

Creed Between the Lines: *The Value and Potential of Literature in Education*

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ABSTRACT

Creed Between the Lines: The Value and Potential of Literature in Education

Ryan Bevan

The following pages deal with literature and its relationship to education. Three writers (Maxine Greene, Martha Nussbaum, Wayne Booth) are incorporated because of their extensive works which explore how literature is a unique and important companion to our lives. A polyfocal analysis ensues, inspired by Joseph Schwab's vision of the eclectic, which attempts to build a foundation for comparison as I show how literature serves as not only a companion to our lives, but also embodies, in its very structure and form, a potential value that is applicable to our development of a curriculum sensitive to contributing vantage points. Literature becomes an example of how a polyfocal analysis acknowledges the power of the imagination in our educational process.

Literature becomes, in this sense, a companion to our subject matter in a similar sense as it is a companion to our lives, as we reflect and deliberate between perspectives. In the study of history, for example, literature, incorporated as a tool for understanding, illuminates the subject matter by providing an individual voice which contemplates the mass movements of specific eras. Similarly, literature serves as a companion to the study of philosophy and moral education, recognizing the emotive elements in the learner while stimulating their rational deliberations. A story incorporates these undeniable aspects of our personalities and, this thesis argues, provides the learner with sense of agency as they become participants in constructing knowledge in a learning environment. Literature becomes a valuable source of reference when structuring a curriculum sensitive to contributing vantage points.

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Finally, I would like to both thank and dedicate this thesis to my wife, Deniz. With me from start to finish, she, like the literary works which have been my companions throughout all my life, is the ultimate source from which I draw my strength. This thesis was written for her.

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INTRODUCTION

“Those of us who have been true readers all our life seldom fully realise the enormous extension of our being which we owe to authors.”

--C.S. Lewis

Between the lines of every book there is a space, and I like to think of that space as empty and waiting; waiting for our personal contribution to what the writer has penned. It is a space there for us to fill in, with all our prejudices, value systems, cultural inheritance, as we read what the author has taken the time to present; building together a meaning across borders and even centuries, and fulfilling the potential that he or she planted as they embarked upon their literary excursion. It is a unique and exclusively human relationship, and although the words on the page are never altered, the meanings between the lines change with every read, and with every reader. In a discussion with fellow readers a dialogue may ensue with the work as centre, and through it we may gain a clearer idea of what it is that we truly cherish, abstract concepts of what we hold dear as humans, a collective creed. This thesis will attempt to harness the potential and recognise the value of this relationship as it pertains to education. As an allegory, the relationship between author and reader will serve us well as a way of envisioning education as a process of filling in the empty spaces, constructing meaning and inspiring and nurturing a self-reflective nature through self-discovery, imaginative exploration, and a fulfilment of an ethical responsibility. It is a journey which begins with the turn of a page.

It is my intent to explore the value and potential of literature in education by building upon the concepts and theories of three writers: Maxine Greene, Martha Nussbaum and Wayne Booth. I will dedicate a chapter to each theorist and incorporate two major works by each, intending not merely to regurgitate their complex ideas but to add my own perspective to the established framework. I believe that what can be gained from such an

analysis is the widened perspective proffered by three theorists addressing one area of study; namely, our personal relationship with literature.

The theorists that I have chosen have all written about literature in one form or another, and I believe that the contribution of each unique vantage point enlightens the study of the value and potential of literature as it applies to the field of education. Before I progress with my examination, it is important to clarify exactly what I mean by this statement.

Notwithstanding the general recognition of literature's educational value, I wish in the following pages to examine a variety of approaches to understanding literature as something to be explored outside of the English Class. By expanding literature's dimensions I hope to offer a broader perspective by emphasising how far we can stretch the usefulness of a literary text and how its integration into seemingly unrelated fields of study can enhance the clarity and widen the scope of all subject matter. In other words, what I wish to establish is that the potential of literature goes far beyond the basic usefulness and exercise of reading, writing, and comprehension. By presenting the different approaches to literature offered by these three theorists, I wish to display the malleability and translatability of a literary work into other areas of study and of life. In this sense I hope to justify the validity of this exercise by establishing the educational usefulness of harnessing the wide potential of literature. Literature is generally considered valuable in education, of this we are certain, but its value and potential in a greater sense, its applicability to separate areas of study, is perhaps less frequently addressed, and this is the field that I wish to explore.

I am indebted most notably to the groundbreaking work of Joseph Schwab which became a main source of inspiration for this exploration. In the book, *Science, Curriculum and Liberal Education* (1978), Schwab, in his examination of the “eclectic” writes how “Incompleteness of subject is easily seen in the entirely cognitive learning theory which takes no account of emotional needs and satisfaction” (p. 296). In the preceding pages, I explore how literature, more specifically its integration into an area of study such as History, takes into account the emotional needs and satisfaction of the learner by introducing him or her to the individual faces that made up the mass collective of society and who responded personally to the events studied, such as The Civil War, or the Industrial Revolution. As poets and writers describe their own visions of reality which mirror the learner’s own speculative natures, the newly enlightened response to partial theories offer a more inclusive outlook or understanding. Eclectic theories, such as Schwab describes, “enable us to make sophisticated use of theories without paying the full price of their incompleteness and partiality” (p. 297). In the second chapter of this thesis, for example, I describe how literature justifies the emotional aspects of our characters in our approach to critical thinking and the overall deliberative process by engaging us both rationally and emotionally as we interact with the text. An “incomplete” reliance on purely the rational or, in some cases, factual, instances of areas of study such as History or Philosophy supports the incompleteness and partiality which Schwab targeted. In other words, when we consider History in light of the eclectic approach to curriculum making, incorporating a piece of literature such as *Hard Times* or *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, or even poems which reflect the frustration and yearning of the era, we make it possible “to see what each member of the collection of

theories does and does not do with and to their approximately common subject matter” (p. 298). History, thus illumed by literature, allows for the opportunity to introduce alternative viewpoints or interpretations which expose the weakness of isolation, or what Schwab calls incompleteness. Literature supplies an alternative viewpoint or theory that aids in the understanding of our personal history. Schwab’s more detailed and inspiring examination of the eclectic was a formidable resource for this study of the value and potential of literature in education.

Beyond even its usefulness as a source of reference which combats this incompleteness of subject matter or “limited” theories, literature also provides what I refer to in my analysis of Booth in the third chapter as “trial runs”. This chapter also owes its inspiration to Schwab, most notably in his exploration of *Anticipatory Generation of Alternatives*. Schwab writes that, “Effective decision also requires that there be available to practical deliberation the greatest possible number and fresh diversity of alternative solutions to problems” (pp. 315-316). It is my argument that literature, in the sense of one becoming a well-read individual, provides this large number of alternative solutions. In Chapter 3 I analyze how exposure to the deliberations and reflections of characters in situations perhaps unfamiliar to the reader equip one for future decisions to similar problems. The anticipatory quality inherent in the process of reading and considering alternative scenarios is exactly why literature, or, more precisely, what we can gain from its illuminative potential, is valuable in education. Schwab goes on to write,

The character of the problem depends on the discerning eye of the beholder. And this eye, unilluminated by possible fresh solutions to the problems, new modes of attack, new recognitions of degrees of freedom for change among matters formerly taken to be unalterable, is very likely to miss the novel features of new problems or dismiss them as “impractical.” Hence the requirement that the generation of problems be anticipatory and not wait the emergence of the problem itself. (p. 316)

A well read individual, one who has been safeguarded against partiality and who has ventured into unknown territory in the literary sense, recognizes the potential of a problem to arise, and subsequently anticipates his or her reaction to it. Schwab continues by commenting on novels specifically, reminding the reader that critical scholarship has generated “a dozen different conceptions of the novel” (p. 317) and how it can be read. Subject matter in education, I argue, can be “read” in a similar, multifaceted fashion. This argument grew from the ideas presented by Schwab and establishes the educational significance of the polyfocal conspectus.

The “polyfocal conspectus” is, briefly, referred to by Schwab as a program of “question, challenge, response and counterresponse” (p. 344). It necessitates, in the above sense of the eclectic, a more distanced approach to theory which brings to light the shortcomings of isolation. By including literature in the study of History, for example, we question and challenge an approach to our history as something which entails merely our ability to memorise and chronicle certain dates, battles and changes to public policy. Literature, in cataloguing the individual’s reaction to and influence upon these events, illuminates the subject matter from a different angle, and in turn elicits its own response which opens the door for further interpretation. As we widen our exposure to interpretations, simply put, we nurture a questioning nature which challenges inert ideas. The polyfocal analysis of subject matter is an idea which is maintained throughout this thesis, and it is the basis upon which I explore the value and potential of literature in education.

I have chosen the works of Greene, Nussbaum and Booth because each has influenced the field of education in unprecedented ways, and each has written specifically

concerning the impact of literature on our lives. I believe that it is only through a thorough review of their significant contributions that one can accurately attempt an analysis of literature's potential in education. My contribution to the analysis will be an attempt to build upon their works by allocating one area of study or aspect of education to each theorist. For example, in an analysis of Greene's books, I attempt to build a relationship between literature and history. In the second chapter, I analyse Nussbaum's works as a prototype for establishing a relationship between literature and philosophy. In the final chapter, I incorporate the works of Wayne Booth and explore how one can use literature as a tool for moral education. Although the studies are separate, the main idea of the value and potential of literature in education is carried through to each chapter and culminates in the conclusion of the thesis, where a comparison of the ideas presented brings the discussion to a close.

Before I begin my analysis, I thought it prudent to address one or two concerns which may occur in the minds of readers. The first of these is that the three writers that I have chosen are all Americans. As I do make the claim that literature has the potential to cross borders and boundaries and engage members of all cultures, it may be useful to clarify from the outset that although the study may be limited geographically as well as linguistically (the literary works referenced by myself and the theorists I examine are all in English), it does not imply that it is exclusive to these confines. In other words, I do not mean for the study to appear limited. In Turkey, for example, there is equal value in a study of Turkish texts and how they complement the history, philosophy and moral education of that land, and the same goes for India, Italy, Russia, etc. A universality is implied in this instance.

I believe that this study is important for many reasons. When the interconnectedness of subject matter is ignored, barriers are placed around areas of study and isolation occurs. Students, moving from one subject to the other, closing their books (and minds) at the end of each class, are missing out on a very important and fundamental learning opportunity. The educational process, in the sense that it is a microcosm of our own lives, is in reality more fluid and dynamic. As educators, we need to initiate a flow of continuity that should pervade our institutions. If we do not, we run the risk, as noted by Alfred North Whitehead, of passing on inert ideas. Inert ideas are those which are “merely received into the mind without being utilised, or tested, or thrown into fresh combinations” (*The Aims of Education*, 1929, p. 1). As we saw with Schwab, the newly illumed subject matter is a source of fresh perspective which challenges accepted ideas. “Every intellectual revolution which has ever stirred humanity into greatness,” writes Whitehead, “has been a passionate protest against inert ideas” (p. 2). A fresh look at established knowledge, from the illuminating perspective offered by literature, is what this thesis will hope to provide. Historical knowledge, for example, is made less inert by the inclusion of literature, as I shall argue most significantly in the first chapter. As we consider our own role in our history, our relationship with the mass movements that we learn about and the insight that literature can provide into this relationship, we may help learners to realise the interconnectedness of all things, the validity of all contributions, and the value system that we have collectively established. This first begins with the engagement the learner has with the subject matter, the teacher and his or her fellow students.

The contributing perspectives of experience, knowledge and philosophies serve not to limit the range of understanding of subject matter, but rather widen the extent of its applicability. In other words, the value and potential of literature in this thesis is explored from varying perspectives – literature as it applies to history, philosophy and moral education – in order to highlight the malleability of a written text or work of art and the significant contribution it can offer to a wide range of areas of study. This type of exploration will be emphasised in the conclusion with a more concentrated look at the work of Joseph Schwab and the advantages of a polyfocal conspectus. The purpose of this exploration, for the time being, is to underline a very basic point. Isolation, compartmentalisation, fragmentation, when it comes to education, can be harmful. A richness of perspectives, as an alternative, gives value to a meaning constructing experience which can be internalised to fit into a macroscopic view of the world and subject matter. Isolation of individual perspectives from mass historic movements, or emotions from rational decision making, or passion from subject matter - three points which will be explored in the following pages - leads to conflict and confusion which mars character and retards the learning process. The model that I wish to present uses literature as an example of how a polyfocal analysis of an area of study can help combat isolation.

This model is presented chapter by chapter and theorist by theorist. In the first chapter, I try to emphasise the importance of placing a human face on our history, something which literature enables as in the case of the poet versus public policy (which we shall see, for example, in Thoreau's *On Civil Disobedience* in Chapter 1). The isolation that is targeted here is the distance between mass movements and our personal involvement with and

reaction to them. Instead, we can see ourselves as active contributors to the policies that we are subject to. Similarly, in the second chapter, the isolation that is targeted is the repression or denial of our emotive aspects in favour of rational deliberation which rises above the childish “fancies” of the dreamer. Instead, a more inclusive understanding of our selves is proposed which justifies the legitimacy of our emotions and their role in our decision making, both public and private. Finally, in the third chapter, I offer what may perhaps be seen as the boldest proposition in this thesis manifested in the suggestion that an over concentration on, or isolation of, the student-centred approach to education undermines an ethical responsibility a teacher (or anyone for that matter) has to the area which inspires him or her. A movement toward a more subject centred curriculum, guided by “authors” who have a passion for their work is prescribed. If students and teachers are isolated from the subject at hand due to their concentration on their own relationship with one another, I argue, the cathartic experience of discovering meaning and procuring value upon the “tale” is denied. As the chapters progress, I intend to thread the links between the theories in order to bind together several points which I find very important and pressing. Targeting isolation in this way, and using the value and potential of literature as model for a building strong framework, I hope to add my own contribution to one aspect of the educational debate.

I would also like to add that one theorist that I did not include this thesis should at least have some mention here in the introduction. A writer who has regretfully not been designated his own chapter is Kieran Egan, who has much to say concerning this more imaginative and story-telling approach to education. I refer the reader to his works, most notably, *Teaching as Story-Telling: An Alternative Approach to Teaching and*

Curriculum in the Elementary School (1986), *Imagination in Teaching and Learning* (1992), and, more recently, *Getting it Wrong From the Beginning: Our Progressivist Inheritance From Herbert Spencer, John Dewey, and Jean Piaget* (2002), as well as the collective work of all members of the Imaginative Education Research Group (IERG) at Simon Fraser University (www.iERG.net). Although imaginative education is a connective arm of this thesis, so to speak, literature is its main focus, and the unique relationship between the author and the reader and its educational significance is what concerns me foremost and is the centre from which I intend to draw discussion and inspiration.

In the following chapters, I look at two major works by each theorist. In the first chapter, I incorporate Maxine Greene's compelling book recounting the history of public schooling in America entitled, *The Public School and the Private Vision: A Search for America in Education and Literature*. The ideas that I build upon involve the conflict between the public movements which specifically target education and the personal responses to these movements by the writers affected by the times. What I hope to convey is the idea that literature catalogues these individual responses to mass historic movements and their inclusion in the study of History allows for a personal internalisation by the learner of the effect they themselves have on the progress of their culture and their society. Educationally, I argue, the potential for literature to provide a human face to the movements contained in a History text may nurture a sense of involvement which does not deny the effect we as individuals have on our society and culture. The personal involvement in our own history and growth is a reality which literature recognises. In the second part of Chapter 1, I look more closely at Greene's lectures on aesthetic education, specifically found in her work, *Variations on a Blue*

Guitar, with the intent on emphasising the potential a literary text, or any work of art for that matter, has in allowing for the contributing interpretations of converging cultures which lead to a questioning of the learner's own unchallenged beliefs and cultural inheritances. Once again, the intent here is to maximise the effect of guiding the learner to a realisation of their own significant contribution to their world.

The two major texts I call upon in Chapter 2 are *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature*, and *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life*, both by Martha Nussbaum. I begin with the former text, building upon Nussbaum's exploration of the form and structure of a literary text and how it opens the door to a more inclusive engagement with philosophy as it reveals the truth about our own, often overlooked, emotionally charged deliberations which affect our decision making. Thus a literary text gives credence to the inner struggle which takes into account the emotive aspect of our characters. In the second part of the chapter I discover how this unique distance provided by literature, i.e., the fact that we are not involved directly in the plot yet still "feel" for the characters who we are reading about, allows us to be better judges in our decision making. I also explore how this distance can translate to public policy making and the greater society once again. Moving from Chapter 1 from the outside in and then at the end of Chapter 2 back to the outside, or the greater society, I hope to demonstrate the importance of internalising and understanding *why* we should feel certain ways about certain things, before claiming the right to effect change.

With this last idea in mind, I begin Chapter 3 with Wayne Booth's *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. Booth, who passed away on October 10th of last year, just as I was researching and writing the third chapter, also analyses the relationship we have with literature, but

this time from the outlook of the writer. I build upon his groundbreaking ideas concerning the chosen technique of the writer which determined how he or she was to present their unavoidably rhetorical piece of fiction. Distinguishing between the “telling”, or intrusive technique, and “showing”, I use Booth’s framework as a spring board to a consideration of teaching practice, drawing a parallel between the author’s relationship with his or her work and the teacher’s relationship with his or her curriculum. I then segue into Booth’s great *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction*, in order to expand this relationship to include the reader, or student, and establish an ethical relationship between the two entities with the subject matter as centre. This final appraisal of the value and potential of literature in education places the area of study as the integral centre of any passionate pursuit and attempts to re-evaluate an over focus on the student, or, more precisely, their cognitive development, which neglects the focal point from which meaning can and should be constructed, namely the subject matter itself.

In the conclusion to the thesis I bring together all the ideas presented thus far and restate my conviction of the value and potential of literature in education as something that benefits the educator and the learner in a unique and effective way. I again state that isolation is the main target to combat, and bring the thesis to a close with a consideration of the practical implications of my mainly theoretically based claims. In doing this, I invoke the work of Joseph Schwab and the benefits of a “polyfocal conspectus” as applied to curriculum making. This is manifested in the call for expertise in subject matter-assigning in our educational institutions.

Finally, it should be noted that while I claim that literature serves as a complement to history, philosophy, and moral education, I mean in reality that literature is a complement

to life. What may perhaps be the most important point that I wish to convey is that as we widen our characters by delving into the offered worlds, our minds, while never ceasing in their attempt to define and redefine our realities, embrace a heightened sense of value on which our realities are based. In other words, the more we read, the more we open ourselves to contributing vantage points, perspectives and interpretations, the more we come to terms with the shared value system of our myths, but only when we embark on a journey beyond our village, our community, or religious and cultural inheritance. Our expansive outlook indicts narrow-mindedness and isolation, looking down from the bridge which connects the greater, abstract morals of our mythological landscapes. Literature, in this all inclusive sense, fills the gaps of humanity.

CHAPTER 1

THE HISTORY STORY

“So long as we neglect this subjective side of history, which may more simply be called the inside of history, there will always be a certain limitation on that science which can be better transcended by art. So long as the historian cannot do that, fiction will be truer than fact. There will be more reality in a novel; yes, even in a historical novel.”

--G.K. Chesterton

In *The Public School and the Private Vision: A Search for America in Education and Literature*, Maxine Greene provides her readers with an evocative and distinctive treatise that attempts to define America's identity by examining its history, the development of its public school system, and the artistic achievements of its citizens. Throughout the book, Greene attempts to "find" America by delving into its past and broadening the historical perspective by integrating the literature - the various poems, essays and novels - into the identity forming analysis. In doing this, Greene paints for us a social reality of significant contribution. In other words, Greene believes that the political and historical movements undertaken by the government as well as the crusades of singular thinkers such as Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman, have unquestionably influenced one another to the point of engendering a way of thinking; a goal or a "Dream" that in turn defines the culture and mission of America. This reality has a dynamic source of contributors. As Greene puts it in her introduction

Some will deal in presentations, in efforts to make people feel and form; others will work with fact and truth, informing, making people know. And, at any given moment of history, the "reality" which is defined is in some sense equivalent to the multiple ways in which experience has been formed. (Greene, 1965, p. 4)

This "reality", of course, affects the public school system, for it is here that future generations are introduced to an ideal which is, ideally, reflected in the lives they lead outside of the classroom. What education is expected to achieve, therefore, is a perpetuation of a system of beliefs that are inherent in the culture. If we turn round and look back at the history of the American public school system, we may be able to gauge the development of this perpetuation. Greene, however, also wishes to include in this backward glance the opportunity for her readers to see through the perspectives of the

artists of the time, particularly the writers. This, as she claims, offers an alternative to Horace Mann's vision of public schooling; it enables us to "consider from a variety of vantage points the story of the common schools" (p. 6). But what can be gained from this alternative perspective? Greene explains that she frequently chooses the literary view because,

the literary artist is characteristically concerned with presenting his personal experience of life, his individual confrontations with tension and change...Unlike the reformer or the orator, he is given to perceiving conflict dramatically. It is his object to integrate his materials imaginatively, to achieve aesthetic resolutions rather than social change or effective persuasion; and he attempts to do this by exploring, probing, molding the particulars he forms. (p. 6)

It is therefore obvious to see the enhanced view of cultural and, subsequently, educational development that such an inclusion can bestow. The orator or educational reformer speaks to the rational mind, armed with a logical arsenal of persuasive theses and effective, seemingly applicable solutions. The artist, on the other hand, in a sense cracks the surface of the shell; he reaches inside himself and in his creative fashion adds sustenance to the rhetoric. As Greene states, men like Hawthorne, Whitman, Emerson, Thoreau, Melville, as individuals, stand "in the midst of the field."

The words *Republic*, *rights*, *enlightened*, even *liberty*, hold different meanings for individual men, if they are meaningful at all. And the "meaning" of the whole, in this case the meaning of the history of common schools, can only be fully defined if we account for what they also see and hear. (p. 7)

The aim of this chapter is to show how Greene's account of what these artists see and hear is transferable beyond the "meaning of the history of common schools" to the study of history as a whole. The influence these writers have had on historical movements, beyond the history of the public school system, will be explored. Whether it be the era of slavery, of depression, of war, or of the Civil Rights movement, or all of these combined, the writers offer us a window into the individual soul of the citizen; a view which, I shall argue, offers us an invaluable opportunity to evaluate and transform our own present.

Greene's paradigm serves as the perfect launch pad to further explore the value and potential of literature as it applies to history.

These foot soldiers for the soul, the writers, poets and essayists, represented in their works the individual men and women who made up the mass that collectively operated the American ideal. Greene explores how the literary artists, when looked at from a historical perspective chronologically in tune with enacted changes in policy, help us "see in new ways in the darkness" (p. 8). This darkness is the inner soul of the man, and the fruits of observation and contemplation which result from self-reflection, as opposed to the outer light of the reality of the public school system. Here, by analyzing Greene's insightful viewpoints we can begin to explore the value and potential of literature as a complement to our study of history. As a base of reference, Greene's book provides a structured example of how this concept can translate to practical application.

In this vein, I would like to move to a more specific account of Greene's book that will help dispel any ambiguity concerning her treatise. As I have previously stated, Greene approaches her study chronologically, mapping the development of the public school system in America alongside the literary movements of the times. In this fashion she begins by focusing on the Boston lawyer Horace Mann, who was appointed to the post of Secretary of the Board and greeted the appointment "as an opportunity to commence a moral crusade" (p. 17). Universal education, according to Mann, was "the first of all causes. No other institution seemed to offer such promise of improving and redeeming human beings" (p. 18). Local schools, public schools, in this sense, became virtual training grounds for good citizens, spiritually and intellectually nurtured and groomed. This commonality of education was "a matter of state concern" (p.18). Without

delving too deeply in Greene's thorough historic account of the birth and early years of common schooling, it is enough to understand that public education, in its earliest stage, was an instrument of what Greene describes as "mass enlightenment" for all classes, inclusively. This of course came at the expense of the middle class in the form of taxation, and when depression and disillusionment intervened, the vigour surrounding the hope faded significantly. Mann, however, was adamant that common schools would "alleviate the 'revenge and the madness' of the poor" (p. 21). And, furthermore,

If the children of the poor were taught to help themselves, they would be less likely to avenge themselves on others...Moreover, if all children went to school together and shared experiences day after day, the gulf between the classes would be narrowed, and hostility would accordingly decrease. (p. 21)

Education in the form of common schools, Mann believed, could create a sense of community between all classes; it could build a fellowship of common-minded citizens, fulfilling the dream of prosperity, creativity and economic output. What was hoped to be gained was a free school where everyone could partake of the learning process and share the fruit of the vine, becoming part of an established and universal brotherhood, working toward the betterment of society. The artists, however, as Greene points out, had much to say concerning this proposed "brotherhood". The establishment and the artistic community were at a definitive crossroads, and at the centre of this conflict was the public school system.

