasan. Cates' theological critique argued for a more comprehensive view on compassion and proposed viewing it as a virtue. Srinivasan, meanwhile, criticized compassion promoted by political regimes as potentially dangerous in silencing victims and hindering them from assessing their full ethical agency. We approached anger through Aquinas's interpretation and situating it against the contemporary discussions of Srinivasan, Henderson, and Thomason showed that the anger that Aquinas portrays is still very much relevant today. We argued that anger can be perceived as a first signal that there is something wrong with a particular moral situation. Moreover, anger can be seen as a transformative emotion enabling one to define himself/herself as a respect-worthy moral agent that engages in action seeking justice. This view, we have seen, is sharply criticized by Nussbaum who holds anger to be an irrational and false emotion that cripples sustainable interpersonal and political relationships.

To give each emotion its due is a process of engaging in careful ethical discussions. The competing views we have encountered have served precisely this purpose – it illustrated the process of seeking a more adequate understanding of the ethical nature of these emotions. It further highlighted the fact that arriving at a detailed picture of the nature of a particular emotion requires discussion of its possible benefits, dangers, and consequences and a look at its most salient features, approaching it from different angles and disciplines. Furthermore, with these case studies we sought to demonstrate that not only were discussions on a particular emotion a delicate matter, but, more importantly, we highlighted that emotions offer significant potential for assessing moral situations in their fullness.

We have also sought to show that the emotions that are more complex in their nature have an epistemic dimension which does not merely add something to our cognitive knowledge, but transforms it.² Our main argument can be re-captured and supported by views of theologian Edward Collins Vacek, S.J. and philosopher Robert C. Roberts. Vacek argues that “[a]n experience of ‘love’ for one’s spouse is different from an experience of the spouse as a ‘rational animal,’ and an experience of guilt changes the meaning of the neutral description ‘uttered a false statement.’”³ This means that emotions bring to the fore features of their object, of a situation which is otherwise concealed if we attempt to engage only in a ‘rational’ analysis. Roberts supports our argument by pointing out that in many cases we can grasp the full meaning of a certain action only by attending to its emotional dimension.⁴ He presents the situation of a father selling a piece of property and asks what it reveals about his character? Once we know more about his motivations, the emotional background, we are able to have a fuller knowledge of the situation. Whether the father has

² Cf. Vacek, “Orthodoxy Requires Orthopathy,” 224.

³ *Ibid.*, 224.

⁴ Cf. Robert C. Roberts, “Feeling One's Emotions and Knowing Oneself,” *Philosophical Studies* Vol. 77, No. 2 (1995): 327.

sold the piece of property out of anger or out of deep concern for his family's well-being puts forward two pictures that enable one to think of the same act in rather distinct ways. Looking into the emotional background of the situation thus provides significant information about the man, his character and how he sees the world. Many actions have the identity they have due to the ways they are tied to our personalities via our emotions.⁵

It is precisely these, sometimes implicit layers of ethical dimension we wanted to bring to the fore. In daily situations when confronted with moral and social consequences of emotions, both others and our own, more perceptive persons may attend to the emotional dimension in evaluating concrete situations. Nonetheless, ethical literature does not widely highlight this dimension of moral conduct nor does it provide the tools to enable one to assess it. We wanted to demonstrate that Nussbaum and Aquinas suggest ethical frameworks to reflect on our affective dimension, and that those frameworks point to the aid emotional knowledge can bring to our moral reasoning.

Our argument was not geared toward emotivism – the view that we should make ethical judgments based on subjective feelings. On the contrary, our aim was to suggest an ethical approach which engages in *critical reflection* on the moral meaning and possible ethical character of our emotions. We advocate ethics which provides us with tools to reflect on our emotions, their possible epistemic worth, and the models of their education. Cates notes that learning any particular account on the nature of the emotions gives one a specific grammar to reflect and debate about his/her emotional experiences; more than that, it enables one to put that grammar to use.⁶ Introducing language that assesses the ethical worth of emotions has the potential to be not only intellectually informative, but ethically transformative as well. Exploring the question of the ethical worth and formation of emotions presents the possibility of making certain aspects of our emotional lives explicit, salient. This enables one “to uncover and seek to articulate some of the deepest mental causes of one’s emotional reactions and habits, including assumptions that one makes about what is ultimately real and really important in life.”⁷ Thus thinking about the nature of emotions is already a formative exercise. Cates adds that this may have additional benefits to one’s relationships with others: “Learning such a grammar can support the practice of virtuous communication regarding the dynamics of one’s own and others’ interior lives; it can thus support more discerning and responsible human interactions.”⁸ This means that an ethics that encourages going beyond action and is attentive to the emotional dimension is likely to form moral agents capable of honest self-discernment, capable of assessing his/her own environment and capable of having insight into the interior life of the other.