It is with this idea of the "establishment" that Greene introduces us to the "transcendentalists, utopians and reformers" (p. 27) who stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the ideals that were being marketed and imposed, and who questioned and challenged the entire process. The idea behind this challenge can be efficiently summarized by Ralph Waldo Emerson's statement that, "Humanity could gain nothing 'whilst a man, not

himself renovated, attempts to renovate things around him” (p. 32). In short, those who called for and initiated reform, needed to, in Emerson’s opinion, fix themselves first. The citizen envisioned by Mann, on the contrary, “neglectful of his own soul, might become ‘tediously good’ in a single domain and narrow or careless in others” (p. 32). The poetic movement emphasised greatly the negative idea of convergence to a common ideal, a “Dream”, which in turn was concocted by those who had not, in a sense, set themselves right, and therefore could not claim the authority to guide citizens to the light of truth.

The issue of slavery provides the perfect example of this intellectual butting of heads, so to speak. Mann, as Greene points out, “discouraged normal school students from attending Abolitionist meetings. He once penalized a normal-school principal for involving himself and encouraging students to do the same” (p. 34). Schools, dependent on the taxes of middle class business men, were not the places to discuss issues that were considered “political”, even though they were unarguably human issues. They were, instead, factories of a different sort, churning out capable workers, submissive, orderly; to fill the spaces needed to run the businesses of those who in turn provided the capital for the schools. Greene begins to draw a line between the artists conception of intellectual and spiritual growth against that of the State’s. In this sense the purpose of education and what the institution is expected to achieve differs according to perspective. The writer, the poet, is, as Wordsworth stated, “a man speaking to men.” The government, as deeply in favour of education as a necessity, is, on the other hand, more grounded in public opinion and the financial reality of providing schooling for its citizens to perpetuate an adherence to a common goal or dream. Students should be taught to function in a society that depends on workers for output and survival. For the government, the mass ideal is

precedent, while the poet, Emerson for example, places his emphasis on education as a soul-awakening and socially transforming entity that can help one discover their individual spirit and therefore re-arrange their lives in accordance with the harmony that befits a true brotherhood of enlightened beings. The mass ideal created by the individual is, in this latter sense, manifested through his or her relations with their fellow citizens. It is not, ideally, dependent on financial gain and the perpetuation of industry; even less so on the controlling of the aspirations of an entire country. Perhaps more importantly, the collective goal was not something to be seen as solidified or set in stone. The reformers, for example, “interwove description with prescription” (p. 46). Children had to be taught to fulfil a role in society, and public schooling could uniformly provide the supply for the increasing demand.

The school, insufficient though it might have been, stepped into the breach for many and at least provided a moral framework, a set of authoritative controls. Something like the ‘social principle’ proposed by Mann became the source of a conscience for many young men set loose in the open, competitive world...It seemed far more important, in the end, to build a solid, gabled house on Main Street than to be known as a buccaneer – more important to be a leading citizen than an adventurer. (pp. 57-58)

But where did this leave the inimitable, individual human spirit? The conflict between the two entities can best be explained as the structure and guidance that men like Mann believed to be providing for its citizens was seen by the poets as encasing, or caging them in a flawed ideal instead of opening the door to flight and freedom. Emerson was calling for the soul to break free, in the sense that one should become self-reflective and question, instead of being blindly responsive in acceptance. Emerson’s philosophy was reflected not only in his own writing, but in so much of the literature of the time. As a companion to our history, we have much to gain from its insights into the human soul, providing an alternative to the proud achievements outlined in American History textbooks. The literature discusses, as we shall see with a more in depth look at a specific

example, the obvious contradiction between the fruitless pursuits of the masses and the yearnings of the individual soul as it comes to term with its existence in this world.

These alternative outlooks may come in the form of novels, essays or poems, and perhaps it may be helpful to draw on a specific example of a piece of literature which reflects the human-ness of a certain historic period as presented by Greene. Hawthorne, states Greene, “saw strange disguises and haunted minds when he looked at men, and he had little faith that humanity could be perfected in the world that had come to be” (p. 66). This view is brought to light in the short story, *Young Goodman Brown*, in which Hawthorne presents the reader with a young man, newly married, who is led into the woods on a dark night to witness a satanic celebration at which all of the townsfolk, priests and nannies, teachers and shop keepers, are in attendance. Brown manages to escape the temptation of the ceremony at the very end, but is left a gloomy and hopeless character the rest of his days. This darkened sense of community, this dead-eyed compliance and dark fellowship, were themes that permeated the bulk of Hawthorne’s writing. Greene explains that

What Mann described as ‘moral compliance’ became nothing more than automatic, outward conformity in the artists’ illusioned world. Men, (Hawthorne) thought, were becoming numb to ambiguities and inhumanity, undisturbed even by sin. It was not that he opposed the forward movement in the land, nor that he believed in a return (to the past). It was, rather, that he saw men of the past as conscious of their predicament as human beings...Compared with the Age of Trade, the earlier age seemed to him to be an eminence, and this in spite of bigotries, witchburnings, orthodoxies. As an artist, therefore, he moved back in search of illumination for the present.” (pp. 66-67)

This technique of looking back in search of illumination, as a way of explaining the ‘numbness’ of the present, manifested itself in Hawthorne’s masterpiece, *A Scarlet Letter*. The novel was, as Greene puts it, “his response to the yea-saying of those who believed they could teach young children ‘self-control’, to the aspirations of those who thought that, given the proper environment, they could insure the self-perfecting of every

living man” (p. 70). Like Emerson, Hawthorne looked with disdain on what he believed to be the fetters placed on the souls of Americans. Hester Prynne, Hawthorne’s heroine, lives outside of the town full of Puritan citizens who had called for her exile. Her child, Pearl, is a free spirit, at one with nature, playful, happy, living. Mother and child, symbols of non-conformity, stand against the town which has cast them out, just as the individual spirit stands against the numbness of the suffocating banality of the institutions directing, controlling and moulding the aspirations of a people. The society was moving forward historically, toward an expected achievement of perpetual prosperity and ‘happiness’; and yet the artists present capsules of alienated and starving spirits who fall between the cracks of the surging machine that is American society, and its training ground, the public school system. The individual spirit, in this sense, is lost in the fabric of the Dream. Men and women are dictated what is valuable to them, instead of being participants in an engaging society of citizens blooming with ideas, opinions and open minds; re-inventers and enlightened thinkers dedicated to watchfulness and the value of true community. This society, as previously stated, must have its beginnings in personal exploration. As we turn now to Greene’s concentration on Thoreau, we see another example of escape and meditation which disregards the prescription of the times.

In the year 1845, the year of Mann’s ninth Report, “with its stress on self-government and its warning against the identification of liberty ‘with an absence of self restraint’” (p. 75), Henry David Thoreau, Greene reflects, went to live in the woods, to Walden Pond. This move is significantly placed against the establishment of a society built on an acquiescence to a moral code whose universality, according to the artistic outsiders, was questionable to say the least. Thoreau exiled himself from the city, the bustle, the

unfulfilling pursuit of an established Dream which involved hard, often fruitless, mind-numbing labour for the good of the society. And yet, as Greene also points out, Thoreau was not asking that everyone in that society return to the woods and the “simple life”. Rather, “he was challenging his contemporaries to examine their lives and their commitments, to consider the values they were pursuing” (p. 80). He wanted people to question the progress they had made, to ask themselves why they were so proud of the society that they had built. Greene writes how Thoreau contrasted images of “automatons and burdened, trudging creatures” with those of “hikers and ‘surveyors’ of woods and ponds” (p.81). The purpose of this contrast is made clear by Greene.

Thoreau knew, as American writers since have seemed to know, that images like those were linked to men’s feelings about freedom, about manhood. Evoking them as he did, he was insisting upon what he took to be the individual’s heart’s desire. Opposing them to what Americans had become, he was insisting that the individual look again, consult his dream, consider what was lost. (p. 81)

Two images stand side-by-side. One of the robotic, assembly-line, hollow-eyed worker, slumping to a factory day after day to fulfil his role as a cog in the wheel, the other of the ‘free’ man, the woodsman, the fisherman, the trail blazer, surviving by the sweat of his own brow, working hard but living happy, sustained. The poet, the artist, presents these images as windows to the soul. The soul of the drudgery laden worker is indeed dark and depressed, bleak and uncompromising. The soul of the free man, the intellectual who challenges his lot in life and seeks to change and improve himself and subsequently his community, is like the clear water of a pond; refreshing, quenching. And the way to achieve this latter sense of being is by taking steps creatively, discovering possibilities that will lead to change. Thoreau called for the farmers and villagers around him to “forsake the newspapers they read so constantly, the dime novels, the trivia of journalism, and to plunge in the great literature of the ages” (p. 82). The workers were being subdued

by the soulless pursuits of the modern consumer. They were mistakenly content with engaging themselves with what was laid out before them, instead of exploring the challenges and possibilities presented by the poets and writers of previous generations. Thoreau too stressed the importance of looking back, or at least within, in order to better understand the present and prepare for the future. With these ideas in mind, he wrote *On Civil Disobedience* to challenge people to “take responsibility for themselves” (p. 83). It was his wish, as stated in his own words, not to bring about social change by deliberately opposing the law of the land, but, Greene explains, to “refuse allegiance to the State, to withdraw and stand aloof from it effectually” (p. 83). In this way, by standing aside from the shadow of the State, one could gain a perspective on his or her social position, re-discover the wants and yearnings of their own individual soul, untainted by material wants, and revisit the community strengthened by the experience. As far as education was concerned, this attitude stood in direct opposition to the adherence to rote memorization techniques, which were popular at the time. Citizens could not bloom while underneath this suffocating blanket of unchallenged acceptance of knowledge. What students learned from their teachers, due in part to the rote technique and accompanying heavy discipline, was that knowledge was and is unapproachable, immovable, unquestionable. They were trained to accept things as they were, groomed to love them, and looked eagerly to gain a place in the society that advocated adherence to the norm. Greene paints an apt portrait of the artist standing against this philosophy, and declaring war upon it.

Greene then turns her attention to Herman Melville, and his particular vision of America as illustrated in his writings. Melville, states Greene, went indeed further than Hawthorne and Thoreau by exploring more deeply the claim to any universality.

“Thoreau, at Walden Pond, said ‘Simplify!’ Melville’s universe was already too complex for simple contraries or dualities” (p. 97). As Greene points out,

There are no answers in Moby Dick...no solutions or correctives. There are only vantage points: mastheads, quarter deck, forecastle, whaleboat, coffin, and a vortex subsiding “to a creamy pool”. Because such vantage points are not the customary ones for those concerned with the problem of schools, new angles and planes are likely to appear when they are taken; new meanings are likely to emerge. (p. 98)

The new meanings which emerge are those constructed from the vantage points taken into account as alternatives to the “solutions and correctives” prescribed by the State as far as education was concerned. Vantage points were not taken into account under the techniques employed by the public school system. And yet the answer to the problems of the soul, and subsequently of society, faced by most Americans was not, in this sense, as simple as retiring to the woods or reading the classics to broaden your perspective. When you returned from your inward excursion you had to apply this new found knowledge to a particular problem, in this case education, as a microcosm of the society of which you were a part.

Today, in our terms, literature provides this unique perspective which enhances the individual’s outlook and through its incorporation, “new meanings are likely to emerge.” Writers like Thoreau, Hawthorne and Melville understood the significance of these vantage points and promoted their use as an opportunity to discover new meanings, to change direction. And while they retired to their own self-reflection and examination, we are left with the results of these labours, and must not disregard their usefulness. Literature, thus considered, not only exposes the reality of men’s feelings amidst the era, but also provides the vantage points that can offer solutions to remedy the present and build toward a better future. It is not a matter of accepting these solutions as an unquestionable framework to be implemented. Rather, it is more of a recognition of their

potential as a starting point to an introspective dialogue. The key to all of this is knowledge, knowledge in the sense of a more complete form, a knowledge that questions and seeks change, and one which is not fragmented into separate subjects of study, with no transcendence. This knowledge nears completion when students are provided with one alternative perspective offered by literature. In the case of the history class, writers who were engaged in questioning during certain eras add a colour to the commentary which can capture the imagination of students. Incorporated as additions to a more inclusive curriculum, literature can engender discussion and nurture critical thinking which may lead students to rediscover their own realities as well as those of the greater society in which they live.

What we therefore can achieve by this expansion of subject matter is a renewed sense of value. Unquestioned acceptance and the habitual compliance with a modern mindset (i.e. the tendency of young people, and adults alike, to accept pop culture ideals as the basis for a starting point of most conversations) leaves little room for an overall analytical and expository debate which takes into question the value of our pursuits. We have the freedom to make these changes, if we are disillusioned with the findings of our analysis. But an analysis must begin, and literature opens the door for a discovery of the true freedom that we are privy to. Freedom, in the sense it is so often used today, is rarely considered as a means to an end. The freedom to imagine and question only becomes valuable and effective when it is employed as an instrument for change where change is needed. The imagination of the students must be allowed to thrive.

Only in this manner can a democratic school which is dedicated to knowing fulfill itself. Only with wholeness can there be the 'democratic dignity' that is not 'the dignity of kings and robes, but that abounding dignity which has no robed investiture'. Like Walt Whitman, Melville went on: 'Thou shalt see it shining in the arm that wields a pick or drives a spike; that democratic dignity which, on all hands, radiates without end from God.' (p. 105)

The discovery, or rather re-discovery, of this freedom can begin in the classroom when our literary texts are opened beside our history books. Whether it is achieved or not, a movement toward wholeness (as opposed to partiality) can at the very least inspire an inkling of purpose. This wholeness involves a unity which considers alternative viewpoints, in this case, the individual amidst the mass. This wholeness may lead to a consideration of change and, subsequently, the dignity of participating in an everyday existence which promotes the truly valuable sense of stability which stems from peace of mind.

If the common school can accurately boast an equality of opportunity, then ideally the knowledge gained from attendance and dedication will lead our citizens to place value on their contribution to a society in harmonious pursuit of a common goal. But this, obviously, was not, and perhaps still is not, the case. Instead, the claim to universality, and the technique employed in subduing and training a mind aspire to common and attainable goal, while in clear view stand those who partake of the more tangible reality of riches, which is what we truly desire, is fundamentally flawed. Our attention, once turned to the dream itself, using our vantage points and the reflective moments offered to us by the various authors evoked by Greene, may not directly engender change, but will equip one with the tools to implement it; namely the realisation of what we truly value and should aspire to attain. This philosophical call to arms, so to speak, relies heavily on the will of a people. For example, we can again look into our past for favourable insight. Greene displays how apathy ran rampant and blind deference to freedom for freedom's sake became the established norm.

Few people...were concerning themselves with the conditions under which free labor was being carried on. Few were equipped to think seriously about any aspect of the plight of ordinary working people where laissez-faire policies prevailed. (p. 107)

No one, according to Greene, saw this more than Walt Whitman, the poet/seer and author of the multi-volume *Leaves of Grass*. If few were equipped, Whitman was one of the few who we needed, and still need, to turn to. Whitman still had faith in the working man, he believed that the common man “would give birth to the ideal person” (p. 111). Men, Whitman believed, were not by nature depraved or unhappy, violent and unruly, and therefore did not need the extreme discipline common in educational institutions of the time. The obstacle, rather, as Green points out, was to be found in “poverty and degradation” (p.111). These were responsible for the crime and misery.

Once social inequities were removed, once men were no longer “demented with the mania of owning,” once the plain people were no longer doomed to lives of “sweating, ploughing, thrashing, and then the chaff for payment receiving,” moral behaviour would be wholly natural. (p. 111)

Moral behaviour, from the true individual, would thusly arise naturally from his nurtured self and translate into a sense of community; men working contentedly behind plough and spike, above all things maintaining a sense of dignity. Poverty takes away this dignity, the ability to feed one’s family is compromised, the lust for more possessions is fuelled, the urge to spend and consume persistent. The problem, once again, as the artists had observed, was the need to renovate the individual perspective before venturing outward in search of social change. This is what all these poets and writers prescribed. At times, like Thoreau, it meant retiring to the woods for perspective; for Hawthorne, it was a refusal to abide by imposed morality; for Melville it was all about the significance of vantage points in affecting change. In each case, the writers illuminate our understanding of historical periods by giving us a window into the hearts of the citizenry. The mass, as a conglomeration of individual thinkers, becomes only an accomplished mass when it is

comprised of qualified, happy people. By qualified we must understand those who are content to engage in communion and comradeship with their fellow individuals, and those who gain valued contentment from their daily labour. Withdrawal from this sense of community gave birth to another symptom of the ailing society - a form of individuality which Whitman saw as *individualism* (p. 120). This was the state of being so aggravated by such things as poverty and oppressive industry that a more 'every-man-for-himself' philosophy began to prevail which had nothing to do whatsoever with communion and fellowship. This individualism, an offshoot of the blind freedom addressed above, dictates that in a democratic society one has the freedom (within reason and the boundaries of the law) to do as they choose; when in effect those choices may be pursued and fulfilled at the expense of their fellow men. Whitman's idea of *individuality*, Greene explains, was quite different.

The true individual was to emerge from the mass a realization of democracy – the completion of the poem, the justification for the school. The difficulty was that Whitman was defining such ends when individualism, working through industry and finance and even slavery, was threatening to destroy individuality *en masse*. (p. 120)

This true individual championed by Whitman was a person who was concerned with the welfare of those around him and well aware of the binding reality of community. Once set in himself, a man could truly work toward the eradication of injustice and repression in his community; set into action for perhaps no other reason than the nagging disharmony which effects his life as well as the lives of those around him. It was because of what Greene calls (positively) "an infatuation with the 'self'" (p. 120), that the entire process of public schooling, at the root of the problem, was challenged. Otherwise, public education might have been "conceived merely as a training ground for faceless men" (p. 120), and never questioned. Visionaries like the writers examined thus far stood against

this standard and provided the inspiring script which led to discussion. But once again, in light of the times, it was increasing difficult to employ this strategy effectively when a war was beginning to rage which surrounded the ugly reality of slavery. The writers, however, had as much to say concerning this as they had with other issues leading up to the Civil War, and many heeded their particular cries. It is interesting to see how literature can be used to illuminate the period immediately following the American Civil War, and hopefully using Greene's example will bring the point home further as to the employability of literature in the history class.

As dignity was indeed an important aspect of each writer's approach to discovering truth through (self) exploration, its opposite, degradation, became the obvious target. As Greene points out, "Melville, Mark Twain, William Dean Howells, Henry Adams, and others joined Whitman in pointing out what had happened to degrade American ideals" (p. 123). This intense study of the past and present unveiled more clearly to these writers the work that had to be undertaken to ensure that mistakes were not repeated in the future; and this was especially true of post-Civil War writers. The educators, on the other hand, who spoke for the school system were not as vocal. Greene reveals that "there is no evidence of social critique in the postwar years" (p. 123). This is especially true of the South in general. Teachers visiting from the North, Greene reveals, "were sometimes asked to leave town because they were suspected of being anti-slavery" (p. 123). These Northerners were represented in newspapers as hostile to the institutions of the South. The public schools of the South, subject to the will of a people who were irrevocably opposed to any self-reflection which considered the rights of a once enslaved people, stood against the dream which was based on freedom for all.

Meanwhile, the North worked hard to extend the public school system in the South; and yet again, even as the shouts of Emancipation were clearly sounded, the individual was lost under the tide. Those who championed free public schooling “were unable to respond to the individual Negro who had been set free – the living human creature in his uniqueness and need” (p. 127). Once again, as the greater battle raged, as the masses united and worked toward their idyllic goal, the individual face was obscured and, in the case of the Negro, endangered. The freed slaves, segregated though they were, were expected to contribute to the work force, earn a dollar, and essentially, incorporate themselves, though from a position of inferiority, into the great machine of industry which kept the wheels of the dream turning. And this is only when they *were* accepted into the mechanics of the dream, and not hunted or labelled as inferior to a dominant race.

The above very brief account of an era of American History can now be examined from a literary perspective. History has much to say of the Civil War, of Abolition, of segregation and the restoration of a dignified pursuit of the Dream. And yet again Greene turns to an alternative source; the individual plight, and the vantage point gained from this modified outlook, is displayed clearly within the pages of a book, in this case Mark Twain’s classic *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. The relationship between Huck and Jim, in the eyes of the reader, stands as a testament to the times; the predicament of the rural, common-schooled ragamuffin and the hunted slave highlight the words written in history textbooks with explicit vividness. Greene explains how when Huck discovers that Jim is being hunted, “the boy gains the strength to act against his ‘conscience’, actually the conscience of the slave-holding community in which he was schooled” (p.135). Schooled to honour the laws of varying communities, Huck instead weighs the pros and

cons in his own heart, and makes an individual decision which conflicts with the general attitude of the mass. Greene parallels this instinctive response with the plights of other familiar literary protagonists in different eras, most notably Holden Caulfield in *The Catcher in the Rye*, “the boy whose schools have been as ‘phony’ as the occupations of the middle class...who wants only to be a ‘catcher’ of children – and protect them from falling into the adult world” (p. 137). The individuals, Huck and Holden, in their individual circumstances, are adverse (in their own distinct ways) to a society that educates and rears its children to become part of a ‘diseased’ community. Today, even more effectively, we have the *Classic Slave Narratives*, to name one source, which documents the personal experience of such writers and ex-slaves as Harriet Jacobs and Frederick Douglass. Often only brought out during Black History Month, these sources of individual account would find a more appropriate home in the discussions of relevant periods of History, despite the month or “theme”. In each case, the artists’ vision, manifested in the literature of the era, walks critically beside the timeline of our history. The often overlooked potential of these contributions to be integrated into the subject matter as openings for discussion and critical examinations means that we are neglecting a valuable source of knowledge. These tales, these vantage points, provide a glimpse into the individual human reactions to massive historical movements. As Greene travels along the timeline, we are privy to these dualities: the mass movements of industry and war, and the individual instinct and dignity that pursues its own truth amidst turmoil and change.

These personal glimpses available through the literature of the time provide a valuable contribution to the study of history. It is important for us to remember, in any field of

study, that the faces behind these movements and events are human faces, and, although often cloaked in metaphor (there will be more on metaphor in Chapter 3), complement the reality of history with their basic sentiment. It is important because we need to understand that the occurrences of the past, faded and worn like an old photograph, stand as testaments to our current reality, culturally and individually. And it is the human aspect that reminds us that the men and women who lived amidst the happenings in the history texts felt much like we do today. Their struggles are, in one sense, a condolence to our hardships as well as an inspiration for our spirits. More importantly, literature is a much more effective time machine which leads to a better understanding of who we are both as a collective people and individual entities. Its potential was, and still is, unparalleled and its value unchallenged. And as the writers lived and died, they stayed abreast of the times, at times shifting perspective, but always culturally aware.

Literature, still pointing metaphorically, giving secret signs of what was happening, shifted its focus from the individual finding fulfillment in the “territory ahead” to human creatures enacting social roles in villages and towns, “determined” (sometimes hopelessly) by environment and heredity. (p. 151)

The environment and heredity is often what we attempt to grasp in the history class. At times it means visiting museums and theme parks (see Upper Canada Village), which in their own way provide a glimpse into the period, but never involve us as directly as the words and emotions scrawled upon a page by people like us who lived during the time. Wherever the writer turned, he or she managed to engrave a valuable statement or commentary into the stone wall of history - our history, their reality. The public school provided the education that equipped citizens for lives “determined by environment and heredity”; the literature painted a picture of the reality of such a living. There are the heroes, villains, victims of tragedy, and stories of hope which gratify the soul of the

individual. Most of all, literature was and is an expression of the emotions felt by the people of a given era. Education, according to Greene, employed a different strategy.

Schoolmen could not simply absorb and interpret impinging attitudes and ideas; they could not simply express how the world felt to them. Also, caught up in a meshwork of viewpoints and demands, they were not entitled to do their work in the light of personal visions alone...Literature might embody intimations of what would *become* a predominant challenge to the schools; but the schoolmen's responses necessarily lagged behind the artists'. (pp. 151-152)

The relevance of literature as an accompaniment to subject matters outside the English class must be realized if we are to "catch up" to the artists. They challenged the people of the time to question the value of the dream and ask themselves whether it is worth pursuing and how it might be changed for the better dignity of the society. Now, when this challenge, although no less important, has hopefully gained a greater recognition in our schools, a reliance on those with the ability to articulate an emotion or stir a mind into active thought offers a well of sustenance that inspires personal reinvention and, subsequently, a movement towards betterment. Only with a greater understanding of our history, through the eyes of artists like Hawthorne, Thoreau and Whitman, can we realize how significant is our own sense of well-being in a society devoted to a common goal. If we do not, firstly, realize and, secondly, unbind, the fetters of repression, the individual intellect will be lost in the individualism of the uninspired mass. Can we tolerate an existence where the sensitive seer, the visionary, is confined to a hopeless corner of society? These writers would state today, I believe, that it is antiquated and irresponsible to create a classroom environment where our students are never asked to question or protest, as they did in previous generations. Greene outlines how the masses often, in pursuit of the American Dream, left no room for those with a questioning nature.

The sensitive, the intellectual – the sharply "individual" – are forever outsiders in the new, respectable American small town. Or they are "grotesques," as in Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*, each one reaching out to love, to be a brother-man – and being forced (by the adjusted man's passion for size and "mechanical things") back upon himself. Once forced back by

the impotence of another, the outsider could not light out, could not go free. He became a cripple, a creature destroyed by repression - no longer a lover but a "grotesque." (p. 163)

Greene's observation of this new twentieth century small town America, ringing from the aftermath of the Civil War, moving toward the first of the World Wars, notes a conflict with the artists' visions. Today the challenge remains the same, as our material culture, obsessed and preoccupied as we are with television, pop musicians and Hollywood actors, often shunts aside the observant sceptic. Yet as we become more aware of, and vocal about, our goals as a culture, we may strive to develop and maintain an educational system which nurtures and promotes personal realization and wages war on any type of repression; questioning (hopefully) the meaning of freedom as a movement toward individual and social harmony, a harmony not based upon the pursuit and collection of materials, consumerism, and the right to act as one pleases to the detriment of other members of society. We may notice a frightening flippancy in the age in which we now live, and our freedom seems to be exercised only to the extremes of self-indulgence. This echoes the individualism noted by Greene which Whitman abhorred, and it should not, the writers would aver, pervade the walls of our educational institutions. The conflict between the public school and the private vision is still a palpable one and a serious interrogation of modern policy begins with an examination of the values which we willingly pursue and fight to defend.

Literature in the classroom, used effectively, in this sense reclaims the love and freedom sought by the outsider artist by shining an accusatory light on the evolution of our society. The newly enlightened past, garnished with the classic literary texts of the age, introduces students to their questioning natures, and engenders a critical thought process which opens up the imagination and plants the seeds of reflection and

deliberation. This all-important emphasis on imagination shall be our next subject for discussion, as we move our focus to the practical examination of classroom application as proposed by Greene.

Imagination, if we are to consider it an important aspect of our personalities, must be “fed”, allowed to nurture. We all too often associate imagination directly with arts, but in effect it is spawned by any pursuit in any walk of life. Literature is only one venue in which the imagination of the student can be encouraged. When applied to history, it gives a story line with living, breathing, feeling characters, to an era. As Greene remarks in her essay *Teaching as Possibility: A Light in Dark Times*, “Imagination, after all, allows people to think of things as if they could be otherwise; it is the capacity that allows a looking through the windows of the actual towards alternative realities.” (Greene, 2000, p. 63) The teacher in the classroom becomes this writer speaking to the masses. It is up to him or her to help their students realise and understand these “alternative realities” and explore the imagination that goes beyond the written word of the text - the cold battle dates that need memorising, or the genealogy of kings, or the names of Prime Ministers. Imagination allows one to go beyond the subject of study, to explore different contexts, to consider vantage-points. How can we translate this into practice? Place an imaginative source as the centrepiece to the conversation. We gather round it, enjoy the repast, set our eyes upon it, and revolve parts of our conversation around it. Greene is especially concerned with what it exposes. Through dialogue, through the very process of considering alternative realities, the flaws of our own system begin to stand out. If anything else (some might argue that realisation, reinvention and revolution are asking too much, perhaps), the imagination releases us for the moment from the stasis of our

daily lives. It takes our attention away from the “humdrum, the routine, or what Dewey called the ‘anaesthetic’” (p. 64). If educators do not induce this “fancy” (another term we will become more familiar with more in the next chapter), then, according to Greene, “they will be in danger of miseducative behavior, ending in cul-de-sacs rather than openings” (p. 64). The openings occur because we go beyond the accepted. As Greene continues, “Most of us realize that, only when we envisage a better social order, do we find the present one in many ways unendurable and stir ourselves to repair” (p. 66). Whitman was practically screaming for education to deal directly in this realisation. If topics like slavery were discouraged from discussion in the public school, what hope did the learners have to realise the indecency plaguing their present and imagine a different reality? A source must be lit, as in the centrepiece metaphor, and like moths to the flame will the imagination gather. But it cannot be confined solely to a book or poem, trapped within its confines. As Greene states, “Imagination, moreover, is enriched and stimulated through live encounters with others, through exposure to diverse vantage points and unfamiliar ways of looking at the world” (p. 67). We are brought back to Melville’s emphasis on vantage points, as opposed to definitive answers. Imagination is a component of critical discourse which *leads us away from experience*, especially when coupled with story telling. In today’s multicultural classroom we bear witness to the new traditions which are being formed daily in those institutions of learning that encourage students to tell their stories, heeding the cry of the individual soul amidst the masses. We need, as Greene urges, “to attend to the community of old traditions as well as the connections only now being disclosed. Both require a consciousness of location, an awareness of both contemporaries and predecessors” (p. 69). This “negotiation of

identity” (p. 69), as Greene calls it, has its source in the sharing of tales, of story telling, imagining beyond the accepted. When we look back to the illuminated past (history coloured with literature) we understand our identity; and yet, using imagination and the story-telling aspect of literature, we can negotiate with one another and conceive a new reality which does not exclude the validity of contributing vantage points. But if this reality is to be born from the ashes of the old, so to speak, it needs to come, as the poets knew long ago, from within. In the sense of curricula, the readers themselves must construct the meaning, and a good starting point or centrepiece to this construction, is a text, written well, which explains our past in more elaborate ways, giving us a source for ideas that help shape a new future. This, many will undoubtedly claim, can be read as my defence of the canon, and perhaps it is. But if we are to read Greene accurately when she too emphasises the importance of encouraging students to “participate in the production of meaning” (p. 72), we have to acknowledge her call for communion in the classroom and to use imagination to shine a light in the dark places. We must understand our past first, if we are to reorder and prepare our future all inclusively. Our past is peppered with the poetic genius of the established canon, and its continued integration establishes a base for negotiations that modify (or at times refute) the claims of its writers. This is because the circumstances surrounding the environment in which the reader reads the book are constantly changing with the times. To deny it fully to the point of excluding it totally is to deny the progress we have made and may undermine the importance of our collective voices. Not only this, but we are discarding an extremely effective and reliable source of dialogue; one which is indispensable in our multicultural schools. As Greene puts it in her collection of Lincoln Center Institute Lectures on aesthetic education entitled

Variations on a Blue Guitar: “We have to attend to the members of other cultures, to see how they read the materials of their own cultures, and how they interpret the material of ours” (Greene, 2001, p. 184). Greene uses examples of African novelist Achebe’s reading of Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* and Edward Said’s reading of Albert Camus’ *The Plague*, the latter pointing out how “the Arabs who died of plague are, compared with the Europeans in the book, all nameless and faceless” (p. 182). Wayne Booth dedicates his book *The Company We Keep* to Paul Moses, a professor who questioned the inclusion of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in the curriculum and whose objection inspired Booth to re-examine his relationship with the text, which subsequently led to him writing *Company* (More on this in the third chapter). Only when we come face to face with our own prejudices and imagine beyond their limits can we open our ears and hearts to an alternative reality, following in the footsteps of our celebrated predecessors who did the same. But we need a basis of examination which allows for this opening. Our best writers of the past challenged *their* eras, and through this beautifully presented artistic questioning we have examples to base our inquiries into our own era on – namely the works themselves! If we use solely, from the point of introduction, modern texts with modern voices voicing modern problems, or completely exclude what we consider classics on the basis that they are counterproductive to our all inclusive, anti-racist curriculum, we lack a foundation, or point of reference, which denies the minds that initiated what we now call critical thinking. Worse still, we deny our learners the opportunity to discover for themselves how one text can achieve so many points of reference, and inspire self reflection and self discovered doubt in established and accepted conventions. In an essay entitled *Curriculum and Consciousness*, Greene writes

that, “For the critic of consciousness, literature is viewed as a genesis, a conscious effort on the part of an individual artist to understand his own experience by framing it in language. The reader who encounters the work must recreate it in terms of *his* consciousness” (Flinder, D. and Thornton, S., Eds., p. 136, Greene’s italics). He or she recreates the action and emotions of the characters in their own consciousness, but also, I might add, in their own historical and cultural context. It is one thing to imagine what it was like to be Raskolnikov, living in poverty in the Nineteenth Century Russia, and it is another to be stimulated by the reading to consider poverty as it is today, and attempt to understand the mindset of those who lack the resources to eke out a daily, dignified, existence. In a group setting like a (multicultural) classroom, the reader responses become somewhat limitless as far as exploring the current reality and historical significance of contributing viewpoints which led to the very reality of which we are now a part. In other words, the inclusion and exposure of a canonical text, like an accepted societal norm, serves as an opportunity for self-reflection in the midst of challenging viewpoints. “Such readings,” says Greene, “remind us that our canon, our standards, take up a relatively small space in the world; such readings offer us expansion as well as inclusion” (p. 184).

Imagination becomes the target here, not the canon. Let us adopt the simplistic generalisation that positive thinking yields the best results. Used positively as a source of imaginative contemplation, the canon can become a necessary (albeit small) contributing resource for overall speculation and self re-invention. Negatively, removing the canon altogether in an effort to deny its existence or claim its ignorance as grounds for dismissal, cheats our learners out of not only the opportunity to discover great works of

art, but the ensuing discussion which nurtures the imaginative nature which allows one an outlet to vent against accepted ideals, as Whitman and Emerson did in eras long past. If anything, it allows for the student to “be free to find their own voices” (Greene, *Blue Guitar*, p. 11). If the canon is taught as an unquestionable or untouchable entity, or, the opposite, as a non-existent, worthless relic, nothing is gained. The students are denied the opportunity either way of formulating their own truths.

Let us return, as we conclude the chapter, to the history story. The narrative structure of a literary text widens our appreciation of our accomplished history. It does this through the workings of our imagination which envisions a world beyond the inert, the banal, the unopposed reality of facts. Imagination, Greene writes, is “that cognitive capacity that is too often ignored in educational talk and, yet, is so fundamental to learning” (*Blue Guitar*, p. 81). Imagination is an engagement with not only objects in our world, but our world itself. Once a writer structures this engagement in a literary text, voicing his or her own imaginings, we are provided with an alternative visualisation to our own, to which we can respond. But the true potential of literature, in this sense, is realised only when there is a consciousness to respond to it. (*Blue Guitar*, p. 117) As part of her lectures at the Lincoln Institute, Greene maps out her intent: “I want to suggest that works of art have a potential for evoking an intimation of a better order of things. I mean, of course, a consciousness of possibility” (p. 117). And yet, as natural as it is for one to imagine beyond their existing lot, “the capacity for responding to metaphor has to be cultivated, just as does the capacity to respond to an ‘as-if’, to a created and alternative reality” (p. 118). The imaginings of a child, not seen as idle fancies or mere day dreaming or distractions from reality, but given a source or outlet in which they can indulge these

undeniable aspects of their personalities, gives credence to the urge, desire or impulse to look beyond the accepted, or the “real”. We will explore this concept further in the next chapter, as we refer to the emotions in a similar context. For now the imagination is our central focus, as a bridge to the questions which join the writer and the reader, or readers, and something which can and should be cultivated within the classroom. We are uniquely lucky, and often, I think, take for granted, the fact that we have at our disposal structured containers of imaginative impulse which serve as a centre piece or meeting ground for our own ponderings. By this I mean, of course, our literature. These acknowledge the legitimacy of our own fancies and, when cultivated, allow for a recognition of their value. But value is a sketchy term, for one can equally claim to find value in a trashy romance novel or music which supports sexist, racist and self-indulgent attitudes. And yet I do not, in the spirit of Whitman’s warning against individualism, endorse any form of fancy or fantasy as productive, valuable, or healthy. We must keep always in our minds the idea of dialogue versus isolation, and the dangers of self-indulgence in this sense. The idea is that the tales written down for us by these writers provide the opening for dialogue, and their content cannot be taken as accepted truths. They are, after all, merely particular vantage points from which the writer views his or her world as they see it. Once we add our vantage points, we begin a dialogue with the writer; once we add other vantage points to ours, we begin a dialogue with each other. An essay by Dewey, or a story by Hemingway, is just as subject to argument, in this case, as a rap song by Eminem or an excerpt from *Penthouse Forum*. The same accusations of sexism, racism, and other related moral issues ring as equally legitimate in each case. And yet the argument can be made that the company we allow into our consciousness in order to inspire this dialogue

is less damaging to character and behaviour if we stick to Dewey and Hemmingway. Why? Because a self-indulgent nature which finds pleasure only in individual forays does not seek out new opinions and closes the doors as opposed to opening them to new perspectives which challenge what they find comfort in. But this is a complex and complicated issue, one that Greene attempts to address. Our best bet, she suggests, is to place one sort against the other, like placing a billboard against a tree, and hopefully the students will question what they hold of most value in not only *their* worlds, but *the* world.

At least we can try to open discussions on what the young seek as possibilities for themselves, and how the works that entice them express desires they share, hopes they cherish. Perhaps if we construct atmospheres that offer encounters with alternative forms – including works we conceive to be works of art, the dialogue may deepen and diversify, and the participants may think more attentively about their own thinking, their own desires, what they yearn for in the world. I know there are no easy answers when daily life seems to offer so little. At the very least, we may open doors. (p. 124)

We can, in Greene's opinion, use them, like the *Harry Potter* books, as "launching pads for experience with even more varied, more multilayered, literary works" (p. 124). The point is that we must understand and recognise that "meanings must be achieved by those with a sense of agency; they do not preexist, to be dug up like nuggets of coal or even lumps of gold" (p. 124). But the meanings, if they are to be achieved, must be achieved in communion and not isolation, if they are to be effective socially. In moments of personal reflection or repose, one type may befit your personal agenda, but the social agenda becomes a different circumstance. In a classroom setting, these personal preferences become subject to the perspective to others, and this is where learning becomes most effective insofar as initiating reflection and change. This reminds me of the wonderful passage in *The Catcher in the Rye*, where Holden is describing the plight of one co-student as he continuously digresses from the subject at hand and is forced to pay the

price (*The Catcher in the Rye*, 1945, pp. 183-85). The digression was his way of incorporating his own narrative into the subject at hand and, though it fascinated Holden, was discouraged by both the students and the teacher who had set the standards. The idea of “sticking to the facts”, which erroneously proclaims the legitimacy of these so-called facts, or even the value of certain facts, as in this context, allows no room for self-reflection and self-discovery, or the opportunity for the learners to construct meaning and discover interests. Greene wants us to realise that an understanding of the arts is what allows for this response. (p. 129) Can we not see how our encounter with history is also shaped (or re-shaped) by this understanding? Art stands for interpretation, for it is only through the realisation of a work’s potential by incorporating it into our own consciousness that we give it meaning. If we incorporate other perspectives questioning our own personal vision into our consciousness, we also give new meaning to our own realities. This way of understanding, of a collective construction of meaning erected from the centrepiece, is applicable to all realms of subject matter. History is at the centre of our deliberations within the History class, but we are not confined by its “truth”, neither should be forced to stick to its “facts”. Rather, we are freed to the possibilities with which our imaginations award us. This does not challenge the authority of the history class’s textbook of accurate information. What it does do is give it a human face; allowing us to see how individual minds and souls like ours reacted to the movements with which they were faced, and helped create.

But let me again attempt to move from the theoretical to the practical and get away from abstract concepts for the moment. What incorporating literature, or imagination, or any kind of artistic influence into the history class can do, for example, is combat some of

the boredom that plagues our students and leaves them unchallenged and unresponsive.

“How,” asks Greene,

on the various levels at which you teach, can you create the kinds of situations where involvement with the arts not only enables you and your students to combat boredom and banality, but develops among all of you the sense of agency that is most apparent (or so it seems to me) in encounters with the arts? (p. 182)

This sense of agency, of being active, constructing meaning and imagining beyond the lines of the text, may evoke a greater response from the students, as opposed to “passive attention” (p. 182). Incorporation of art, (not only literary texts and not only in history class) and the imaginative response that is so often exclusively connected with it, allows for a “blurring of the disciplines” (p. 183). Greene asks, “how can we show the connection between our attentiveness to the concrete particularities of things in the domains of the arts and the posing of investigative, curious, sometimes impassioned questions that lead o general descriptions, the overarching explanations of the sciences”, or how “French impressionist landscapes release visual imagination – and at once provoke questions that lead to doing geography” (pp. 182-83). In both cases the lines between the disciplines become blurred, and our shaping of the world around us is less fragmented as a result.

We seem to have covered a lot of ground in this chapter, so let me now try to put it all in perspective. The text that I chose as a foundation to this discussion was *The Public School and the Private Vision*. Using Greene’s articulate arguments as a base, I wanted to portray the usefulness of the History Story as a learning tool. Greene’s chronological treatise was useful, as it served as a guideline which displayed how massive movements of any era are also decorated with the literature that was the result of an individual artist’s reactions to these movements. The mass, as in the assembly of workers trudging to the

mills, which represented a cultural or societal movement toward a collective dream, was contrasted against the individual face that was obscured within that mass. Congruently, the classroom as a microcosm of the mass movement in the process of being groomed to inherit this dream implied a similar contrast on a smaller scale. Articulating it in today's terms, the point that I am attempting to make is that just as Hawthorne called for an examination of the past in order to understand the present, so can we gain from a similar analysis. This understanding not only leads us to question, as they did, the values and traditions we hold as infallible, but it gives credence to the imaginative impulses which urge us to discover for ourselves our own meanings, by recognising the way in which we learn: through speculation, questioning and imagining beyond the perceived. Whenever we study any given era of our history, we can rest assured that there is a corresponding artistic voice which places a individual human face in the midst of turmoil and change, or even the drudgery of everyday, normal life. Let us recite the poetry of Siegfried Sassoon or Wilfred Owen when we study World War I, let us read Thoreau's *On Civil Disobedience* when we tackle public policy issues, to name two examples. When we first establish the humanity of our history, we can then use these stories, poems and essays as grounds to discover how perspectives or vantage points can enlighten our own visions of community and fellowship. Placed at the centre, a great piece of literature which illuminates the era with a human glow, also sacrifices itself to the interpretations of the conflicting viewpoints offered by the contributing voices of our multicultural classrooms. In this way, we are not only provided with a source of imaginative inspiration which documents the era in a more flesh and blood sense, involving us, as human souls, more directly in its evolution and not independent of its influence; we in turn evaluate the very

source of our inspiration by illuminating it with the various perspectives of our meaning constructing partners. It is my argument that this incorporation can provide the tools for a greater understanding of the subject matter as well as allowing room for self-discovery and subsequent reflection and re-invention. The History Story is our story, and we can never neglect the impact of our own individual voices.

CHAPTER 2

EMOTIONAL RATIONALITY

"I came into the world for this: to bear witness to the truth; and all who are on the side of truth listen to my voice."

"Truth?" said Pilate. "What is that?"

--John18:37-38

In this chapter I will examine literature as it stands as a valuable contribution to the study of philosophy. By philosophy, it is important to note, I mean, and will continue to mean, the “search for and the statement of truth,” a distinction drawn by Martha Nussbaum in an essay extracted from her collection entitled, *Love’s Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature*. Nussbaum explores the importance of form and content in the act of writing and avers from the outset that “Literary form is not separable from philosophical content, but is, itself, a part of the content – an integral part, then, of the search for and the statement of truth” (p. 3). Far from presenting a thorough and complete review of Nussbaum’s collection, I will in the first part of the chapter build upon certain core ideas drawn from specific essays that will enlighten the reader on the relationship between philosophy and literature. Philosophy, in the context that I wish to examine it in this chapter, must be seen as the attempt to answer Plato’s age old question: how should one live one’s life? In the field of education it is meant to be seen as a relative of critical thinking, the student’s ability to question and determine truth, and therefore is a significant component of the learning process. The value and potential of literature, in this sense, applies to the idea that a literary text can enlighten the discoverer and heighten critical awareness much in the same way as it illuminates our history, as presented in Chapter 1. Yet the focus of study in this first section will be more on individual discovery and nurturing the critical student mind as opposed to the elaborate analysis literature can provide for our historical perspective. I will attempt to concentrate the discussion more on the individual and his or her own role within the mass in the first part of the chapter, steering back towards public policy in the second part when we turn to Nussbaum’s book,

Poetic Justice. The ideas put forth by Nussbaum highlight the important contribution that can be gained from a partnership between literature and philosophy, as we shall see once we involve ourselves more deeply in her concepts and theories. As an introduction, it serves well to note that the border crossing potential of literature in the sense that it nurtures a critical approach to all subject matter, by virtue of its interpretative framework, is the main focus in the following pages.

The inquiry into the relationship between literature and philosophy by Nussbaum is, in her own words, “both empirical and practical: empirical, in that it is concerned with, takes its ‘evidence’ from, the experiences of life; practical in that its aim is to find a conception by which human beings can live, and live together” (Nussbaum, 1992, p. 25). Thus we return once again to the importance of inter-relational harmony that should be our goal as individuals in a society. The inquiry probes more deeply into Emerson and Thoreau’s excursions within the self, taking attention away for the moment from the timeline of our history as a society and culture. In this sense it is less concerned with social change and movements and more preoccupied with personal self-discovery and renovation. Nussbaum dedicates the bulk of her first chapter to the link between a distinct conception of life and the structures of the novels she intends to study. (p.26) These ideas culminate neatly (for my purposes) in a later chapter entitled *Reading for Life*, in which the novels attain the status of ethical guides that are essential to anyone pursuing a philosophical perspective. In the search for the truth, Nussbaum realizes the value of the inclusion of certain literary texts.

The proposal is that we should add the study of certain novels to the study of these works, on the grounds that without them we will not have a fully adequate statement of a powerful ethical conception, one that we ought to investigate. (p. 27)

This investigation leads the reader to a consideration of how one can gain a wider ethical perspective on life by adding to their intellectual repertoire a varied source of literary works. Consequently, the question of ethics and the link between literature and moral education will be addressed in part in this chapter, but the bulk of that particular aspect of the examination I shall leave until the next chapter, with concentration on the works of Wayne Booth. I am not arguing *here* that a literary text should be read as a sort of ethical guidebook which leads one to an understanding of morality or truth. I have instead adopted Nussbaum's opinion that the pursuit of truth, just like a literary text, and the truth itself, is "various, and mysterious and unsystematic" (p .29). Therefore, "the very qualities that make the novels so unlike dogmatic abstract treatises are, for us, the source of their *philosophical* interest" (p. 29). Our search for truth cannot rightly be called a search if we do not subject our interpretations to interpretation. With a literary text as the centre, subject to different perspectives and vantage points which inspire self-reflection and discussion, the search becomes more definitive. A meaning, far from being uncovered, is constructed and analysed, with the end (if there need be an end) being a better understanding of one another and our selves in the process.