Thus ethics engaging in the question of emotions can have benefits not only through assessing deeper layers of character formation, it is also likely to have practical outcomes in forming more aware agents. Ethics that presumes to have human relevance needs to resonate with the actual experience of people and emotions are very likely to have

⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 327.

⁶ Cf. Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 254. She makes the argument having Aquinas’s account in mind. We consider this argument to be transferable to any ethical account tackling the nature of emotions as long it is critically worked out.

⁷ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 259.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 260.

significant social and moral consequences in individuals' lives. If ethics mirrors the reality of people, it is able to suggest competent, persuasive, and personally moving directions on ways to live better personal and communal lives. Thus together with Vacek we highlight that "[w]ell-reasoned arguments themselves usually are impotent unless they correlate with human affectivity."⁹ We additionally highlight that despite the possible beneficial practical outcomes emotional knowledge can offer, one can argue that being able to perceive our ethical realities by engaging our emotional receptivity is a morally commendable quality in itself. The idea is brought to the fore by Srinivasan who suggests that it is morally praiseworthy to feel our ethical realities, which we can understand as a capacity analogous to "a virtue or a capacity to be compelled by the beautiful or the sublime."¹⁰ There is something ethically admirable about a person who is disposed to react to moral situations with emotional sensitivity and personal investment – there is something of intrinsic value in being able to assess moral realities in this way. And we thus argue that ethics should form ethical agents capable of such receptivity.

The above arguments have direct consequences for theological ethics, a discipline geared to explaining experiences and behaviors stemming from the context of Christian faith. The Christian faith itself stems from a tradition of kinship between people, appeal to love and charity directed to each other and God in building a good, truly flourishing human life. And yet we can find a great quantity of theological works written on the tradition of correct beliefs, of correct praxis of those beliefs, and very little on what it means to experience them, to feel their truth – about 'correct' sets of emotions. Vacek points out that we rarely recognize that communities are largely built through shared emotions.¹¹ He argues that:

The history of Christianity is often told in terms of *orthodoxy*, the truth of doctrines believed; and Christians are frequently evaluated in terms of their *orthopraxy*, the good that they do. But the inner history of Christianity is what we might call its *orthokardia*, the ordered affections that unite us with God, ourselves, other people, and the world. These affections give rise to both doctrine and practice. Ultimately, our perfection as a person is measured strictly according to the degree of development of our loves.¹²

Bringing the topic of emotions to theological ethics may serve as a counter-balance to the view that Christian life consists solely of the exercise of intellect and will – it also, and very fundamentally, consists of the exercise of the heart.¹³ Vacek insightfully comments that adequate theological anthropology should consult and discuss all these dimensions of human being. We hope that Nussbaum's and Aquinas's accounts illustrated how we can approach the reflection on the matters of the heart.

We would like to end our work by acknowledging that despite the elements of reflection, distance, persuasion, education and cultivation we can introduce to our emotions, by their very nature emotions will remain elements that escape our full control.

⁹ Vacek, "Orthodoxy Requires Orthopathy," 238.

¹⁰ Srinivasan, "The Aptness of Anger," 15. The argument also occurs in section 2.2 *Contemporary Thinkers on Anger: Anger as a Moral Response to an Imperfect World* in this Chapter IV.

¹¹ Cf. Vacek, "Orthodoxy Requires Orthopathy," 226.

¹² Vacek, *Love, Human and Divine*, 5.

¹³ Cf. Vacek, "Orthodoxy Requires Orthopathy," 241.