What novels, poems and plays add to the study of philosophy is an outlook unlike the stone tablets of the religion class. It is one thing to state unequivocally, "Thou shalt not kill", and another to display for the listener the circumstances, consequences and emotions inherent in such an act. Novels involve us in the thoughts of the characters as they express doubt, reflect upon means and deliberate between complex choices in everyday (or not so everyday) experiences. As we shift focus now to the philosophical act of questioning which leads to a realization of certain realities, the value and potential of

literature is much more concentrative on the individual cognitive process which inspires new perspectives and enlightened vantage points, which in turn may inspire a movement towards change, in the sense of both thought and action. It is my argument that the individual needs to make sense of the Biblical admonition by placing it into a human context. As we saw with our history, this human context allows room for interpretation where perhaps interpretation seemed discouraged, or, at the least, unwelcome. In short, it is important to emphasise our own involvement in acceptance of certain truths, no matter how indisputable they are purported to be. Novels, as Nussbaum states, are undogmatic, and therefore of interest to us philosophically; for they provide an opportunity for dialogue and mirror the reality of our doubt-filled and contemplative natures.

Philosophy does not necessarily need literature to survive as a field of study, but the very crux of this entire thesis relies on the charge that all knowledge, and therefore all subject matter, can be viewed as fluid, interwoven, subject to polyfocal analysis, and that the addition of the literary perspective can only widen the scope of any field, even the most specialised; particularly the humanities. This is an important endeavour to pursue simply because it opens doors instead of closing them, as Greene wrote, expanding consideration beyond the narrow, or concrete, view. Literature, in its very form, as Nussbaum now suggests, offers philosophy a wider range of examples from which to draw inspiration which precedes discussion.

Schematic philosophers' examples almost always lack the particularity, the emotive appeal, the absorbing plottedness, the variety and indeterminacy, of good fiction; they lack too, good fiction's way of making the reader a participant and a friend; and we have argued that it is precisely in virtue of these structural characteristics that fiction can play the role it does in our reflective lives. (p. 46)

As in the previous chapter, the incorporation of literature in this sense acts as a sort of lightning bolt to the cold, often lifeless (in an artistic sense, at least) textbooks found in

the history class as well as the limited scenarios (e.g., case studies) used as kindling for philosophical debate. And yet it must be made clear that I am in no way claiming that literature has, inherent in its content and form, all the answers. Far from it. If we focus our criticism on the literature itself, we see the dramatic overtones, the inescapable rhetoric (something we will explore more deeply in Chapter 3) and all other characteristics exclusive to the genre that leave the novel or poem *too* open for interpretation (if this is possible). But the very form which is subject to this interpretation incorporates the dualism inherent in our characters – namely our emotions and our rational minds – and though it does not offer us solutions to the problems it centres on, it reflects, as Nussbaum states, our absorption in the circumstances which effect our lives. It offers no answers, only helps us “try on” scenarios.

Literature, as it applies to philosophy, encourages the partnership between the rational mind and the emotions. Slices of life provided by literature, along with the exclusive perspective offered by the interior monologues of the character(s), the reflection and deliberation we witness in their decision-making, provide the reader with a familiar framework which mirrors their own cognitive process. And, once again, it is important to remember that these contemplations naturally involve the considerations of fellow citizens within the community; flawed citizens who are subject to their own deliberative natures. Thus the novel has much to offer in answering the question of how one ought to treat their fellow human beings. As Nussbaum states, in the essay *Reading For Life*,

Indeed, in very many philosophical works affection and friendship do not play a part either: the text repudiates the idea that any relationship at all is under way between vulnerable, incomplete, desiring human beings. (p. 128)

It may seem silly to have to state that others (the young man on the Metro, the person standing next to us in the elevator) are subject to their own worries, frets and fears just as

we are. And yet Nussbaum wants to show us how literature stands as an important and unique reminder of this fact. It also serves, as a complement to the “drier” presentation of philosophy, as a great consultant demonstrating the human-ness of our neighbours. On a personal note which may add to the present discussion, I once had a conversation with a young man in his final year at the seminary who was studying to become a Catholic priest in the Diocese of Montreal. I asked him if he had to read any C. S. Lewis or Chesterton as part of the curriculum and he said ‘no’, that in fact they had to go much deeper, concentrating more on the institution of marriage, the history of the Church, what went on at which councils, etcetera. But he told me with a grin that he had always wanted to read some of these authors, although he was too deeply immersed in the mechanics of the Catholic faith. I wondered, after the conversation had ended, which avenue of study would help the young man out more once he had gained his priesthood. In dealing with his potential parishioners, I could not help but conclude that the arm-chair philosophy, the resounding and heartfelt sentiment of a writer like Lewis in a book like *The Problem of Pain*, would prove far more useful if the young man was approached by someone facing a major spiritual crisis. Overt concentration on edicts and doctrines lends little support to those who need an encouraging word from someone who they believe is an enlightened servant of God. Similarly, in the Religion class, concentration on the recitation of the Ten Commandments and the memorization of the names of the twelve apostles will undoubtedly have less effect on a child or young adult than the knowledge that Jesus wept for mercy in the garden of Gethsemane, that he told his apostles at the Last Supper that “no greater love hath man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.” The human aspect in both these circumstances plays an integral part in the

understanding of faith as a whole. And yet, as in the case of the young man at the seminary and the religion class, we rarely see the willingness to include such perspectives in our rational pursuits of Knowledge. But without this inclusion, we are undoubtedly fragmenting the issue, and although it is of course impossible to know everything having to do with a particular area of study, the fundamentals of the emotive compartment of our makeup should not be brushed aside as invalid. The intellect is not and cannot be separated from the emotions, for we will be denying ourselves the reality of our lot and our plight as human beings. Poets, writers, such as Whitman or Emerson, as Nussbaum points out, in the very nature of their work, challenge the separation which Plato declared necessary.

The poet, then, by the nature of his art, promotes the very elements that make ordinary human life deficient in understanding and access to truth; he impedes the separation of the intellect and its ascent to the good perspective of the "real above in nature," from which really true accounts are produced. (p. 249)

The poet is aware of both his rational capacity for thought as well as his or her emotions and in turn explores the relationship between the two, displayed in the structure and content of his or her poems. Indeed they promote an embracing of or submersion in interpretation, of the varied-ness of our emotional responses and their intellectual significance. The prescription of this thesis is for a similar balance that also takes into account the complexity of the human makeup and how it relates to our embracing of knowledge. This knowledge is not dependent simply on our rational internalising of the facts at hand, but hinges as well on our understanding of our emotional responses to our current reality which our involvement in is vital. The argument that stands between philosophy and literature, or sentiment (or fancy, or imagination), is a complex one: "The old quarrel between philosophy and literature is, as Plato clearly saw, not just a quarrel

about ornamentation, but a quarrel about who we are and what we aspire to become” (p. 259). Do we aspire to rise above the emotions, stripping ourselves of a part of our nature, or do we embrace the reality and ponder the significance? The title of Nussbaum’s work is *Love’s Knowledge*, and perhaps that gives us the greatest clue as to what a totally inclusive approach which considers both the rational mind and the emotions can teach us. Love, in the most fundamental sense, involves our dedication rationally to those who are a part of our lives, which is inextricably linked to our emotional dedication which is less easy to explain.

If we return for the moment to the interaction between individuals as members of a society, we may gain a better understanding of one of the main points in Nussbaum’s collected essays. If we reinvent, or renovate, the inner man like the poets of Chapter 1 so often prescribed, we still have to live in a society whose peace is dependent upon our interaction with our fellow citizens. Opening the door to the emotions can help us deal with the complex relationships that pervade our society. Working together with the rational considerations of reflection and deliberation, these circumstances, as illustrated in our literature, can provide, if not guidelines, examples or models of the processes which we must emulate to further our inner peace and subsequently the overall peace of the society. It is an all-encompassing view which

insists that knowledge of love is not a state or function of the solitary person at all, but a complex way of being, feeling, and interacting with another person. To know one’s own love is to trust it, to allow oneself to be exposed...Such knowledge is not independent of evidence...Nor is it independent of powerful feelings that have real evidential value. But it goes beyond the evidence, and it ventures outside of the inner world. (p. 274)

This venturing out provides the opportunity for a dialogue with the emotions, from a reflective standpoint, as opposed to immersion in self-indulgence. In other words, letting the emotions in, opening the door for them, does not mean that you will be drowned in

the flood and swept away. If we return to the history class, we do not expect that the incorporation of a text like *Huck Finn*, or the poetry of Whitman, will completely undermine the ‘seriousness’ of the understanding of history by encouraging “distracting” discussions surrounding policy (subjecting us to shouts of ‘Digression!’), and impede the fulfilment of the course requirements. On the contrary, its inclusion draws our attention to the human aspect of the era, and the reality of social interaction which marked such a time. What we can therefore learn about our present reality, from our multicultural classrooms to our inner city streets, is fundamental and important; but I shall leave such considerations to the final chapter. For now, the main point is the realisation of our emotional natures when we embark upon the self-renovation called upon by the poets of Chapter 1.

What is essential to Nussbaum’s argument is that the inclusion of a text can lead one to the realization that the emotions we experience or have experienced (as during the era of slavery) such as fear, disgust, hate and the apprehensions felt when facing difference, can be viewed in this respect as social constructs as opposed to personal or natural feelings. (p.287) In other words, the emotions and feelings have been transmitted to us socially, from the tales we tell one another, in isolated communities. This is what can be gained from an informative inspection of a time sensitive literary piece which does not deny the influence our isolated outlooks can have on our thoughts and behaviour. When we incorporate a powerful text such as *To Kill a Mockingbird* into the classroom in order to promote discussion, we have the ability to expose blind hatred and/or fear to the light of individual circumstances as opposed to sweeping movements condensed into non-committal paragraphs in dry textbooks. When we consider the plight of one man, one

black man, for example, and are privy to the humanness of the character, his thoughts, his relationships, his reactions, we focus on the connectedness of our souls, a perspective that is missing in an overview of the trials of the southern negroes in any significant era. We also have the opportunity to view the mindset that supports a rationale of hate as a social construct of the time. More than complementing the historical era itself, it speaks to our emotions *and* our rational minds and the wheels of critical thought begin to turn. We can see these fears and racial hatreds as built by a society, not an intrinsic natural inclination. The effects of this (and I will pursue this point further below as we turn to Nussbaum's *Poetic Justice*) permeate all aspects of our society, including law and order. When we include in our considerations the perspectives, the individual tales of each person's circumstances, it should become difficult to adhere to a strict doctrine of immovable maxims and edicts. Rationally, we may cry for order and the irrefutable laws which govern the masses; but the individual needs a call for a different approach more in touch with reality, that we open our hearts to a consideration of circumstances and use our emotional responses in conjunction with our reasoning, and vice versa. Through its form and content literature, although far from supplying the textbook, can help nurture the mindset.

We may find that we have widened our understanding of truth through this process. Philosophically, in pursuit of this truth, we have an opportunity for shared enlightenment through these readings. As Nussbaum considers literary form, we see that it is the stories that lay claim to our emotions. Stories are what reach us and influence our passions, because they are presented in the form of stories. What (if we consider an unfortunate reality) do we suppose will have more impact on someone's attitude toward a race or

culture: firstly, if we hear a sweeping statement that perpetuates a stereotype (“All Jewish people are tight with money”, “All Irishmen are drunkards and hooligans”), or, secondly, if someone recounts a specific instance to us in which they were wronged by a member of that race or culture, painting for us a situation with which we can sympathise with the story teller and feel their rage, hate, disgust, etc? Obviously the latter example will, the majority of the time, influence the listener more. The emotions are more effectively evoked through the act of story-telling, by examples of specific instances.

We learn our emotions in the same way that we learn our beliefs – from our society. But emotions, unlike many of our beliefs, are not taught to us directly through propositional claims about the world, either abstract or concrete. They are taught, above all, through stories. Stories express their structure and teach us their dynamics. These stories are constructed by others and, then, taught and learned. But once internalized, they shape the way life feels and looks. (p. 287)

The above example was purposely negative in order to better illustrate the point. But consider stories which force the internalization, or personal recognition, of the irrationality of hate, exposed by such works as *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Huck Finn*, among many others, which remind us of the humanness of those who suffer due to the colour of their skin, (to name one example), and initiate the positive renovation of the self championed by the poets. Literature provides what Nussbaum calls the “appropriate form” (p. 290) that philosophy needs to turn to if it wishes to pursue wisdom.

The simple and basic point is that we are all human. What Plato proposed in *The Republic*, Nussbaum explains, when he prescribed the elimination of all poetry was that one should not be content with sympathizing and therefore identify with the “non-self sufficient behaviour” (p. 387) of heroes such as Achilles as they are represented in the tragedies. We should, instead, ideally, rise above the inefficient qualities to a higher degree of understanding. But this very understanding, this transcendence, Nussbaum argues, is dependent on an analysis of our human nature which exposes and, to a certain

extent, explains the reasoning behind our affections, passions and moods. In other words, we must turn to literature to understand more about *us*, if we seek to find the truth behind *our* existence. In this way literature truly aids our understanding. Her argument is worth quoting in some length.

Suppose we think that there is something to the suggestion that, being mortal, we should think mortal thoughts. Then we might well conclude that philosophy, as the art of our thought and the pursuer of truth about us, had better speak mortal speech and think mortal thoughts. In this case, we will instruct the philosopher not be seduced by the lure of the unaided intellect – for one can surely speak of seduction here – and to think and speak more humanly, acknowledging in speech the incompleteness and neediness of human life, its relations of dependence and love with uncontrolled people and things...This would mean, in our argument, that the emotions, and their accomplices, the stories, would be not just permitted, but required, in a fully human philosophy. (p. 389)

As members of a society, a fully human philosophy, which takes into account the realities of another's potential for suffering, as well as the negative effects of sweeping statements of exclusion, hate and ignorance, must be a top priority, initiated, ideally, by the educational institutions. This philosophy responds to the inquiries of the rational mind and also acknowledges the undeniable emotions which bind us together. Literature bears witness to this sharing, and documents the relationship between the larger movements of an era and the individual responses of the citizens. Besides leading us closer to a desired "truth" it may help us realize the collective good which pervades our history. As Nussbaum concludes at the end of the collection, "novels conduct a philosophical investigation into the good of a human being" (p. 390). This investigation leads us closer to a more expansive cognitive perspective which inspires critical thinking in the learner. It speaks to us, in every sense of the word, not as systematic thinkers of cold calculation, but of family members, husbands, wives, neighbours. Literature stands as a testament to the goodness of our desire to investigate, to learn, to understand, as individuals as well as citizens.

Individual thought, in this more inclusive sense, refers to logic, emotions, and the imagination, all of which can be encouraged once a literary work is included as a bridge to discussion. The often overlooked end to this entire investigation is to confer upon the learner a greater awareness of the value of humanity. I am not arguing that this is, or should be, by any means, the ultimate end of education as a whole, but it stands as a potential finish line as far as conducting a search into the value and potential of literature in education. The literary imagination, what Nussbaum refers to in her book *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life* as “fancy”, recognizes this end. I will now turn to this text for an expansion of the current discussion.

In the book, Nussbaum aims to present a “vivid conception” of a side of public reasoning that is humanistic, as opposed to pseudo-scientific, and aims to show “how a certain type of narrative literature expresses and develops such a conception, and to show some of the benefits this conception might have to offer in the public sphere” (pp. xviii-xix). The bulk of the book focuses on the law, and the role the emotions and the imagination play in it. Nussbaum considers what public reasoning would look like if approached from the spirit of fancy. (p. xix) She begins with a look at the literary imagination, and stands it against the attitude of the economist, embodied in the character of Mr. Gradgrind from Charles Dickens novel *Hard Times*. Gradgrind is a logical being, with no room in his life for fairy tales, poetry, or imagination of any kind. Life is real, and cannot accommodate the childlike fancies of the dreamer. Nussbaum continues to use this character as an example throughout the book, stating from the outset how his economist or utilitarian viewpoint betrays the significant impact literature can have on the mind. “If literature is... dangerous and deserving of suppression, this implies as well that

it is no mere frill, that it has the potential to make a distinctive contribution to public life” (p. 2). This contribution, according to the strict economist, is a detrimental one, but why? Nussbaum embarks on this investigation with a closer look at “the characteristics of the literary imagination as a public imagination, an imagination that will steer judges in their judging, legislators in their legislating, policy makers in measuring the quality of life of people near and far” (p. 3). Thus we will move the examination once again to the public sphere, leaving behind for the moment the individual, and the personal fulfilment gained from pursuing certain literary works. If we are to take the proposal of this thesis seriously, this next step, I believe, is a necessary one. By examining Nussbaum’s work we can hopefully gain some insight concerning what our society might look like if we used the emotions and the literary imagination as guidance for public reasoning. Nussbaum attempts to accomplish this by showing how novels “embody and generate – to Mr. Gradgrind’s chagrin – the activity that he calls ‘fancy’, that ability to imagine non-existent possibilities, to see one thing as another and one thing in another, to endow a perceived form with a complex life” (p. 4). The potential impact that this may have on public reasoning is then considered by Nussbaum, as the reader, like the citizen, steadfastly maintains an open-mindedness when encountering a narrative. But first, before we go any further, it is important to note the short-comings of a stringent economical approach to life and living, as outlined by Nussbaum. Once we have probed more deeply into Gradgrind’s outlook and pinpointed its flaws, we can compare it more effectively with the imaginative approach.

The most important part of this economic outlook is the refusal to see men as anything more than commodities. In our attempts to establish ourselves as truly efficient rational

beings we may become cloistered in a false sense of reality which is nothing less than machine-like in its approach to everyday life. It is above all a search for order, a search that leaves little room for such irrationalities as emotions and the imagination. Emotions, from this perspective, disturb our ordered universe; they surprise us, anger us, and force us to question our claims to stability. What pervades our social sciences, therefore, is a pseudo-scientific search for order; an attitude that has infiltrated fields of society thought perhaps to be unscientific. "Public policy-makers turn to these norms to find a principled, orderly way of making decisions. Economic approaches have been widely influential even in areas that might initially seem most uneconomic, such as the analysis of family and sexuality" (p. 18). Nussbaum is quick to add that this approach has recently "made its way into literary studies" (p. 19) and she begins to question the claims by such theorists, criticizing this "particular conception of economic science, not...the idea of economic science itself" (p.19). This "particular conception of economic science" is, as stated above, embodied in the character of Gradgrind, who claims assuredly that "'The reason is the only faculty to which education should be addressed" (p.20). Nussbaum describes further the main ideas behind what she refers to throughout the book as "Gradgrind economics".

Gradgrind economics claims proudly to approach the world with reason rather than sentiment, and with the detached theoretical and calculative power of the mathematical intellect, rather than any more qualitative type of reasoned deliberation. Gradgrind intellect sees the heterogeneous furniture of the world, human beings included, as so many surfaces or "parcels" to be weighed and measured. (p. 20)

When used as a strategy in determining public policy, this approach leaves little room for consideration of individual needs and wants; it has no interest in someone's "story". It ignores the emotive enhancement that broadens a philosophical understanding of truth which we have been discussing up to this point. In terms of the greater society that we

have been partly concentrating on, it fails to see the individual contributors as feeling human beings, it fails to look within. “The cheerful fact-calculating mind plays round the surfaces of these lives, as if it had no need to look within, as if, indeed, it could ‘settle all their destinies on a slate’” (p. 23). As it applies to education, Gradgrind’s own children “are taught from an early age to approach the world of nature without any sense of mystery or awe” (p. 23). Such fancies, the nurturing of the imagination, of story-telling, are frowned upon by the strict economist. Why? *Because they do not deal in factual realities.* They will not put food on the table, pay the rent, and they interfere with a dedication to daily living that is practical. But considering what we have learned thus far about the importance of a balanced relationship between the rational mind and the emotions, this economist approach to education and the social sciences, as well as public policy, is in actuality a greater departure from reality. As Nussbaum writes, this refusal to acknowledge the inner man, the moral, feeling, yearning being, this denial of humanity, as outlined by Dickens as he describes the economic policy makers opinion of the workers, is, above all else, obtuse. (p. 24) How does one motivate an inanimate object? How can you argue with a superior who cannot comprehend your dissatisfaction with stale bread and cold soup? You are, after all, from his perspective, being fed, able to sleep beneath a roof, and support a family. But, as in Chapter 1, the soul of a man or woman rarely acquiesces to these fetters, and it is almost impossible to explain to the strict economist a person’s poetic need to indulge the cravings of their spirit. When it comes to public policy, this approach is, fundamentally, flawed.

The main point that underlies the Gradgrind theory, writes Nussbaum, is that it is not in the least *scientific*. If this economist’s view pervades the social sciences, an area which

studies the nature of human lives and relationships, and claims to be in coherence with a scientific efficiency, it is easy to point out the basic flaw. “If the job of science is to record and grapple with all the relevant facts, the Gradgrind theory is inadequate science, since many of the relevant human facts are simply not noticed” (p. 27). These “relevant facts” are specifically the emotions, the imaginations, the dreams and fancies of the individual soul. As with philosophy in our earlier discussion, a complete understanding of who we are as human beings, a search for *our* truth, cannot exclude any aspects of our lives which are undeniable, notably the emotions and the imagination. The Gradgrind theory is therefore not only obtuse, it is blind.

Blind, above all, to the fact that human life is something mysterious and extremely complicated, something that demands to be approached with faculties of mind and resources of language that are suited to the expression of that complexity. (p. 27)

We may feel the need to categorize ourselves and others in ways that are easy to assess, but the reality of our lot is much more complicated. If we lay claim to a scientific approach to human living, we cannot discard the emotional reality; a reality magnified accurately in our literature. Where else can we witness episodes of human conflict, suffering and resolution which do not exclude the inner workings of the mind and soul, the influence of the emotions on our choices and our state of being? To not take these realities into account when establishing public policy is a betrayal of everything we wish to champion in implementing those policies: a way of life, a dream, a common goal, a society. For the society itself is non-existent without living, breathing members, all of which succumb to the emotions at some time or other.

More than anything else, a novel is true to the realities of this life. It does not, as Gradgrind suspects, result in idle fancies, useless imaginings which bear no impact on our lives. “In imagining things that do not really exist, the novel, by its own account, is

not being 'idle': for it is helping its readers to acknowledge their own world and to choose more reflectively in it" (p. 31). This reflection which occurs once we acknowledge our lot and then imagine beyond it, reveals the freedom of choice that may seem elusive in Gradgrind's theory. For what choice do we have in Gradgrind's sense but to work hard, pay the bills and be useful contributors to society? Here reflection is stifled, even though conflict may arise between the head and the heart when the factory life does not leave one with a feeling of achievement and/or fulfilment. But when we can choose, when we imagine beyond what we see and consider it as a potential reality, we may be moved to action, to change our lives and the lives of others. This is, admittedly, a grand view of the potential of literature as fodder for the imagination which leads to revolution, but it is undeniably broadening, and does consider the human aspects which Gradgrind's theory denies.

What a student of Gradgrind may fail to see, and this is especially important when considering public policy, is the fact that each individual in the factory, in the market square, has a story. "The person brought up solely on economic texts has not been encouraged to think of workers (or, indeed, anyone else) as fully human beings, with stories of their own to tell" (p. 33). The danger of labelling people in clumps, as products of culture, predictable in behaviour and attitude, is obvious as far as strengthening racist and classist attitudes which are nothing more than broad generalizations of homogenized individuals. In other words, neglecting the significance of individual plight and the personal story of the man or woman, our neighbour, closes the door to an enriching dialogue which has the potential to change thought patterns and work toward a better social harmony. We may not, in this day and age, suffer in a strictly Dickensian way, but

do we not see freedom, or the Dream, even today, as an achievement which does little more than afford us the right to work and consume, toil and spend? Through this avenue, we seem to be told, shall our souls be nourished. But the soul, if anything, is the collective makeup of what makes us human, our minds, our emotions, our imagination. When any aspect is starved or neglected, the collective suffers. This does not, Nussbaum is also quick to point out, imply or encourage an emphasis on sentimentality, for this may lead one to a feeling a pity for the poor which, instead of inspiring complete social change, may preoccupy us with giving the underprivileged “a little relief and leisure time” (p.33), a band-aid solution which undermines the gravity of the social reality. *Hard Times*, as analyzed by Nussbaum, stands as an example of what literature can do as far as broadening the mind for a better understanding of our plight as a society.

Reading a novel like this one makes us acknowledge the equal humanity of members of social classes other than our own, makes us acknowledge workers as deliberating subjects with complex loves and aspirations and a rich inner world. It makes us see their poverty and their oppressive labor conditions in relation to those emotions and aspirations...In its insistent focus on these facts, it inspires compassion and the passion for justice. (p. 34)

Justice, in this sense, is not to promote the right of everyone to enjoy some leisure time; in the modern sense, it does not mean that everyone should have equal opportunity to participate in mass consumerism, have access to i-pods, the latest fashions, or the finest, overpriced foods. It is the more meaningful justice which dictates that everyone has a right to a sense of well-being, of spiritual fulfilment, to the delights of a peaceful state of mind; to have the value of their existence recognized by others, not to mention themselves.

As a stepping stone to conversation, the value of literature is unique. Because it so aptly portrays our struggles, and feeds our belief in, and need for, justice, it serves as a precursor to discussion. Arriving at reason through fancy is (no pun intended,) a rather

novel approach. Plato famously used many examples taken from tragedies to emphasise certain points or engender discussion. It gives one a frame of reference. Fancy is simply, as Nussbaum puts it, “the novel’s name for the ability to see one thing as another, to see one thing in another...Things look like other things, or more precisely, the other things are seen in the immediate things” (p. 36). An example of this usage of fancy is reflected in the character Louisa, Gradgrind’s daughter in the novel, who “sees shapes in the fire, endows perceived patterns with a significance that is not present in the bare perception itself” (p. 36). So do we see things inside the pages of a novel that are significant to our present plight and circumstances. Gradgrind has no tolerance for fancy; things are what they are and nothing more. Nussbaum draws further examples from Dickens’ *Hard Times* to show how the omission of “useless frills” from education, such as Gradgrind would profess, is the “omission of a morally crucial ability, without which both personal and social relations are impoverished” (p. 37). As a complement to reason, fancy is an essential part of education as a whole, and also of public policy. As we have seen in Chapter 1, Whitman also believed in the value of the imagination, and Nussbaum recognizes the connection in her book.

It is Dickens’s view, as it is also Whitman’s, that this imagination – including its playfulness, including its eroticism – is the necessary basis for good government of a country of equal and free citizens. With it, reason is beneficent, steered by a generous view of its objects; without its charity, reason is cold and cruel. (p. 43)

These writers (we will focus more on writers in the next chapter) are calling for an interpretation of their text, and of all things, but not in the “scientific” way adopted by the social sciences. Once again, it is through fancy that we can arrive at reason and begin reflecting on our lives and the lives of those around us. “The novel speaks not of dismissing reason, but of coming upon it in a way illuminated by fancy, which is here

seen as a faculty at once creative and veridical” (p. 44). In nurturing the creative mind, by encouraging imagination and interpretation we arrive at reason better equipped. It is, as previously stated, a more truthful reflection of our lives.

Nussbaum devotes the third chapter of *Poetic Justice* to exploring the usefulness of this approach. She explains that “a lover of literature who wishes to question Plato’s banishment of literary artists from the public realm must, in pleading her case, make some defence of the emotions and their contribution to public rationality” (p. 54). Perhaps the best way to approach this argument is through a thorough examination of the meaning and worth of emotions. When we examine the makeup of the human being (just look at yourself, to start), it is important to not just simply acknowledge the emotions as an undeniable aspect of our personalities that we are forced to deal with; we must go beyond this and recognise their *value*. The emotions themselves are both valuable and justify value. In other words, our responses to the world around us are at least partially emotionally based and therefore we recognise value through our emotional responses as well as valuing our emotions themselves. “Intellect without emotions,” writes Nussbaum, “is, we might say, value-blind: it lacks the sense of the meaning and worth of a person’s death that the judgements internal to emotions would have supplied” (p. 68). This placing of value on the basic reality of human life manifests itself in an emotional response. It “invests the dead with the worth of humanity” (p.68) and, if neglected in daily life and/or public policy, could result in an invasive callousness that has the potential to turn us, to borrow another literary metaphor, into stone. What the emotions provide, therefore, is a recognition of the complications inherent in acute deliberation. “The emotions do not tell us how to solve these problems; they do keep our attention focused on them as problems

we ought to solve.” (p.69) It would seem problematic then to repress these emotions in favour of a purely economic attitude if for no other reason than the undeniable existence of the emotions dictates that they should be examined in order that we learn to use them “correctly”. The alternative may have its dangers. “Repression of...emotions, by contrast, may simply bring emotion back in a more destructive and genuinely irrational form” (p. 69). A stirring example of this may be extracted from our modern media, where satire and a flippant attitude at times completely undermines the seriousness of things like war, poverty and oppression. The emotions in this sense have returned into an uncomfortable and mocking response where, in a sense, nothing is sacred, and life itself nothing more than a joke (see *The Tonight Show*, *The Daily Show*, Tabloid Magazines, etc.). But this is only one form of manifestation that can be brought on by repression. What is perhaps most important to understand, especially concerning the value and potential of literature, is that reading novels and poems provides us with the proper distance with which we can examine our emotions as detached participants. In other words, we are not directly involved in the lives of the characters of the novel; we have no stake in the outcome of the story, and therefore the distance from the occurrences guarantees against the irrationality that so many fear emotional indulgence can spawn. While it may be true that we may indeed become overwhelmed by our emotions at the death of a loved one who was a contributing factor to our existence, in a novel, we have no such attachment. We can read and consider our emotional responses with a speculative eye. The reader becomes what Nussbaum refers to as the “judicious spectator” (p. 72) and we can now consider the reader as this spectator in greater detail.

With novels, we are not personally involved in the action; there is nothing at stake for us which may pollute our judgement. The emotions experienced, thus considered, are trustworthy companions of rational thought. We also, it is important to note, are provided with the whole picture when reading a novel, we are at times privy not only to the thoughts of the main character, but also the thoughts and feelings of the antagonist(s). The narrator, as well, relates to us the circumstances that have led up to the events portrayed in the story. We as readers better understand the entire situation, which is more reliable than a news cast or newspaper report. Emotions, in the novel-reader sense, are good guides.

To be a good guide, the emotion must, first of all, be informed by a true view of what is going on – of the facts of the case, of their significance, for the actors in the situation, and of any dimensions of their true significance or importance that may elude or be distorted in the actors' own consciousness. (p. 74)

Once again, as mentioned in the example of the racist storyteller earlier in the chapter, the act of story-telling is powerful enough to incite emotions if not for any other reason than it provides us with concrete details that we can relate to. I will skip for now a more in depth analysis of authorial rhetoric and the potentially negative effects this can have on the reader until we reach Chapter 3. What is important for the time being is the understanding of Nussbaum's portrait of the readers as judicious spectators who have in their hands, literally, the details of the case, and use their emotions as contemplative tools. Perhaps more importantly, when we read a novel like *Hard Times*, we are "free from personal bias and favor" (p. 83). We stand aside in our particular and unique way, and make our judgements. But what, exactly, are we judging? Any well read individual (and by that I do not mean simply one with a knowledge of the classics or canon, but more accurately one with a lengthy experience as a reader and spectator into different

worlds) will inevitably be equipped with a broader sense of society that will help to not only engender discussion, both internal and external, but engender discussion which may lead to the dismantling of stereotypes; stereotypes that, to name one example, contribute to the ugly reality of racial hatred. "Literary understanding....," writes Nussbaum, "promotes habits of mind that lead toward social equality in that they contribute to the dismantling of the stereotypes that support group hatred" (p. 92). We are judges when we read, and we also apply this judicial nature outwardly when we participate in a society of individuals. This relationship can be strengthened by the literature that we embrace. Our sympathies and capacity for reflection, the combined usefulness of our emotions in full partnership with our rational mind, aid in our understanding of one another and the acknowledgement of our stories and our plights. Philosophically, literature adds to the search for truth by arriving at reason through the doorway of fancy. We use our imaginations in the act of reading, or of story-telling, and contemplate the emotional response in tune with a consideration of circumstances from the point of view of the characters present in the tale. We use our judgement in response to the situations presented to us and, if practised frequently, we incorporate our moral judgements into our lives as members of a fellowship, a community ever vigilant to the needs of others; this for the mere fact that we are exposed habitually to the thoughts and deliberations of others, privy to the entirety of the circumstances. Professional judges, in the public sphere, could benefit from this type of imaginative approach; an approach which, according to Nussbaum, exemplifies "a sort of public rationality we badly need at this time in this country, where increasingly we are refusing one another this sort of inclusive vision, closing the doors of sympathy that Whitman wished here to open" (p. 120). This

inclusive vision saves room for the emotions and the imagination as necessary additions to our deliberations. It exemplifies, as Nussbaum states at the end of her book, “a type of thinking that should be involved in judicial reflection” (p. 120). But it is not Nussbaum’s argument (nor mine) that a purely literary mind is enough to initiate appropriate public policy, just as not every reader of books can be considered a qualified philosopher. “Poetic justice”, it must be clarified, “needs a great deal of nonliterary equipment: technical legal knowledge, a knowledge of history and precedent, a careful attention to proper legal impartiality” (p. 121). The argument of the book, and to some extent, this thesis, is not that literature and reading solve the world’s problems and should be the cornerstone to private and public policy initiation, but that its value and potential are indispensable to education. It is a necessary addition to the completeness of knowledge of our selves and our society as interacting individuals. Nussbaum notes that “in order to be fully rational, judges must also be capable of fancy and sympathy...in the absence of (their capacity for humanity), their impartiality will be obtuse and their justice blind” (p. 120). Education must take into account both the technical capacities and the capacity for humanity, which is missing from the “scientific” approach adopted by Gradgrind economists which we still see pervading the social sciences, even literary criticism. In short, our judgements, because we are human, need to reflect our human characteristics, most notably the emotions we so easily dismiss as irrational. It cannot be a truly scientific method of approach if all aspects of the subject, (in this case, human beings) are not taken into account.

This chapter began with the basic claim that literature could stand as a complement to the study of philosophy. Just as we discovered in Chapter 1, the very form and content of

a literary text adds sustenance to the search for truth and broadens the perspective of certain areas of study. I began with a look at Martha Nussbaum's collection of essays on literature and philosophy, entitled *Love's Knowledge*. Turning to the individual fulfilment of the reader, it was revealed how the search for truth, i.e. how one should live one's life, was enhanced by the incorporation of a literary text. This enhancement is due to the fact that literature in its form and content gives credence to the inner struggles that we face in our deliberations. We do not, in this sense, rise above the emotions to a greater plateau, but come to a better understanding of them when we read these tales from a detached distance. As we strengthen this understanding, philosophically, we strengthen an overall understanding of who we are, and can therefore claim a closer relationship to truth, a truth which does not deny certain undeniable aspects of our makeup. This truth also aids in the understanding of how one should live one's life through our exposure to storytelling which can expose the irrationality of racial hatred and prejudices. By reading novels, and incorporating them into our thought processes, we become familiar with the reflective attitudes of the characters and can anticipate the consequences of certain actions, i.e., how our thoughts, words and deeds affect others. How we live our lives, therefore, means more than just fostering a thoughtful approach to living, it reveals our actions as consequential, and contributes to the overall harmony of societal living and how we treat one another.

From this individual reaction to a literary text, we moved to a consideration of public policy, approaching reason through fancy as suggested by Nussbaum in *Poetic Justice*. The literary imagination was seen as a necessary addition to our lives as judges and policy makers, contrasted as it was by Nussbaum against the economist approach adopted

and championed by a character like Gradgrind in the novel *Hard Times*. This approach, pervading our social sciences as well as literary criticism, lays claim to a scientific mindset which, unlike true science, refuses to take into account all aspects of the subject matter, namely our human emotions and our stories and their significance. Literature provides a more accurate depiction of our plight, and the distance we are privy to as judicious spectators allows us to view and “control” our emotions from an uninvolved (in the “real” sense) zone. Here we can nurture an air of consideration and sympathy, even altruism, that will hopefully manifest itself in our daily lives as we participate in the greater society of which we are a part. Literature, as we have seen in this review of Nussbaum’s *Love’s Knowledge* and *Poetic Justice*, stands as a complement to the study of Philosophy as the search for truth. In education, it inspires and nurtures critical thinking which can lead to a broadening of our sense of this truth, and pervade our reflective and deliberative tendencies. We turn now from the reader to the author, and discover how the rhetoric and structure of literature, as well as the potential impact a text may have on the reader’s lives, leads to a consideration of the ethics of fiction, and how literature can possibly be used as a tool for moral education.

CHAPTER 3

THE MORAL RELATIONSHIP

“The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains.
The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.”

--William Arthur Ward

This chapter will begin with a look at the first of two books by Wayne Booth, entitled *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. As we move closer to a consideration of literature as tool for Moral Education it is important to clarify that the focus in this chapter will be on the authors themselves, and how the stories they tell, or, better put, choose to tell, affect the listeners in unique ways. In Chapter 2 I touched briefly upon the idea of how a story, as opposed to a sweeping generalisation, can reach into the depths of the listener and engage certain emotions which elicit powerful responses. Here I will re-examine this point by addressing the authors who tell these tales directly and hopefully give justice to Booth's argument of the unmistakable reality of rhetoric in story-telling and what this means to the value of potential of literature in the classroom. The ultimate goal in this chapter is to arrive at an understanding of the potential literature has as a tool for moral education; but before we reach this controversial realisation it is important to clarify my intent.

The act of story-telling, as related in the example provided in the previous chapter, uniquely portrays circumstances that address the underlying emotional connection which exists between us all, simply for the fact that we are human beings, despite the protestation of Gradgrind-like characters. What I intend to focus attention on in this chapter is, firstly, the undeniable existence and power of the rhetoric inherent in these narrative excursions, and, secondly, the ethical reality of this persuasive technique, highlighted in Booth's great work, *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction*. What this will lead us to is a discussion of the moral implications inherent in the act of reading, writing, and story-telling in general. We will be able to determine the significance of this art form by contrasting the airy, uninspired characteristics of the sweeping generalisations

against the more engaging and thought provoking style employed by the authors who weave a tale. The latter approach, as we shall see when we turn our attention to *Rhetoric*, can be described as the “showing” technique, while for the former I will reserve the term “telling”; drawing a distinction familiar to literary critics in general, both professionals and amateurs, and one which Booth refers to often in his book. The practice of showing, not telling, constitutes an art form of which literature exemplifies. The narrative, therefore, or the story which involves many aspects of character and circumstance, of relate-able situations and human emotions, shows us, rather than tells us, for example, how racism affects an individual. The power of this approach will be discussed in the upcoming paragraphs and will hopefully lead us to a better understanding of the value and potential of literature as a complement to moral education. Booth employs these terms in the beginning of his book, and I will begin my analysis with his evocative presentation.

Booth begins the book with a look at the author and his or her ultimate involvement with the story itself and the general criterion for what makes a “good” novel. He starts by making the point that “Many novels are seriously flawed by careless intrusions” (p. 28). These intrusions were made and are made by the writers themselves who enter into the story directly, therefore not only manipulating the reader but also making it easy for us as listeners to realise his or her true opinions. An example of this, as shown by Booth, occurs in the *Decameron*: “When the author of the *Decameron* speaks to us directly, in both the introduction and conclusion, whatever illusion we may have had that we are dealing immediately with Fiammetta and her friends is shattered” (p. 16). Another example is the *Odyssey*, where “Homer ‘intrudes’ deliberately and obviously to insure

that our judgement of the ‘heroic, ‘resourceful’, ‘admirable’, ‘wise’, Odysseus will be sufficiently favorable” (p. 5). This is not, it is important to note, an indictment of these great works as flawed; Booth is merely gauging the growth of the art form as it moved stylistically to the modern area (the book was written in 1962) of Joyce-like narratives which are ambiguous, open and supremely interpretative. It *can* be flawed, however, if used by a writer of poor quality (more concerning this point below). Ideally, in the modern sense (and in keeping with the vein of this chapter), the author should be as detached as the reader. This idea is very similar to what we saw in Chapter 2 with Nussbaum, where the emotions evoked by reading a novel were seen as “trustworthy” because the reader is not directly involved in the plot. The writer, who sits at the opposite side of the relationship, makes a choice as to how he will present his narrative in order to evoke the desired response from his or her intended reader. Booth states that there are “many... routes (the author) can follow... to achieve dramatic intensity” (p.64). Herein lies the art, for the author can appear modern, “freed of all authorial intrusion” (p.64) but that doesn’t necessarily mean that they are writing good fiction. What they must learn instead, states Booth, “is the art of choosing what to dramatize fully and what to curtail, what to summarize and what to heighten” (p. 64). The art, once again in the modern sense, lies in the author’s ability to consider his or her intrusion with the knowledge that it can be manifested in various forms. Whatever form he or she picks, the author cannot, in the end, avoid rhetoric, “his only choice is of the kind of rhetoric he will use” (p. 116).

The author, Booth states, “can seldom afford to pour his untransformed biases into his work” (p. 70). The call for neutrality, however, according to Booth, underestimates the “importance of the author’s individuality” (p. 70). In order to make this point clearer,

Booth then begins to draw the important distinction between the narrator and the implied author: The implied author is someone who cannot, no matter how hard the writer tries, avoid scrutiny from the reader. "However impersonal he may try to be, his reader will inevitably construct a picture of the official scribe who writes in this manner – and of course that official scribe will never be neutral toward all values" (p. 71). The impossibility of achieving total neutrality stems from the fact that in the very structure of the tale, the characters the implied author places emphasis on, the episodes he or she highlights, the thoughts he or she chooses to evoke in favour of alternative perspectives, all betray the intent of this invisible figure. He does not, as Shakespeare does not, "barge clumsily into his works" (p. 75), but we still gain an idea of what he loved or hated, and in this sense neutrality, for Booth, is impossible: "even the most nearly neutral comment will reveal some sort of commitment" (p. 76). The main point here is to remember that, as Booth states, "Even among characters of equal moral, intellectual, or aesthetic worth, all authors inevitably take sides"" (p. 78). Realistically, how could he or she not? By their very choice of story and correlative characters they are making some sort of claim. They have to tell *a* story, not *all* stories, and therefore have to focus on specific characters that are integral to plot progression. These characters, in the way they are presented, represent certain values or moral positions which lead us once again to a consideration of why the implied author chose them. Booth is drawing a distinction between the objective author and the subjective author merely to make the point that "none of the three major claims to objectivity in the author has any necessary bearing on technical decisions" (p. 83). Subjectivism, when the author intrudes directly into the work, is, according to Booth

“almost always fatal”, but “a clear recognition of this truth cannot lead us to doctrines about technique” (p. 86). Also,

it should not lead us to demand of the author that he eliminate love and hate, and the judgements on which they are based, from his novels. The emotions and judgements of the implied author are, as I hope to show, the very stuff out of which great fiction is made.

Booth is leading us down the road to our final destination: the undeniable rhetoric present in fiction and the author’s inability to avoid using it. Before we go further, it may be useful to analyse the situation thus far and put it into context for this thesis.

Whether or not the author as story-teller intrudes into his or her own tale while relating it to an audience of open listeners, the values inherent in the author’s judgement, by virtue of the characterisation and the course of their chosen narrative, are impossible to deny. We can infer their stance from the very structure of their story. “We can admit, of course, that the choice of evocative ‘situations and chains of events’ is the writer’s most important gift – or, as Aristotle put a similar point, the ‘most important of all is the structure of the incidents.’” (p. 97) In our own lives, when tell each other tales, we structure our incidents based upon the emotions that we wish to evoke, and the emotions that we wish to evoke are to us, as authors, worth the thought that proceeds from their utterance and therefore value-laden.

What we say, simply put, we say for a reason, and the stories we choose to tell reflect our inner feelings, our ideas of what is right or wrong, or good or bad, despite the manner in which we choose to present them. The disguised rhetoric, or the distanced, “neutral” approach is what is the more agreed upon, artistic form, as opposed to intrusions which spell out the intent of the author. But why? “What is it that distinguishes this acceptable rhetoric from the tricks and contrivances to which we do object?” (p. 103) One potential answer, according to Booth, is the accessibility of the work: “the very conception of

writing a story seems to have implicit within it the notion of finding techniques of expression that will make the work *accessible in the highest possible degree*" (p. 105, my italics). In other words, the accessibility of a work is dependent upon the degree in which it can stand alone as an objective entity. The more we attempt to step out of the story we are telling, the more we are encouraging the listener not to take into account our own prejudices and value systems, to consider the circumstances as they are, standing alone. We may give the duty to a narrator, or even a character in the first person, like Holden Caulfield in the *Catcher in the Rye* or the title character in Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, but the implied author operates separately from these devices, and it is this relationship between the implied author and the reader which Booth emphasises. Sometimes, then, it may be important for the author to disguise him or herself as best they can in order for the reader not to become too involved in psychoanalysing the author's intent, and the employment of the first person narrator is a useful device towards achieving this end. Booth tells us that it has everything to do with emotional distance. "(The Author) may seem at first to desire an increased emotional distance of all kinds. But what he really wants is to increase the emotional distance in order to involve the reader's social judgement more deeply" (p. 123). The writer does not want the reader, in this sense, to close the book thinking that he or she has just read an interesting and persuasive treatise on the author's personal views of the world. Instead, they, as Whitman, Hawthorne and Emerson of Chapter 1, want the reader to think about their social situation, their plight, their lot, and begin to question certain standards, to name one example. In other words, the author's distance from the action, as well as the reader's, place the *story* at the centre, and from there is the interest drawn. If the opinions are meant to be at the centre, there

can be hardly any thought as to what technique the author will use; intrusion will win every time. This is where the power of the narrative as opposed to the sweeping generalisation which I dwelled briefly upon in Chapter 2 becomes most effective. If it is the author's intent to foster an opinion in the reader that mirrors his or her own, then intrusions involving personal experiences and opinions will be the best approach. And yet, it needs adding, that the opposite approach, abstract concepts and images, can be equally ineffective in evoking a thoughtful, socially aware response from the reader. Often the intent can be lost, the involvement in deep social judgement marred, by extreme ambiguity. As Booth points out, in reference to Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*,

If I am to rejoice, for example, in Stephen's flight into exile as the final sign of his growth into the true artist, I cannot at the same time delight fully in his *creator's* cleverness in leaving the meaning of that flight ambiguous; the more ambiguity the less triumph. (p. 135, my italics)

The rejoicing is based upon the reader's emotional involvement in the story, not on the respect they confer upon the author's creative prowess. Once again we have moved our attention away from the tale as an objective entity, again toward the author, but this time in regards to his creative choice of technique and application. Both the intrusion and its opposite, extreme ambiguity, direct our attention away from the tale. In the example using Joyce, instead of being involved in the triumph inherent in the tale, we may find ourselves celebrating the creative prowess of Joyce, while losing the full effect of the story and the final accomplishment. If emotional involvement is what the author is aiming for, he cannot turn all attention toward himself and his technique. We have been led by the writer to this moment of rejoicing, and he must know how to lead us there if he is to elicit the proper and desired response, but we may not feel what perhaps he is

wishing us to feel. The more ambiguous he is, the less we will be able to celebrate the moment with him.

If the author wishes to take me on a long quest for the truth and finally present it to me, I will feel the quest as boring triviality unless he gives me unambiguous signs of what quest I am on and of the fact that I have found my goal when I get there.” (p. 136)

So now we have reached two conclusions which I shall attempt briefly to place into perspective for this thesis. Booth’s examination, early on in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, provides for us a foundation upon which to build discussion concerning the role between three entities: The author/teacher, the reader/student, and the tale/subject matter. Direct intrusion, by the author into the tale or subject matter, leaves little to no room for the reader to form opinions directly from the source. Instead, they are told what to think of the hero, how to feel about the situation, and what lessons to learn from the story. Conversely, the extreme ambiguity on the part of the writer may move our attention away from the tale/subject matter to a focus on technique or intellectual prowess. The celebration or triumph of the tale is not reached collectively between reader and writer, because the triumph, smothered beneath the presentation, is lost in an emotional sense. In other words, the intellect may have been fed by the facts, but the triumph of the finished quest or the celebration of the achievement is lost emotionally. Before we delve deeper into this dynamic, another related question demands immediate attention.