In other words, there will always be something mysterious about our emotions and the ways they reveal us to ourselves. Learning to cultivate emotions, it seems, is ultimately a process that consists of both mastering and learning to let go. Nussbaum elegantly captures this process in her explanation of attempting to understand the truth of the human heart and what love might be. In order to attempt to understand what love is we need more than just an intellectual grasp which without a doubt is a necessary and critical element of this pursuit. Yet ultimately we also need an element of fundamental openness to the reality of the other, reality beyond us. Nussbaum captures the often forgotten element with an image of learning to fall with an attitude of trust. She herself is utilizing an intuition found in Ann Beattie's short story *Learning to Fall*, a story of a woman who learns her own love through learning not to fear her own vulnerability. Nussbaum explains that the protagonist of the story discovers her inner world through the medium of a boy, Andrew, telling a story about his mother, Ruth, learning to fall in her dance class. Her realization is summed up in the following insight:

But what this means is that she lets herself not to stop it, she decides to stop stopping it. She discovers what will happen by letting it happen. Like Ruth, slowly falling in the class exercise that teaches and manifests trust, she learns to fall. As Andrew says, she doesn't just go plop[;] she gently, slowly yields to her own folding, to the folding of his arm around her. She lets that touch not startle her. Like Ruth's bodily fall, and as she sees, like a prayer, it's something done yet, once you do it, fundamentally uncontrolled; no accident, yet a yielding; an aiming, but for grace. You can't aim for grace really. It has so little connection, if any, with our efforts and actions. Yet what else can you do? How else are you supposed to pray? You open yourself for the possibility.¹⁴

This image, we argue, captures well the general dynamics between the intellect and the knowledge emotions can offer to our ethical thought. Our critical insight will gather the intuitions offered by emotions and conceptualize it. Yet if we decide to take the epistemic worth of emotions seriously – we, in certain aspects, will be led by it in unexpected ways. Allowing emotions in the sphere of the ethical will ultimately ask one to embrace his/her own vulnerability. This is what an ethical judgment that connects an intellectual deliberation and a consultation of emotion looks like – it embraces aspects of control and aspects of surprise and unpredictability. We consider this intuition to be a strong aspect of Nussbaum's ethics. Our moral lives and moral judgments are about deliberation, manageability and control. Ethics is a discipline, after all, that tackles predictable patterns of human behaviors and suggests reliable ways to improve them with the goal of achieving a human life that is fuller, better, more flourishing. While ethics in its very nature has to focus on this, Nussbaum points out that in order for our moral reasoning not to become solely procedural endeavor, we need to leave space for openness, for wise moral insight where we allow life, circumstances, people, our emotions to surprise and awaken us. This insight is especially valuable to theological ethics which is open to the Mystery of transcendence which requires the same space of possibility.

Nussbaum's metaphor of learning to fall presents a beautiful image and a good reminder for ethics, but her trusting fall, representing the depth of human love, does not embrace the dimension of the fall which requires the courage to trust what is beyond

¹⁴ Nussbaum, "Love's Knowledge," 278.

human. This intuition, rather, is expressed in Aquinas's hope that God himself comes to aid our vulnerability. This is the same intuition expressed in Rainer Maria Rilke's poem *Autumn* portraying a different kind of fall:

The leaves fall, fall as from far,
Like distant gardens withered in the heavens;
They fall with slow and lingering descent.

And in the nights the heavy Earth, too, falls
From out the stars into the Solitude.

Thus all doth fall. This hand of mine must fall
And lo! the other one: – it is the law.
But there is One who holds this falling
Infinitely softly in His hands.¹⁵

Both images of human trusting fall and the fall which has trust and faith that there is an ultimate Love to aid us in the process are the intuitions that theories of the ethical role and meaning of emotions provide – the intuitions that can nurture the science of critical reflection that ethics rightfully is. More than that, the intuitions that can stimulate that reflection to be both the work of a critical mind and an insightful heart.

¹⁵ Translation by Jessie Lemont available at the *Project Gutenberg* website <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/38594/38594-h/38594-h.htm> [accessed 26 August, 2015].