The Rhetoric of Fiction teaches us that intrusions on either or any level are impossible to avoid. What if, then, at the end of the novel, we do not wish to celebrate the moment with the character(s)? What if the moment, in our eyes, is not worth celebrating, as it has conflicted with our own moral values? This is precisely why it is important to understand how complete objectivity, as far as system of moral beliefs is concerned, is impossible to achieve when *reading* a tale. We may, as I previously stated, possess a distance from the

action, the characters and the ultimate outcome, but our judgements based upon where the author has led us are still our own, and are as unavoidable an intrusion into the work as the author's own rhetoric. We may choose not to call the hero a hero, or we may simply be left in the dark, unsure of how to feel about him or her. "To pretend that we read otherwise," writes Booth, "to claim that we can make ourselves into objective, dispassionate, thoroughly tolerant readers is in the final analysis nonsense" (p. 147). The authors' intrusions, perhaps no longer blatant, are still present, as he or she leads us, through correlating circumstances, to the end of the story. Our own intrusions, as readers, inevitably place judgements on the chain of events (thoughts, words and deeds) that have guided us there. And yet in the very act of making a judgement, do we not become aware of our own value systems (perhaps for the first time) and therefore consider the fact that they may conflict with others and therefore stand as fallible? I will return to this point in the conclusion of this chapter in order to better illustrate how we can engender discussion of morals, and the subsequent analysis which may help us establish an important dialogue with our fellow citizens. The awareness of the above dynamic, and the reality of intrusions from both sides with the work at the centre, is essential in our understanding of the *moral implications* of a literary text.

I will return for the moment to the "show, don't tell" policy that pervades story-telling in all its forms, in order to emphasise, on the writer/teacher side, the importance of choosing one technique over the other. Booth provides us with a prime example of the power of the "show" approach as opposed to the "tell" in a section of *Rhetoric* entitled "Manipulating Mood" (p. 200). In this section, Booth looks at how Edgar Allen Poe, in his short story *The Premature Burial*, fails to move his audience by continuing (for

several pages) “with talk about the horror of premature burial” (p. 201). Poe does this by addressing us directly: “attempting to put us into the frame of mind *before* his story begins” (p. 201, Booth’s italics). The superlatives used by Poe, Booth suggests, “would be much more acceptable if reserved to describe the actual plight of the victim during his interment” (p. 201). In this way, “he is divorced from the effects of his own rhetoric” (p. 201). In other words, Poe himself, as author, is trying to establish mood before the tale begins, which does not have the same effect on the reader as *The Fall of the House of Usher*, where a character is created who “experiences the rhetoric in his own person” (p. 202). It is the narrative approach to presenting the tale/subject matter that is the important distinction. “The author may intrude,” states Booth, “even to work upon our emotions directly, provided he can convince us that his ‘intrusions’ are at least carefully wrought and as pertinent as his presented scenes” (p. 205). In short, we should come to the realisation (assuming we needed to *realise* this) that premature burial is a horrifying experience naturally from the text. We should not be overtly persuaded by Poe to feel the horrors of such an event; instead the horror should arise from the circumstances experienced by the character. Let us take this point out of context for the moment and apply again it to the classroom, keeping in mind our writer/teacher dynamic. How, shall we say, will a child (or anyone for that matter) benefit more: from a teacher telling them what it is that is wrong with our society, that racism is intolerable etc., or that he or she realises these injustices on their own? It is a difficult and controversial question but one I think is important to address if we are to be serious about the implications of literature as a tool for moral education. Perhaps an example of a hypothetical situation may help shed some light on how the “show, don’t tell” policy can translate to the classroom. If we

consider a class where multicultural or anti-racist pedagogy is being addressed, we may find two different scenarios in which the approach to the subject matter differed significantly. The first approach may go something like this: a student is given a text that displays an ugly act of racial hatred and the teacher proceeds to inform the student just how ugly and harmful and inhuman the act is, while the student listens attentively to the dissection and silently digests the lesson. The second approach may resemble something along these lines: the student is given the same text to read and asked, with no further intrusion from the teacher, what he or she thought of it and why. The teacher then listens attentively to the student and encourages further discussion of certain key topics which seem of particular interest to the student, leading him or her to a realisations of the ugliness of racism by correlating their own form of rhetoric in the conversation, and meeting in the end to celebrate the triumph together. Which do we think will benefit the student more? (And by “benefit” it is important to note that I obviously do not mean which approach will give him the better grade, for to be told what to look for is to almost guarantee success come test time). I have of course presented a loaded situation. Yet I did so in order to display how in the latter scenario the student comes to certain realisations on his or her own, and through these self-originating epiphanies he or she can make the topic “fit” into the landscape of their own cognitive development and secure a place in their further reflections. It has grown, in a dramatic sense, out of the garden of his or her *own* mind, instead of being planted by a foreign agent, at least in the overt sense of the term “telling”. The relationship between teacher and student in the second scenario is, in my opinion, a more advantageous one, as the listener is learning while the author is guiding.

The “intrusions” then, if intrude the author must, should be from an author who is, in some sense, in the same place as the reader. “An author who intrudes,” writes Booth, “must somehow be interesting; he must live as a character” (p. 219). In other words, we cannot take intrusions from a haughty author telling us what we should think or feel about the tale he is weaving. Rather, the intrusions, when they occur, must be from someone as involved in the tale as us, a friend of sorts that we can discuss the book with. Booth quotes, as I had referenced previously, *The Catcher in the Rye*, where, near the beginning of the novel, Holden Caulfield comments on how, after reading a book, we may wish that the author was a friend of ours who we could call up whenever we wanted. (p. 213) Would we care to discuss the *Premature Burial* with Poe? He himself seems to know all the horrors he evoked, what else is there left to discuss? Instead, as Booth suggests, we would like to sit down with Salinger after reading *Catcher*, or Sterne after reading *Tristram Shandy*, for we see them as the wonderful characters which they have invented. (pp. 221-240). We draw our conclusions with them, as well as formulate our opinions despite them. Because even though in the tale we stumble when they stumble, and rise when they rise, we are still ourselves, and come to realisations on our own, and not always for certain.

In such works we do not discover until the end – and very often not even then – what the true meaning of the events has been. Regardless of the point of view in the narrowest sense, the moral and intellectual point of view of the work is deliberately confusing, disconcerting, even staggering. (p. 287)

Hence the yearning for a conversation, a discussion of the tale with the author. Booth is moving us toward the life-mirroring ambiguities of modern fiction. “Modern fiction”, states Booth,

has tried to move closer to life itself than was ever attempted by earlier fiction. Leave the reader to choose for himself, force him to face each decision as the hero faces it, and he will feel much more deeply the value of truth when it is attained, or its loss if the hero fails. (p. 293)

But, once again, we must remember that the decisions, dilemmas and truth attained by the hero must be things of value to the reader as well. The didactic quality of this type of relationship is difficult to dismiss. We do not, as in the example of the teacher and the student, have to agree, or even listen, to the direct intrusions which manipulate, but we do come to our own realisations in any interaction, and these realisations occur, in part, from our instruction. We are being instructed by the implied author, not the narrator, and it is he or she who we would like to engage in conversation, as we would with Salinger or Sterne. If we return to the writer /teacher analogy for the moment, we can say that the teacher, far from creating the problem or issue presented, is the author behind the discussion (indeed the course), leading us to certain conclusions. There is, as Booth states, “a secret communion of the author and reader behind the narrator’s back...The author may wink and nudge, but he may not speak. The reader may sympathize or deplore, but he never accepts the narrator as a reliable guide” (p. 300). It is the author we are working with; we are communing with him behind the backs of the characters and/or narrator in the tale, which I have designated to represent the subject matter. The History teacher then, for example, is the author behind the events because he or she is presenting them to the reader, and the conversation between the writer/teacher and reader/learner is going on behind the subject matter’s back. “What all this amounts to,” says Booth, “is that on this moral level we discover a kind of collaboration which can be one of the most rewarding of all experiences” (p. 307). Moving with the author to the ultimate outcome, we are working together to figure things out, to make sense of what we are witnessing.

But this cannot be done, warns Booth, at the expense of the story itself. For, as he reaches the conclusion of the book, Booth notes how in the modern approach to literature

the ironies are piled “thick and deep” (p. 368) and that the “hunt for hidden symbols and ironies has been carried too far” (p. 368). In the educational sense, we cannot bury the student in ironies and symbolism so deep that it will be impossible, or at the very least, intensely laborious, to elicit a response from him or her. There *are* right answers to questions, and those are the answers which are not a complete retreat from the tale into subjective opinions based solely on personal experiences. The story is at the centre, and we must remember our English teachers’ admonitions to provide textual evidence in support of our arguments. In Chapter 2 as well, Nussbaum reminded us how it is not enough to simply recognise the emotions as contributing forces to policy making. We must, of course, have more than a basic knowledge of Law to go with it. Digressions are important contributions, but they are not sole resources on which to base discussion of specific subject matter.

The phenomenon of “deep reading”, Booth again points out, has pervaded the modern literary scene. Deep reading moves our focus away from the text or subject matter. One of the worst results of this, states Booth, is that “it becomes more and more difficult to rely, in our criticism, on the old standards of proof; evidence from the book can never be decisive” (p. 369). We are forced, instead, turn to outside sources; in the case of Joyce, the author’s notes or interviews conducted which reveal his or her intent. We lose our collective base upon which we stand: the subject matter at hand. We need, in short, more explanation than the book provides, and this, to Booth, is a failing. Similarly, the call for balance in the preceding chapters is not an indictment of Historical texts and rational contemplations. Rather it holds together the two extremes using the subject matter as a fulcrum. We may have moved too deeply into what Booth refers to as the “fog”: “We

have looked for so long at foggy landscapes reflected in misty mirrors that we have come to *like* fog. Clarity and simplicity are suspect; irony reigns supreme” (p. 372, Booth’s italics). In this sense, the author loses control over his work, sending it to a “confused and confusing reception” (p. 374). The technique employed by the author, or teacher, cannot be bereft with useless coaxing to find deeply buried truths that the author alone is aware of and the student must come to realise. It is, rather, the dialogue that arises between the two that determines the truth. The questions, in this sense, or the persuasive technique used by the teacher to help the student realise the meaning, cannot be pre-planned. Ideally, the teacher him or herself must be, to a certain extent, unable to anticipate the end result of the “reading”, or how the work will be received. When the discussion with the reader ends, only then can an evaluation be made; an enlightened consensus drawn for the subject matter itself, which sits always at the centre.

What Booth shows us is that the narrative technique chosen by the author has moral implications. The moral question (from the writer’s point of view, not the reader’s - the reader will be more closely addressed when we turn shortly to *The Company We Keep*) “is really whether an author has an obligation to write well in the sense of making his moral orderings clear, and if so, clear to whom” (p. 386). (Let us modify this obligation to “write well”, so that it reads “teach well”, in order to keep the analogy fresh in our minds). The writer’s moral obligation is, “to do all that is possible in any given instance to realize his world as he intends it” (p. 388). The author, if he is to lay claim to artistry, must “know how to transform his private vision, made up as it often is of ego-ridden private symbols, into something that is *essentially public*” (p. 395, my italics). The image of himself, as the implied author, must be one that “his most intelligent and perceptive

readers can admire” (p. 395). As Holden Caulfield suggested, we must see him as a friend, a member of the society he is describing, not above it, controlling it. There is a relationship between writer and reader that must be acknowledged and trustworthy, and therein lies the moral aspect, at the typewriter or in the classroom. “The novel comes into existence as something communicable, and the means of communication are not shameful intrusions unless they are made with shameful ineptitude” (p. 397). It is up to the writer to decide the type of rhetoric he or she will use, but we must understand that the rhetoric is there, creating the reader and his or her responses. The choice the author makes in presenting his world to the reader has important moral consequences.

We will now turn to Booth’s *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction*, in order to better explain what these consequences entail. In this rather large work, Booth expounds deeply on the “reasons for confidence in pursuing a conversation about ethical values” (Booth, 1988, p. 82) in narratives by looking in the first part of the book at the *potential* of literature. Picture a poem or a story, sitting on the shelf, collecting dust. In such a state it can claim no value, although there is potential. “The value is not there, *actually*, until it is actualized by the reader. But of course it could not be actualized if it were not there, *in potential*, in the poem” (p. 89, Booth’s italics). The relationship cannot be fulfilled unless there is an active partnership between the two entities, author and reader. In order to “evaluate” the work for ethical content, one must open up the book, and consequently themselves, and engage in that special kind of fellowship with the author. Here is the choice of the *reader*, of what company they keep, whether they reject, or cast aside, the company of some in favour of absorbing into themselves the company of others. But first, before we decide on a preference, we may expose ourselves in our search to what we may

see as an unpleasant, even repulsive world, and once we have done this, it is impossible to cast aside. Hence we have incorporated strategies such as censorship in order to “save” future generations from the defilement of mind that we ourselves have suffered. But this very choice, taken on by the individual reader, and the test of virtue against vice, the displaying of character through choice when the choice is not so obvious, is necessary to help strengthen the mind of the reflective learner. In the same sense of self-discovery, we *own* the choice we have made; a choice which will undoubtedly force us to come face to face with our fears and prejudices. We will return to this point when we get to the end of the Booth review, for he deals exclusively with this need for exposure to other worlds. For now it is the ideas of potential and worth that I am more chiefly concerned with.

It is the mind of the human that opens itself up to the work of fiction, but the book must be taken off the shelf first. “In showing that anything has ‘worth’,” writes Booth, “we always imply *potential* worth *for* some human being; a fiction is worth nothing to a rock, a rock nothing to a fiction” (p. 120, Booth’s italics). The worth only comes to life, as it were, in the personal relationship between the two entities, writer and reader. Literary works are uniquely invaluable sources of reference and contemplation that award us with the honour of spending time in the company of great thinkers thinking their best thoughts. What we celebrate as valuable in our lives and in our literature, we do so for (among other reasons) the fact we are fulfilled by its inclusion. Certain texts make us feel good, challenge us, and create a dialogue with the author who introduces us to its contents. But only if we are willing participants in the dialogue, i.e., we give our selves fully to the subject matter at centre. Booth examines the responsibilities of the reader to the work of art and the implied author.

If I am to give myself generously, must I not also accept the responsibility to enter into serious dialogue with the author about how his or her values conflict with mine? To decline the gambit, to remain passive in the face of the author's strongest passions and deepest convictions is surely condescending, insulting and finally irresponsible. (p. 135)

But does our responsibility end even there? The conversation between the author and the reader can widen, as Booth suggests, into a critical culture, where books are recommended to one another and the conversation of conflicting values broadens and deepens. "Do I owe to others (not just to the author) the effort to conduct ethical inquiry about the works I admire or detest? Obviously this book is in large part an effort to show why our answer must be yes" (p. 136). What begins with a dialogue with our implied author, moves to a conversation with our peers and spreads, like concentric circles in a pond, to our society. We cannot be afraid to let a book take us there. "Implicit throughout this book," states Booth, "will be a plea for engagement with the political questions that naturally spring from any serious thinking about the ethical powers of fictions" (p. 137). It is only through exposure to the many, and often conflicting, points of view and value judgements that one can arm oneself against a censorship that claims to "protect" us from harmful works. It is also, I believe, a fine argument against the "telling" approach employed, perhaps, by overzealous teachers whose intrusions stifle the willing engagement of the reader/student. It is our responsibility *to the text* and the importance we place on the questions raised that urge us to seek all vantage points and to incorporate what we have learned into our own thought process (p. 151).

An ethical reading of a text calls for an open mind to the world that is presented. Let us return to the classroom analogy again. If we are to make friends with the authors who provide us with an ethical presentation of their work (and we in turn are responsible for an ethical reading of the text), we must be willing to work together or the relationship is

doomed. We must be willing to consider what the author is offering us: “to teach us, by the sheer activity of considering their gifts, a life larger than any specific doctrine we might accept or reject” (p. 222). This offering is personal and engaging; it should not, as Booth states, be “the offer of a sadist to a presumed masochist” or “of a seducer or rapist to a victim” (p. 222). Do we, in our lives, consider such characters as true friends; ones with whom we debate the choices we make and lives we lead? Hopefully not. We instead choose friends who share equally in the fellowship individually offered. And yet, even our friends cannot offer us completely what an author could. For example, there is no friend who could tell us how it was to live in the 19th century, or to joust among kings and queens in the 14th Century, or to be shipwrecked, in any era of our history. It is “the irresistible invitation (authors) extend to live during these moments a richer and fuller life than I could imagine on my own” (p. 223). And yet where do we expect to find these enlightened views? Certainly they do not (always) fall into our lap? We are exposed to these wide arrays of spectrums from the very people who we entitle as “teachers”. It is through the guidance and leadership of the author of a class, or a syllabus, that opens the door to the personal friendship that may generate from a reading.

It is now time to turn to the question of how this relationship may affect the character and, subsequently, behaviour of the reader. How can we say, by offering examples, that a narrative can harm someone, seeing that we have concentrated solely thus far on the merits of literature? The answer, if we continue to follow Booth’s analysis, lies in the idea of character as something that is revealed in the choices we make. And, as far as it pertains to literature, the choice of authorial friends reveals the character we wish to emulate or are inclined to become as we continuously grow as a “self”. Of the choices we

make, chief of these, according to Booth, “is that of deciding whether a proffered new role, encountered in an appealing narrative, is one that we can afford to take on, or ought to take on” (p. 260). As we take on this role we build the character of the “inner self” which influences our choices and behaviour. This “inner self”, therefore, is what is fed by the friendship pursued and manifests itself through the choices we make. Education, in this sense, has a responsibility, ethically, to offer us the best of choices on which to base our decisions.

As Booth explains, as we take on a role, with all previous reflections and decisions guiding us concerning how we *ought* to behave, and live the desires of the characters in the narrative, we re-evaluate our position.

Following upon our coductions of various narratives, fictional and historical, we try out each new pattern of desire against those we have found surviving past reflections, and we then decide, in an explicit or implicit act of ethical criticism, that this new pattern is or is not an improvement over what we have previously desired to desire. (p. 272)

The desires can be for power, sex, fame, physical strength, or intellectual prowess. Or we may desire a moral or virtuous life, one which we aspire to in our daily struggles. When we are exposed to the heroes and villains of fiction, we weigh their acts against ours, their reflections and deliberative processes against our own, and we make a judgement, turning inward to probe our own characters and reconsider our present state. In short, when we read, we “become” the characters, we experience what they experience, and desire what they desire. This can easily be transferable to our lives and behaviour. It is not so difficult to imagine someone being moved to re-evaluate their moral standing by reading the autobiography of Sister Therese of Liseux, or the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine. These of course are on the high end of moral literature, with an overt emphasis on God and the virtuous life, but on the other hand, could we not be tempted to indulge in the life of a

barfly after spending a day reading Charles Bukowski? The roles to which we expose ourselves “invade” our inner selves and it is silly to think that they do not possess the potential to influence behaviour. More importantly, they add to our stock of possibilities and widen our considerations when the time to choose arises. We would miss the point, I would argue, of a Bukowski novel if we took it as a resounding celebration of a life devoted to alcoholism. The choices the hero makes (in *Post Office*, to name one example) lead him to loneliness, thoughts of suicide, despair, depression and physical harm. He has made these choices, and we with him, and this unique glimpse into the mind of another human being forces us to reflect on our own thought process and experiences that have led to the establishment of our present selves. We may find, upon such reflection, that we are doing all right without this new addition to our characters, and at the least a novel or writer such as Bukowski confirms our suspicions of such a life. We return here to the idea of friendship; for one’s conversations with a friend often lead to self reflection and self-doubt. In short, by exposing myself to these lives and inner worlds, I can look at my own past and question my solid, in-bred, inherited beliefs and, in the true spirit of reflection, find the “courage to assert ‘my’ true beliefs, including those borrowed from my past, and not just the courage to reject those inherited beliefs that seem to bind me” (p. 290). This assertion, the action taken or the life that we aspire to, reflected in our choices, truly helps determine our character. Our choices, the more we read, are welled from a deeper source than we could ever hope for in our everyday lives. In short, we must grow to become “experienced” readers, exposing ourselves to a wide range of outlooks, so that we are not so solely and singularly influenced by one. We are perhaps all aware of the story of Mark Chapman, John Lennon’s assassin, and his obsession with *The Catcher*

in the Rye. If Holden was our *only* friend, expounding daily to us on the hypocrisy of modern life and his disgust of anything “phony”, would it be realistic to assume that his outlook would not rub off on us, occupying our thoughts and swaying our judgements? Even in real life, when discussing relationships with one’s friends, does not their input play an important role in our decision-making process? The point is to seek, in the literary sense, many opinions and outlooks, become “experienced”, meet new friends and establish different perspectives. In the classroom too, we meet many friends in the various subject matter offered, and we choose our company, i.e. eventual areas of specialisation.

We may, in fact, not even be aware of the “dangers” of our beliefs, or the narrowness of our outlook, until we engage in a dialogue with a friend who possesses a different past and different experiences than ours. Here is where the value and potential of literature truly shines through, by exposing students to these viewpoints, whether through the incorporation of a novel or by simply encouraging the students to “tell their stories”. For literature, as Booth writes, offers us an image, “deliberately criticized by its context” which opens “our eyes to the viciousness of some previously accepted practice: on the one hand, transmutations of the quotidian into radiance; on the other, revelations of what is absurd or base in our ‘normal’ practices” (p. 295). This “new” way of thinking, of looking at our world, and our evaluation of our up-until-then-unquestionable beliefs and norms, can be most effectively evoked, perhaps, by the use of figurative language, a common practice in fiction. Most notable of this technique is the use of metaphor.

Figurative language, states Booth, “will always figure the mind more incisively than plain language” (p. 298). We return here once again to the “weakness” of the sweeping

generalisation as opposed to the specific instance, grafted in the form of a tale. As I have been attempting to assert thus far, the act of story-telling, the assuming of a role and living and experiencing with a character, is an act of involvement that evokes our very being; emotions, reflections, choices. This evocation is a more fundamentally effective tool for learning, and it is commonplace in fiction. An integral component of the art of fiction is the use of metaphor, capturing us and as Booth writes, “bonding us with its maker” (p. 299). Booth begins his look at figurative language by concentrating on what he terms “weapon metaphors”. There are two important questions he wishes to pursue, which are of special interest to rhetoricians: “Are the metaphors effective in winning? and, Is the cause of the rhetorician who uses them just” (p. 304)? The “weapon metaphor” is a technique employed in winning an argument, a taking advantage of the closeness it invites between the author and the listener in order to sway a view in the desired direction. Here is another case of direct manipulation, reminding us of the shortcomings of the intrusions and the “telling” technique. Booth uses an example of a lawyer friend who fell into the hands of a “genius with metaphor” (p.304) in the courtroom. The lawyer was defending a large utility company against a suit by a small one. After the lawyer had made his case, with the law seemingly on his side, the lawyer for the small utility spoke to the jury in this fashion:

““So now we see what it *is*. They got us where they want us. They’re holdin’ us up with one hand, their good sharp fishin’ knife in the other, and they’re sayin’, ‘you jes set still, little catfish, we’re jes gonna gut ya.’” (p. 304)

At that point, Booth reports, his friend knew that he had lost the case. The metaphor had done its work in convincing the jury. This “short fiction” as Booth calls it, “is a good one technically – good, that is, as a weapon designed to win” (p. 305). The “author” in the case used the metaphor as a weapon with which to defeat his opponent, speaking to the

jury figuratively using an image they all could relate to, a very effective persuasive technique. I myself remember a teacher in college who, in a screen-writing class, recounted to us the story of how he had been asked to produce a short, ten minute film for a big corporation designed to lure investors. He and another filmmaker were given the same opportunity, the same budget, and a deadline for submission. The teacher used the budget wisely, spreading it out evenly throughout the work and ending up with a modest, economical, sufficient presentation. His competitor, on the other hand, went *over* budget, and concentrated heavily on the opening graphics to capture the interest of the corporation's representatives. The teacher's work was viewed first, with an encouraging response, but when the second film was shown the reaction was noticeably more enthusiastic. After a half minute of rapid, flashing graphics and ear-catching sound effects, the teacher told us how one representative from the corporation turned with a wide grin and said, "I love it already." Suffice to say, the teacher lost the contract, but learned a lesson. The more extravagant the presentation, the more eager the listener. The same goes for metaphors. It is, in this sense, a dangerous weapon of persuasion used to gain favour. And yet, as Booth suggests, this does not speak to our reason, and perhaps should not be valued as deeply as it is.

A people whose imaginations were schooled by a steady diet of metaphors like "Catfish" would no doubt be highly activated, but might they not also be more passionately vindictive, more inclined to engage in polar thinking (their world divided into threatening villains and innocent victims), more committed to the belief that victory belongs to those who feel most deeply or those who can crack the cleverest bitter jokes, rather than to those who reason most rigorously? (pp. 312-313)

As we saw when examining Nussbaum's presentation of reason without emotion, we have here the opposite example, emotion without reason. Neither, when isolated from the other, constitutes a healthy approach to daily living. This perhaps rings true of our modern society today. Even in classrooms, isn't it the most vigorous and impassioned

argument which stays with the listener longer than the well reasoned rebuttal? We live in a culture which is used to eye-catching attention seekers, whether through 30 second television commercials, 30 minute sitcoms where complex problems are tied up neatly by the end, or billboards that recruit buyers through the use of a single image. As a weapon, it is certainly an effective one. Perhaps the best example of all is politics, where it is impossible, according to Booth, to “repudiate the use of weapon metaphors” (p. 313). In any campaign, a war of sound bites is often what ensues, weapons that are designed to seduce and sway. Booth refers to all these weapons as “micro-metaphors”, meaning that they are techniques “designed to win by attacking an enemy” (p. 318). As far as ethics is concerned, it is the “explicit (aim) of a metaphorist” (p. 319) that should concern us. For, as Booth states: “Metaphors are simply inextricable from the business of the world – all the business, clean and dirty, generous and vicious” (p. 320). We can forgo their use in favour of explicit truth, or reason, but are destined to fall to the lure of a great speaker, a “genius with metaphor”. More importantly, any given metaphor “usually comes to us in the company of brothers and sisters, cousins – whole extended families – as ‘macro-metaphors’” (p. 320). These macro-metaphors encompass entire worlds, cultures, and they too have creators, and I shall address what Booth calls these “Metaphoric Worlds”.

This point is best underlined by the statement made by Booth that “metaphor cannot be judged without reference to a context” (p. 329). The members of the jury who “got” the “Catfish” metaphor had to understand concepts like gutting fish, had to recognise it as a significant image that has meaning in their lives. They had to respond to the dialect, the slang, the pronunciation of the lawyer’s words. The rhetorical purpose is there, but, as Booth points out, it is covert, where as in the macro-metaphor, it is more overt, even

blaring (p. 329). They confidently offer, as in *The Divine Comedy*, *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Paradise Lost*, “the best equipment for the best kind of life” (p. 341). These views are placed directly against those of other religions or belief systems, and are undeniably didactic. Once again, it is exposure to these macro-metaphors that defines not only our characters, but our entire outlook on life and reality, in all its forms. We choose, as in all other situations, the company we keep, discarding all others.

We try them on for size...and we thus compare each new one that comes our way with the other worlds we have tried to live in. At any one moment we have a relatively small collection of worlds that we take together as a pretty good summary of the “real”. But each new encounter with a powerful narrative throws a critical light on our previous collection. We can embrace its additions and negations vigorously, so long as we remember that like all the others, this is a metaphoric construction: a partial structure that stands in place of, or “is carried over from,” whatever Reality may be. (p. 345)

So are we using these macro-metaphors as weapons against our enemies, or, rather, are we using them to understand our own reality better? We can *use* these metaphors instead of abandoning them for fear of the conflict and alienation they may cause. The point is realising the power that these narratives hold over us. By bringing to light these conflicting beliefs, in a multicultural classroom perhaps, our broadened sense of reality may douse our fear of difference. Weapons are used only in battle, when one wants to win, in defence of a standard which we adhere to. When we question what we are defending, realising the hold these macro-metaphors hold over us, we can re-consider what we are fighting for. Literature, the narrative, provides these windows into conflicting belief systems. (See *To Kill A Mockingbird*, *Huck Finn*, *Hard Times*).

As we saw with Nussbaum in Chapter 2, do we not have in literature virtually all we need, coupled with philosophy, that helps us deal with the very idea of “being alive” – to question and self-examine? Booth mentions how the geologists and Darwinists “finished off the creation story” with evolution and time span, and yet still, “instead of abandoning

the myths, a rising number of people, even among the well educated, seem to have thrown into question the rationalist standards that had seemed to destroy all myth” (p. 351). Why? Because, perhaps, we are unsatisfied with the answers provided to us by science and its rationalist allies –we find it difficult to accept an all-encompassing reality which takes care of everything for us. Simply put, science does not give us the “flowery” presentation that the teacher’s short film was missing in comparison to his competitor. It produced, in effect, the response the corporation representatives wanted: to see the beauty of what they believed their corporation to hold reflected in film. Similarly, the beauty of life, as we see it, is reflected figuratively in our poems, novels, in our art, taking into account the reality of our lot as both rational and emotional beings. They not only define us, on a microcosmic level; they also define the quality of the culture of which we are a part. And, subsequently, we judge other cultures by this same standard. Can we realistically renounce these in the name of an all encompassing science (under the assumption, for the sake of this argument, that we *are* being asked to renounce them)? Is it wrong to take an intellectually sound, critical view of a culture which celebrates and aggrandises human sacrifice and female circumcision, once we compare it to our own and others that have developed based on a broadened acceptance of contributing influences? In each case we are being asked to discard what we truly believe in, myths that we believe define us as human beings and help us reorder our reality and question those with less of a broadened view.

On the other hand, now that we understand these macro-metaphors as culturally defining, can we not also see the possibility for control of power, for perpetuation of value defining myths? We see such attempts to release ourselves from the grip of these

myths in today's society. Rejection of the classics, or canon, as skewed weapons used to initiate young minds into an established mindset is a major trend. But the important point to remember, amidst the stampeding race to change, is what we are proposing to replace the canon with. If we reject these myths as pointless, what, then, is the point? Rather, I think, when we expand the myth beyond the conversation between ourselves and the implied author, to those around us with different, and ethically challenging myths, we do move from an acceptance to what Booth defines as a "restless questioning" (p. 478). Discussion should, I believe, ensue by bringing to light the narratives and myths we "embrace wholeheartedly" (p. 484) and exposing them to others with different perspectives but equal love for the pursuit of truth and meaning behind their existence. If I surrender my myths as irrelevant, am I not surrendering *all* myths, and leaving us at the mercy of the empty wall, stripped of cross, statue and/or poem? What the "classics" can offer is an opening to reading well what is written well; a standing testament to what we hold dear and what we should hold in question. Gaining the experience of a well-travelled reader, one can learn to test the waters of different micro and macro metaphors, and through a discussion of the past and present realities presented to us by a wide selection of literature, we can see the value in numbering our vantage points. Fiction, according to Booth, possesses a unique value: "its relatively cost-free offer of trial runs" (p. 485). The offer is basically this: *Come along with me, says the implied author, I will put you in the minds of these characters, you can experience the choices, the reflection, the deliberation in a certain context and take or leave what you will. If you really claim to accept wholeheartedly your system of beliefs, place it against my offering, and see if it strengthens your conviction. If it weakens your conviction, perhaps you truly, in your*

heart, did not believe in its infallibility? “So long that our hearts are right,” writes Booth, “we can plunge into any ‘otherness’ that comes along and hope to emerge the better for the plunge” (p. 487). How many atheists or “humanists” reject the very essence of Christianity (or Religion, for that matter) without having ever read a passage from the Gospels (or, if they have, read it out of context)? How many fundamentalist Christians have denounced homosexuality, abortion, or prostitution, without ever once leaving the inner circle of their church group, dining (as Christ did, by the way) with “sinners”, or befriending “tax collectors”? You may not have reason to abandon your myth, and, consequently, your whole way of life, but rather you can broaden your understanding until it forms a bridge to a more complete understanding of human relationships and the fellowship of humankind.

Booth ends the book (and the discussion) by returning to the concepts explored in the first chapter: “the obvious reality of every ethical offering to the ethos of the *person* to whom it is offered” (p. 489). He claims that

Rather than taking this, as some have done, as a reason for rejecting ethical criticism, it should be seen as a good reason for rejecting the search for universal prescriptions and proscriptions. The fact that no narrative will be good or bad for all readers in all circumstances need not hinder us in our effort to discover what is good or bad for us in our condition *here and now*. (p. 489, Booth’s italics)

We have seen, in Chapter 1, how literature can enlighten our realisation of the past and what we have come to believe. But that does not solidify the foundation as unshakeable. The values we explore change as we widen our vision, and each situation we encounter provides an opportunity for personal reflection, reinvention and adaptation. A decision made one year ago should not be the basis for the same decision to be made today when confronted with different circumstances. Instead there is growth with each interaction,

and literature can provide an abundance of resources for the “trial runs” that can stand in stead of the complex interactions and discussions which we should be engaging in.

I began this chapter with the claim that I would investigate how literature can be used as a tool for moral education. It is now time to concentrate more fully on this endeavour. We have taken the long road in a sense, first establishing familiar terms like “showing”, “telling”, “implied author”, “intrusion” and “rhetoric” and drawing a parallel between the literary relationship of writer/reader/text and the classroom relationship between teacher/student/subject matter. This complex relationship revolves around the subject matter or text and can only be fully realised when both teacher and student are engaged toward a single purpose. In the classroom then, such things as blatant intrusions, used often when the “telling” technique is the preferred strategy, fail to establish the distance necessary for the reader to join in a lived experience with the story-teller. In other words, they do not discover the “moral” of the story on their own terms; they are told what to think and feel by narrators/authors like Poe in *The Premature Burial* and subsequently are denied the response they would have received by experiencing the horror with the character (“horror”, is perhaps not the best term to employ for this particular comparison!). This form of authorial intrusion, which Booth addresses in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, can be seen as a problematic approach to story telling, taking the attention away from the tale and minimising the emotional involvement of the reader. I examined Booth’s presentation of the important, and often overlooked, relationship which occurs between the reader and the implied author. This is the person behind the scenes, guiding the tale, using rhetoric and correlating circumstances in order to lead us to certain realisations, triumphs and tragedies, and to elicit an emotional and intellectual response

from the reader who they have attracted. There is a form of intrusion implicit in every work, but the technique employed by the author makes a significant difference. Booth is critical, then, of the modern Joyce-like approach where the distance is at the forefront and we end up admiring the creative prowess of the artists instead of engaging ourselves fully in the tale. We are buried in technicalities, or facts, and, once again, as readers we lose the emotional involvement at the heart of the relationship. Ideally, we should experience the triumphs and tragedies with the implied author, making a friend in the process, one whom we would be happy to call up to discuss the issues outlined in the book. Here I have attempted to outline a prototype for the ideal teacher/student relationship. One in which the teacher, as guide, attempts to evoke the intended response from the student while placing the subject matter at the centre, and fulfilling the relationship by creating meaning as it grows out of the text, mingled with the (oftentimes) conflicting value systems that precede and contribute to discussion. The author can try to make us “see” his or her world as best they can, but in the end it is our choice whether or not we agree with what has been implied – in the sense of a “moral”. The work, then, only comes alive and realises its potential when the writer/reader relationship is established and fulfilled. And yet it is important to realise the ethical responsibilities each entity has to the other. The writer must write well, establishing the appropriate distance while at the same time proving to be a competent guide. The reader, on the other hand, has the ethical responsibility to offer him or her self fully to the text, delving into the world presented by the author. If this communion widens to include more readers with different perspectives and value systems, the work expands and flowers into a beautiful garden, colourful, tantalising, and lush. The teacher remains the guide by choosing the tale, or the

curriculum, but the fulfilment spawns from the interests and personalities of the students who engage themselves in the story. An author is flawed when intrusions reveal too much of what is to be gained from the reading. The experience is forced upon the reader and not discovered, leaving the reader detached and bored, and a great sharing is lost. The moral aspect, as far as the author is concerned, involves the dedication to the reader and forming the tale in such a fashion that the responses the reader is persuaded to feel are the direct result of a dualistic witnessing of the events presented. Each must come to realise the “truth”, with as little intrusion by the writer as possible. In short, one must write well, keeping in mind not only the story itself, but the writer/reader dynamic which effects technique. If we enter the classroom with a pre-planned response which we wish to elicit, we are approaching the subject matter from the wrong angle. We do not, in this sense, bring the meaning to the class; it is created rather from discussion of the text. The reader’s responsibility lies first and foremost in their commitment to the text, the willingness to engage in a discussion with the author, questioning the deliberations of the characters, their actions and their thoughts, from their own ethical perspective. We cannot refuse to engage in this fellowship, not if we expect to learn something about our own lives and the workings of our world. It is the only way in which we can become “well-read”, experienced readers, by exposing ourselves to the various narratives and choosing from them what we will incorporate into our own character development. Thus the company we keep is crucial to our growth as men and women, influencing our thought pattern and behaviour, invading our thoughts and plucking our emotions. Only through experience will we be able to see through attempts at direct manipulation, weapon metaphors that force us to overlook our rational reasoning process. We can, instead,

realise, perhaps, the influence our own previously unequivocally accepted myths have had on our attitude and behaviour. Here is the true value and potential of literature as far as moral education is concerned. The stories presented, as previously stated, follow a growth from the micro to the macrocosmic. We saw this in Booth's presentation of metaphoric worlds. The parent of the micrometaphor, or the weapon metaphor, is the macrometaphor, the beliefs, religions, myths that define the greater culture. The writer/reader relationship follows a similar ascent, as we move from our personal fellowship with the writer and respond to his or her presentation, we present our discussion, viewpoints and theories, to others. These others contribute their own myth based philosophies to the conversation, adding even deeper perspective to the piece that began the discussion. An awareness of other worlds, different perspectives and vantage points, can lead us in the end to an understanding of our own prejudices, even questioning the macrometaphors that encompass our reality. And these we should not be asked to abandon, rather, to realise the myths that have built our characters, both on the micro and macro levels of existence, leads us to an acceptance of the binding aspects which we all hold dear. In other words, we may realise what we all hold dear if we concentrate on the bridge that connects rather than the moat that divides. Concentration on the larger themes of bravery, sympathy, humility and grace, as they permeate the macro myths of established cultures, raises the foundation of our awareness to the heights of our collective values. The process may be continuous, with no end in sight which promises to establish universality or truth. But seeing what links us in the grand sense, what we value and how these values pervade borders and philosophies, can give us an inkling to our purpose. In comparison to more narrow views which support ideals bent

around oppression, rape and mutilation, our broadened sense which germinated from our core text demands a reconsideration of baser value systems. The meaning we give, collectively, to a single text, a single cell which spawns so much creation, has real moral value which can be translated to our lives in the global sense.

CONCLUSION

“I wonder what sort of a tale we’ve fallen into?”

“I wonder,” said Frodo, “But I don’t know. And that’s the way of a real tale. Take any one that you’re fond of. You may know, or guess, what kind of a tale it is, happy-ending or sad-ending. But the people in it don’t know. And you don’t want them to.”

“Don’t the great tales ever end?”

“No, they never end as tales,” said Frodo. “But the people in them come, and go when their part’s ended. Our part will end later--or sooner.”

--J.R.R. Tolkien, from *The Lord of the Rings*

The final chapter of this thesis will be divided into two sections. In the first, I shall re-examine the value and potential of literature in education by drawing from the examples of the first three chapters. In an effort to compare and contrast the three theories of literature, as a complement to history, philosophy and literature, I hope to present a more structured argument concerning the relationship a literary piece as a source of imagination can have with the active classroom. While working within the relationship between the teacher and the student, as analogous to that of author and reader, I hope to thread a common link that may be self-evident throughout the thesis thus far, but which nevertheless needs stressing here in order to clarify my intent. The process of learning, as a combined effort between the emotions and the rational mind will, hopefully, provide a different and useful perspective by virtue of this polyfocal analysis, using literature as a base. In the second section, I will turn my attention more to the curriculum and practical matters, using Joseph Schwab's paradigm of the four commonplaces of curriculum making, as presented in the paper, *The Practical 5: Theoretical Concerns of the Practical – Subject Mater Commonplaces in Literature*, as a map which will guide the remainder of the discussion from the theoretical to the practical. What will be gained from this inclusion will be a more practical based approach to using literature as a tool for inclusive, subject centred education which harnesses the potential, and justifies the value, of a curriculum engendered by reliable guides.

I.

Let me now go over in greater detail the thematic basis on which I have attempted to structure my thesis. In the first chapter it was my intent to show how the mass movements of the public (as in Slavery, the American Civil War, the Industrial Revolution) affected the individual and how literature catalogued his or her response to it. By incorporating Maxine Greene's compelling book, *The Public School and the Private Vision*, I found a model on which to build my own arguments concerning the value and potential of literature in the history class. Greene, as I summarised, began by establishing two parallel lines of progression within the same time frame. The first was the mass movement in America towards establishing a public school system which allowed room for students of all classes and backgrounds to share in the possibility of attaining and maintaining a common dream or ideal which represented a collective yearning for prosperity and subsequent happiness. Against this movement stood the individual visions of the poets and writers of the times, who responded through their art to what they saw as lacking or disharmonious in the system. As I presented Greene's arguments, I too attempted to draw my own parallels in a wider sense. I suggested that just as literature could accompany our study of the history of the development of the public school system in America with very enlightening results, so could it apply to our study of history as a whole. As a complement to a history text cataloguing battles, dates, and movements, a poem or a novel, reflective of the individual struggle of the time set against the movements of the mass, could provide students with a more "human" perspective which gives scope to their own questioning natures. Confident in Greene's competent analysis, I used the works she incorporated in her book as perfect examples of era-defining,

humanistic texts. These texts included, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *Walden Pond* and *On Civil Disobedience*, all of which called for a re-evaluation of the legitimacy of a dream which was perpetuated by those who were not “fixed in themselves”, and which defined happiness and freedom as the opportunity to participate in the accumulation of goods. This left the individual spirit starving, whereas the poets were advocating the need for its recognition and nourishment. They were claiming that one had to step outside the trudging lines and factory floors (as Thoreau himself did, and as Hawthorne represented in the characters of Hester Prynne and her daughter, Pearl) and call into question what one was pursuing and, at the same time, neglecting. I suggested other texts as well, offering alternative perspectives, such as the inclusion of the *Classic Slave Narratives*, which apply beyond the scope of Black History Month. The point was to approach history from a reachable angle. In other words, the inclusion of literature could aid in establishing the fact that we have been and still are a part of these movements which define our reality. We are not outside them; we are truly contributing factors, and a sense of agency may be needed. This agency was enabled and engendered by the imagination, which I explored in the second part of Chapter 1. Just as the poets used their imagination as a tool for self-reflection and envisioning alternative realities, so could the inclusion of their works in the history class allow room for this form of discovery which gives a human face to mass movements. In this way, I intended to show in the first chapter how mass movements in the public sector influenced individual thought and inspired an emotional response from the poets and writers of the time. This response involved utilising the imagination to envision alternate realities that called into question the legitimacy of a dream, a dream which stifled and discouraged questioning by

virtue of the allegiance of the people who were caught in the whirlwind of production to its perpetuation. This narrowed view offered no incentive to step away and regard this way of life sceptically. Mere survival, and the toll it took on the people, was enough to deal with day-to-day. But the poets, calling for a revival of the spirit, so to speak, championed the validity of self-dignity which came from happy pursuits which nurtured both mind and soul. Simply put, if happiness, or at the very least, self-satisfaction, was not present in their lives, then their lives were not making them happy. A distanced re-evaluation of lifestyle and pursuits was what was therefore prescribed.

In the second chapter, I moved emphasis over to the individual affected in order to concentrate on the mechanics of the inner struggle between the emotions and the intellect in the battle to come to terms with the “irrational” need for soulful fulfilment. A factory life, for example, promised happiness rationally, but left no room for irrational fancies or emotions which demanded recognition. Inspired by Martha Nussbaum’s collection of essays on philosophy and literature entitled *Love’s Knowledge*, I explored the potential of literature as a companion to philosophy, which I defined as an attempt to answer Plato’s question of how one should live one’s life. I pondered the advantages of approaching reason through fancy or the imagination, cataloguing Nussbaum’s suggestions on how literature, as a source of emotional response, can lead to a discussion of philosophical matters which address the truth about *us*. Being both emotional and rational beings, it seemed rather logical to assume that a complete examination of our makeup, one which included recognition of the emotions, should be the proposed mode of analysis. Literature, providing for us the distance on which to “practice” our emotional responses and value their worth, along side our reason, became an ideal avenue from which we

could nurture our deliberative and reflective natures. I then moved from the individual mind back to the greater society by exploring how this new renovated outlook might affect our approach to public policy. Coming full circle in this way, I wished to arouse interest in the legitimacy of my claim that the value and potential of literature extends well beyond the English class, into our lives individually and as a society. In the second part of Chapter 2, I incorporated Nussbaum's book *Poetic Justice* into the discussion for the fact that it built upon her ideas in *Love's Knowledge* by exploring how, as readers, we are privy to unique perspectives which allow us to become "judicious spectators". The term referred to our distance as readers from the plot and consequences of the text. And yet despite this distance we are not unaware and unaffected by both our emotional and rational responses to the action as it proceeds. Applied to public policy then, the emotions, linked to our exploration of fancy or the imagination, are not threats to our sound judgement, but rather legitimate and necessary contributors to our decision making process. I again used Nussbaum's work in the field as a launch pad to discovering how literature, as a companion to our rational considerations, gives credence to our emotional perspective within the realm of reason. In other words, our distance safe guards us from the common criticisms of the irrationality of the emotions by limiting our direct involvement so we are not completely overwhelmed to the point of abandoning reason. In the classroom then, the type of critical thinking such an approach engenders in the student is one which combats isolation on either side of the spectrum. It does not promote a Gradgrind-like approach to the world which discounts everything to do with the imagination and the emotions, and neither does it abandon rational thinking distant from the sometimes overwhelming effects of emotional response. In Chapters 1 and 2, I

attempted to use literature as a connector that illuminated seemingly diverging aspects: the mass and the individual, and, secondly, the emotions and the rational mind. And yet there were still many questions to be addressed. For example, what literature could be deemed reliable as such a resource? Are we not responsible for providing our selves, our students and the public with *reliable* guides that inspire and promote a questioning nature? Who has the right to claim which texts are reliable? With these questions in mind, I explored two works by Wayne Booth in Chapter 3 which I believe addressed these concerns directly.

In the first chapter, I began to map a circular pattern displaying how mass movements and public policy affected the individual. I then concentrated in the second chapter more directly on the inner struggle initiated by this response to mass movements and subsequently shifted focus from the renovated self back to the mass; considering how the “fixed” man or woman could use their new perspective to influence the greater society and public policy. In the third chapter, I wanted to focus more on the classroom, the microcosm of this greater society, and explore how the relationship between the teacher, student and subject matter formed a dynamic which truly harnessed the potential of a literary or imaginative approach to education. I also needed to locate a legitimate response to the nagging question of who can truly judge what texts are reliable guides. I first incorporated Booth’s book, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* in order to establish the fact that the author of a narrative could not avoid rhetoric, and the importance of his choice of technique. The “telling”, or intrusive, technique was labelled as inefficient in comparison to the “showing” technique”, which allowed for a shared response to the constructed meaning between the author, or teacher, and writer, or student, my own designations. The

ethical responsibility of the author then, was to present his or her tale in such a way that the shared responses left room for self-discovery which emerged from placing the subject matter at the centre. The reader too, had the responsibility (which, if the work was presented well, would rise naturally from the relationship) of legitimising and then questioning the values presented by the author in order to discuss the content from converging perspectives, cultures, and/or value systems. I attempted to build once again upon Booth's ideas in the second part of the chapter by analysing *The Company We Keep*. The author, as the reading revealed, became as a friend to the reader, one who he or she would welcome into their homes and minds, considering the author's ideas and suggestions as well as contributing their own to the discussion. What the argument of the third chapter amounted to was the fact that because it was determined that an author had an ethical responsibility to his or her work, the work had to be something that he or she was dedicated to and, in a sense, loved. It had to be an honest offering of a well-structured and lovingly crafted narrative, neither intrusive nor ambiguous, neither of which are characteristics we (hopefully) expect from a close friend. If this was indeed the case, the chosen technique, which evoked the proper emotional response without either seduction or blatant manipulation, placing the tale itself as centre, allowed the tale to stand on its own. What I intended to do was draw a parallel between this relationship and the relationship a teacher has with his or her curriculum, or subject matter. As a graduate student I often spoke with teachers who expressed their frustration at being forced, through lack of staff and resources, to teach English or History or Geography, when their areas of concentration were more computer or mathematics oriented. They expressed disdain for such texts as *The Lord of the Flies* or the plays of William Shakespeare,

which seemed to me quite a pity. The point is that they did not display a passion for the subject matter which, when applied to the above analogy of the responsibilities a writer has to the text, of presenting it to the reader in an engaged and evocative way, seemed like a rather ludicrous approach to education. I began to formulate a theory based upon a more subject centred and “moral” approach to education which could benefit the learners more. Literature as a tool for moral education went beyond its resourcefulness as a stepping stone to discussion which questioned established beliefs and gave credibility to the vantage points which help us construct a more inclusive and less isolated reality. It provided also a framework for approaching our educational system in a new light, challenging our own narrowed concentration on our Progressivist inheritance by moving concentration from student (or, more accurately, from the cognitive development of the student) back to subject matter. (This point was addressed briefly in the Introduction to this thesis. For more on this argument I refer the reader to Kieran Egan’s *Getting it Wrong From the Beginning*, where he explores this issue in full.) How often have we heard the phrase “write what you know” used as a credo addressed by all who attempt a narrative of their own? Simplistically, could we not suggest a re-wording of the phrase to “teach what you know”? What may seem so obvious is neglected, it seems, when we encounter teachers who are forced to teach unknown, or unfamiliar subjects. Here we have perhaps come closer to isolating the problem surrounding that tricky question of who has the right to determine what texts are reliable guides. It is certainly not those who are distanced completely from the subject matter which they represent or “author”. Rather, the reliable guides have a wide range of knowledge concerning the story they are telling; they may have even lived it to some extent. These are the guides who we put our

trust in, and yet still do we not internalise their opinions as doctrine. As Booth suggested, the relationship between the implied author and the reader is one of shared ethical responsibilities where meaning is constructed. The author/teachers are reliable guides because of a) their passion and b) their range of knowledge concerning the subject at hand. We should trust their judgement, while at the same time questioning their value system.

In Chapter 1, Greene provided us with Emerson's response to Horace Mann's vision of the public school, saying, "Humanity could gain nothing 'whilst a man, not himself renovated, attempts to renovate things around him'" (pp. 19-20, this thesis). The common thread, if there must be one, which runs through the three chapters of this thesis, involves this idea of self-renovation as atop the list of priorities for a man or woman to gain contentment with his or her lot. This applies as well to their chosen vocation and their advocacy concerning what they represent. Isolated from the subject matter, as in the example of the disgruntled teachers who I myself have encountered, there is no chance for a shared construction of a valued meaning. Let's carry the image over to Nussbaum's presentation of the Gradgrind-like way of approaching the world. If this isolated concept of character and purpose, void of fancy or emotional investment, is enacted as a philosophy for daily living, there is little hope for the true sense of happiness that reaches beyond empty consumerism, or other similarly meaningless pursuits. If all we are to deal with are facts, if we measure success by our capital gain, subscribing to simplicities alone such as "putting food on the table" or owning a home, for example, we are neglecting undeniable aspects of our lives which need sustenance of their own. We cannot go so far

as to deny our dedication to our area of work, as something of value, especially if we are declaring it a pursuit worth learning, as applied to education.

The factory images that Hawthorne evoked in Chapter 1's analysis of Greene, become symbols of our narrowed vision - bland and uncompromising - as we sell pieces of our lives by the hour to maintain a lifestyle symptomatic of our "broken" selves. The self can be renovated through a consideration of what makes us feel not only happy, but complete, inspired by our own individual tastes and passions. Attempting to "fix" our world around us from such an unenlightened angle becomes an exercise in futility to these poets and writers. Attempting to teach without this inspiration amounts to the same thing.

I attempted to build on Booth's emphasis on the overlooked relationship between the reader and the implied author and apply it to a classroom setting. Teachers who resemble Gradgrind-like characters expect a certain amount of efficiency from their students; who in turn measure success based upon the fulfilment of these requirements. The ideal relationship which stands in opposition of this can be drawn, I argue, from Booth's description of the ethical relationship between the author and the reader. The ethical responsibility of the writer to the reader lies in part in his or her dedication to the story. As we saw with Booth's description of the "showing" versus the "telling" technique, as displayed best perhaps in his criticism of Poe's narrative technique in *Premature Burial* versus *The Fall of the House of Usher*, the flawed intrusions of the inept author disturb the reader's response to the work. Such intrusions suggest a self-indulgence which echoes the individualism which Whitman abhorred, as seen in Chapter 1. A flawed teacher, in the same sense of the flawed and intrusive author, is quick to enforce his or her opinions about the characters, theme, and moral of the story before the student has a chance to

experience it for themselves. This sort of behaviour is akin to the individualism Whitman warned against. Individualism, notes Greene, in Whitman's time, "working through industry and finance and even slavery, was threatening to destroy individuality *en masse* (p. 120). This individualism is another form of isolation similar to that of the emotions or the imagination from the intellect. In this case however, it is the separation that impedes or undermines the text or subject matter's ability to provide a source for mutual meaning construction between the two entities – teacher and student. The implied author is someone, Booth notes, who cannot escape the reader's attention. "However impersonal he may try to be, his reader will inevitably construct a picture of the official scribe who writes in this manner – and of course that official scribe will never be neutral toward all values." (*Rhetoric*, p. 71) If a teacher *chooses* to become an English teacher, then it should be for the reason that they recognise a certain value in studying English. But the way in which they structure their tales, as authors or guides to the curriculum, must be one in which the subject matter at hand, or the student's individual response to it, is not circumvented by rash individualism which forces these values, through direct intrusion, onto the student. Or, perhaps even worse, they may fail to find value in the tale at all, and deny the students the opportunity to become inspired. Theoretically, there is no moral base to the educational process without dedication to the subject matter. Also, a love for every aspect of the subject one is recruited to teach, means the teachers become good friends, in Booth's terms, because they have the experience and knowledge to provide their students with the best company possible, the greatest works of their wide repertoire. The best options should be offered, or one might never have the opportunity of exploring them otherwise.

The three authors who have each been allotted a chapter in this thesis recognise the value and potential of literature as it applies to one's life. My contribution, in researching their individual theories and concepts, has been to consider how this value and potential can be applied to education as a whole. In the field of history, I believe the ideas I presented are rather straight forward, perhaps less so in Chapters 2 and 3. There is a noticeable progression from the concrete to the abstract as I move from Greene to Nussbaum and then to Booth. I will attempt here to bring into clearer perspective the relationship between the three chapters.

Initially, my efforts to apply literature to philosophy were inspired by Nussbaum's review of Booth's *The Company We Keep*, which is found in a chapter from *Love's Knowledge* entitled *Reading for Life*. Nussbaum voices from the start the regret that Booth

focuses so little on the distinctive qualities of our relationships with *literary* works – never asking at length, for example, how the friendship one can have with a novel differs from the friendship promised by a philosophical treatise; how it differs, as well, from the relationship one is able to form with a lyric poem. (p. 236)

This light criticism was the inspiration for the second chapter of this thesis, maybe even this thesis as a whole. Nussbaum's elaboration on Booth's ideas, her discovery of how literature provides a friendship which differs from a philosophical treatise, led to my examination of how its incorporation into other areas of study could open the door to the imagination where once this door remained closed –and bolted (areas like History, Religion, Geography, even Science and Math, as we saw with Greene's insightful considerations from section two of Chapter 1). Booth is rather narrowed when it comes to this discovery, but, as Nussbaum herself notes, Booth is no philosopher (p. 240). He is rather a literary scholar; and it is all the more beneficial for me that these writers have

gained inspiration from each other which subsequently widens my perspective in the field. For example, as Nussbaum argues further in her review, philosophy has its own seductive power, “its power to lure the reader away from the richly textured world of particulars to the lofty heights of abstraction” (p. 238). It promises escape “from the messy and difficult world we live in to a world made more simple and schematic” (p. 238). The suggestion I have made in this thesis, simply put, is for a healthy balance of the two seductive aspects. Philosophy and literature, as analogous to our rational faculties and our emotions, can learn from one another. Nussbaum states that,

To be the ally of literature, and to show what is philosophically important about it, philosophical criticism will need to think carefully about its own style and the statements its style make. It will need to be, itself, less abstract and schematic, more respectful of the claims of the emotions and imagination, more tentative and improvisatory, than philosophy has frequently been. It will need, in short, to choose for itself a style that reveals, and does not negate, the insights of literature. (p. 239)

Nussbaum goes on to say that she hopes Booth will one day undertake this task, even though she herself has done so efficiently in this very book of essays. Booth’s ideas are expansive and malleable, and this leaves room for much criticism, but as Nussbaum’s states at the end of her review, “The vigor of the criticism this book provokes is a clear sign of its value” (p. 244). We could say the same as well for great works of literature.

My own criticism (if one could call it that) of Booth found resonance in Thomas Roby’s and Joseph Schwab paper *The Practical 5: Theoretical Concerns of the Practical – Subject Matter Commonplaces in Literature*. I will turn shortly to a brief review of this piece as I end the thesis with a consideration of the practical uses of literature as tool for education. For now I wish to draw upon the authors’ observation that Booth seems to neglect the authors “in their own terms as real persons” (p. 13). Booth states late in the book that the writer’s image of himself, as the implied author, must be one that “his most intelligent and perceptive readers can admire” (Booth, *Company*, p.395). But this has

little to say about the real man or woman, and how knowledge of their true characters may interfere with a reading of a text. It would have been beneficial, I believe, for Booth to have explored if certain characteristics of an author's true personality, once gained by the reader, affected the reading in any way. If someone was to learn, for example, halfway through reading *The Lord of the Rings*, that J.R.R. Tolkien was a devout Roman Catholic, would this affect the reader's opinion of the story? Booth addresses the implied author, the image we construct of the man behind the tale, but what if our knowledge goes beyond assumption? Writers as a rule (as Tolkien himself did) abhor any implication that the story does not stand alone despite any personal information one had gained concerning the author, and perhaps this point was self-evident for Booth as well. If it becomes a question of ethics, one would have to conclude that any author has the responsibility to his work not to let his personal viewpoints taint the independent narrative. It's what separates *The Lord of the Rings*, from *Mien Kampf*, to name an extreme example.

In the end, however, it is the common ground that I wish to establish between the authors that will benefit most in our understanding of the value and potential of literature in education. Chapters 1 and 2 especially, share the idea of what Nussbaum referred to as "approaching reason through fancy." This aspect is an important focal point for the value and potential of literature in education, and one which I wish to revisit here at the conclusion. First, if we look at the poets and writers addressed by Greene in the Chapter 1, we see that there is a distinct dissatisfaction with life, or at least the version of it propounded by the visionaries and policy makers like Horace Mann. The stance they are making is a brave one. Who, rightfully, can possibly oppose a system of schooling

funded by the public which allows opportunity for children of all races and social standings to pursue knowledge and acquire skills which will land for them a worthwhile and contributing spot in the work force and, subsequently, society? The answer is the people who recognise a flaw inherent in that very system and oppose the perpetuation of the importance of chasing a collective dream which suffocates the individual face, soul and identity. Picture Hawthorne, standing on a busy street corner, watching the mill workers pile into the smoking factories, observing the ladies and children entering and exiting the shops, hands full of packages, bearing witness to the crime, hatred, shame, that runs rampant in the homes and alleyways of the city. Picture Hawthorne then looking to the hills, out into the distance, the horizon, wandering with his mind's eye over uncharted landscapes and possibilities. Perhaps he writes down a tale dealing with unconformity, an alternative lifestyle to the one we have come to accept, an alternative vision. If shared with others, this vision, once analysed and discussed, leads others to reason within themselves and with others, to self-reflect, to deliberate, to question. Now do a slow fade over the previous scene, and there stands another poet or visionary. Only this time he or she bears witness to the hustle and bustle of a modern city street corner, watching the credit cards exchange hands, reading the billboards adorning the buses and sides of buildings, and he or she too begins to imagine. The poet, in both scenarios, no matter what the time frame, has approached reason through the doorway of fancy, or imagination. We, as learners, have at our disposal the fruits of their labours, and with them, we imagine beyond what we could imagine. We not only have access to their accounts of Arthurian glory, worlds long since eliminated by time, but we have also a framework of questioning that widens our berth beyond the usual boundaries. We have

our History, a History which is anything but inert, cold or distant. We too approach reason, speculation, through the doorway of fancy. The works presented by the reliable guide/teacher offer a glimpse into this process, giving us a basis, a text, for discussion on which to question our own accepted personal and social values which leads to a renewed consideration of contributing vantage points. One point I have perhaps overlooked (or at least glossed over) is the fact that teaching, as opposed to a book, is not a one-on-one setting. Instead, in the classroom the author presents his or her work to a wide audience simultaneously, and the meaning construction is more layered as a result, the foundation runs deeper. There are more sources from which to construct meaning.

This inner partnership, the reaching of reason through the aid of fancy, is highlighted in Chapter 2 as a useful tool for establishing how to live one's life, in the philosophical sense. Inspired by the outer society, as in the case of Hawthorne, the inner imaginative reasoning then works its way outwards and impacts that same society with the tangible results of their imaginings, and thus continually. In education, or the classroom, as in Chapter 3, the results of this approach can help foster a mindset that does not set societal change and revision as the desired end. This *may* occur, but the target, it is the theme of this thesis to propose, should be the inner renovation that occurs through self-discovery engendered from the relationship between the teacher and the student on either side of the subject matter. First and foremost comes the "fixing" to which Emerson averred, then the change that so many rush to instill as priority in the minds of learners. To fix the problems, one must become aware first of the tools to employ, learn how and when to use them, and then go about bettering the surrounding world.

II.

Finally, I shall end the thesis with a brief look at the practical value and potential of literature in education. I will address curriculum development in the remaining pages from the standpoint of this imaginative approach. The article I will be basing my thoughts on is entitled *The Practical 5: Theoretical Concerns of the Practical – Subject Matter Commonplaces in Literature*, by Thomas W. Roby and Joseph J. Schwab. The paper was given as part of the symposium *Subject Matter as a Curricular Resource*, and incorporates many of the ideas presented in this thesis. I believe that its inclusion here at the end is a useful one, as it will help bring into perspective how a polyfocal approach to literature can translate to curriculum development. What we may gain from the following analysis is a clearer picture of the practical application of literature and imagination as a tool for structuring subject matter.

The *Practical* series of papers by Schwab have concentrated on the “overreliance by educators on direct theoretical intervention for the solution of complex problems of school and classroom” (p. 1). The *Practical 5* wishes to address the criticism that Schwab implied in his previous work that there should be “no reliance at all upon theory” (p. 1). Therefore, in this article, Roby and Schwab “attempt to correct such misunderstandings by showing how a proper reliance upon the Theoretical is integral to Schwab’s practical emphasis” (p. 1). From the beginning the authors are acknowledging a polyfocal approach to curriculum making, which considers different perspectives as challenging and equally valid. Using literature (or, more aptly, literary criticism) as a guide, the authors map out “four divergent, and entirely proper perspectives from which to examine

any work of art and its relations” (p. 3). A summary of the four perspectives (Mimetic, Objective, Expressive, and Pragmatic) is addressed as follows:

Mimetic theories concentrate on what the author can show an audience about past, present, or future worlds. Objective theories center on the structure of the work itself. Expressive theories point to the personality of the author. Pragmatic theories concentrate on the work’s effects on its audience. (p. 14)

Using the short story, *A Rose for Emily* by William Faulkner as a basis for analysis, Roby and Schwab conduct what they deem a “polyfocal conspectus” of the work from the perspective of each commonplace. These commonplaces (Mimetic, Objective, Expressive, and Pragmatic) are represented in turn by two authors/theorists who stand for each perspective. An interpretative and polyfocal analysis of Faulkner’s short story ensues, offering illuminating results. The authors have chosen this particular story because they “wish to illustrate one movement from commonplaces through critical theories to particular details in a work of sufficient complexity to sustain and reward a polyfocal perspective” (p. 18). It is the point of this thesis to establish that art and the imagination in general, with a specific emphasis on literature, provides this complexity which illumines subject matter outside of the English Class. I will now look at each of the four commonplaces as presented by Roby and Schwab and then compare them to the polyfocal conspectus that I have tried to present in this thesis. Perhaps a final and definitive consensus can be reached concerning the value and potential of literature in education as we draw this discussion to a close. The first commonplace we will look at is the Pragmatic.

Pragmatic

Roby and Schwab call upon the works of two writers, Plato and Edgar Allen Poe. The pragmatic approach dictates that we consider how a literary work affects the audience to which it is presented. We bear in mind Plato's infamous call to abolish all poets and play writes who fail to engender in their listeners a proper response which does not encourage "weak" or "flawed" characters in young readers. Achilles' arrogance towards the gods, an example noted by Roby and Schwab, "and greed in dealing with Agammemnon and Priam are intolerable" (p. 15). Furthermore, "such actions by our heros lead us to become lenient of our own misdeed. They form the early opinions of the young which tend to be unalterable" (p. 15). Poe's pragmatic aim also has his audience in mind, but he is more concerned with what Roby and Schwab refer to as the "elements – plot...or diction...that can best secure the chosen effect" (p. 16). Both aspects of the same commonplace I have addressed in all chapters of this thesis, but perhaps most particularly in Chapter 3. In my analysis of *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, I attempted to persuade the reader, by building on Booth's established theories, that the chosen rhetoric of the author or teacher depended greatly upon the emotional reaction and involvement that he or she wished to evoke from the reader, or student. The "showing" technique was judged to be more effective than the "telling" or intrusive technique, for it allowed for the reader to discover for him or herself the "truths" inherent in the text and to experience them with the author. Also, with an analysis of *The Company We Keep*, I built further upon the pragmatic commonplace by proposing that the best guides or friends who should "author" a curriculum are the ones who are most passionate about their work. These authors leave room for interpretative meaning construction as they acknowledge an ethical responsibility they have to the

reader. They also possess a wide range of knowledge concerning the subject matter which ideally allows for one to trust that the best decisions have been made concerning the chosen company of texts. In the context of moral education, literature sacrifices itself to the scrutiny of the audience, opening the doors to silenced voices with contributing viewpoints that enhance rational discourse. The moral “spin” goes beyond the relationship between the reader and the implied author; it promotes the questioning nature that should pervade all areas of study.

Mimetic

The authors evoked in the analysis of the mimetic commonplace are Aristotle and Hippolyte Taine. Roby and Schwab note how Taine “centers attention on the historical universe which produced the work and is reflected by it” (p. 8). Aristotle, in his definition of Tragedy, concentrates on the complex plot and how it plays out “in terms of the tragic hero who should be a good person of noble family, suffering misfortune as a result of choices involving some flaw in his character” (p. 8). This, according to Roby and Schwab’s analysis, arouses the catharsis. “We feel pity for undeserved misfortune and fear for someone like ourselves” (p. 8). These ideas were explored in the first chapter of this thesis. Taine’s view of literature as reflecting the universe which produced the work, coupled with Aristotle’s significant observation of our pity-induced catharsis, are points which I tried to elaborate on using Greene’s concepts and theories in Chapter 1. As a complement to our history, literature gives life to an era as well as faces, thoughts, and personalities to the characters who, no different from our selves, reacted to and influenced the period in which they lived. As an addition to the curriculum, a literary text which provides for us this enlightened perspective is an indomitable resource.

Objective

Roby and Schwab call upon the works of Wayne Booth as well as Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren. The structure of the work itself is here addressed, and I attempted to stress the importance of this structure most notably in Chapters 2 and 3. In my analysis of Nussbaum in particular, I explored the notion of the reader as judicious spectator, enabling him or her to trust their emotional response well in tune with their rational deliberations because they were not directly involved in the action of the plot. Literature in its very structure provides this advantage and its widened application engenders a speculative edge which generates the type of critical thinking that critical pedagogists call for. The distance that the structure of the literary text provides as well as its ability to speak to both the rational mind and emotions of the learner plant the seeds of balanced inquiry which operates against isolation. In Chapter 3, I noted how Booth's work in *The Company We Keep* revealed the potential of literature to offer us what he referred to as trial runs with which to test our decisions and choices based upon the consequences provided. Finally, in perhaps the most practical sense of the commonplace, the structure of a well-written text provides a framework for good writing. The essentials of grammar, sentence structure and spelling still remain precedent, and, if for no other reason than the logistical, exposure to great writing can yield practical results.

Expressive

The final commonplace that I shall draw as a comparison is the Expressive. The writers used here are William Wordsworth and John Keble. Wordsworth, Roby and Schwab note, defines poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." (p.3) The Expressive theory deals directly with the people involved in creating the art, the

authors, painters, musicians, etc. For Kebl, “the poem or work, becomes a kind of disguised self-expression, the imagined fulfillment of ungratified personal desire” (p. 14) In either case, the poet him or herself is the focus, and I have addressed this issue in Chapters 1, 2 and 3 in various ways. Story-telling, or imaginative expression as a whole, allows one, simply, to express their inner feelings. In the case of Chapter 1, it provides a voice for the individual within the mass. In the second chapter, it gives credence to our fanciful natures as we imagine alternatives within a world of reason. In the final chapter, the Expressive theory achieves fulfilment in the learning relationship between the author and the work, and the work and its readers. The latter contribute to its continuance by adding tales of their own to the already established focal point, building upon macro-myths which bind us and elevate our collected value systems. We all become, in this sense, poets, or, as Plato would have it, philosopher kings.

I will not go into the details of the various readings of *A Rose for Emily* and the interaction between the commonplaces as presented by Roby and Schwab. I instead refer readers to the article itself for a more fulfilling engagement than I could possibly provide. The importance of the “polyfocal conspectus” provided by Roby and Schwab and how it can be applied to education and curriculum making as a whole is what concerns me here. Designing a structure which uses the imagination, and in the case of this thesis, literature as a tool for curriculum development can yield worthwhile results. Roby and Schwab provide one answer to why that is. “A fascinating feature of the resulting polyfocal conspectus is how ‘contradictory’ theories often provide complementary interpretations” (p. 31). As I have been attempting to show from the beginning, the power of contributing vantage points in meaning construction is virtually limitless. The value and potential of a

literary work in education means that, when placed at the centre, the various interpretations of the text all have equal significance which may reveal common value systems embraced by converging cultures. The widened breadth that comes with a polyfocal conspectus, or interconnected approach to learning, opens the door to an awareness of self-defining myths which should not be abandoned but questioned, valued for their uniting graces and built upon. The approach to reason through the doorway of the imagination may transcend cultures, utilising our tools as story tellers, to engage and engender self-reflective and deliberative natures which inspire self-discovery and self-renovation, based on the enlightening response offered by a polyfocal approach. Used as a tool for a more inclusive approach to curriculum making, “The polyfocal view of a subject matter provides options for choice by teachers” (p. 32). These options go beyond the fragmentation of knowledge which isolates one area of study from another. History becomes thus illumed by literature, mathematics by art, and science by music, each interchangeable with the other. Teachers, can, in this fashion, promote the fluidity of knowledge, using their passion for the subject matter to widen the berth of said subject. For one who lives and breathes literature, or history, or science, naturally sees the world as it relates to their passion, and this imposition can be encouraged in the classrooms where they present their chosen field. How can this polyfocal perspective, conversely, benefit students? According to Roby and Schwab, “curricular coherence raises a crucial issue in the experience of students, if they are to be able to see work or world in more than one way and be able to connect such experience polyfocally” (p. 33) This coherence can also be applied to the relationship between the emotions and the rational mind as

presented in Chapter 2. Chapters 1 through 3 as a whole emphasise this way of helping learners see and structure the world, knowledge and themselves.

With this last point in mind, we see that there is here a concentration on the interests of the students, but it is not at the expense of the subject matter which a teacher is expected to “author”. Instead of an overtly neglectful focus on the learner, his or her behaviour and cognitive faculties, as well as the world around them which they are called upon to change, we have returned to the subject at hand. From this source arises imaginative engineering within the individual, reliant still upon evoking interests, but with a resurgence of subject matter as a framework upon which to base discussion, as opposed to society, or surroundings. Via the curriculum, the teacher/authors who see the world according to their passions do not isolate themselves or their students from the source of their inspirations. Together, meaning is constructed between the reliable author and the individual mind that he or she comes into contact with. Collectively, in a classroom setting, this construction becomes multi-layered, acknowledging the contributing value systems of each individual perspective.

Between the lines the empty spaces become filled with meaning, the gaps are reduced and a fullness of knowledge adds density to the educational process. Inner comprehension, renovation, understanding and self-discovery precede change. Once guided, we become guides, once fixed, we proceed to fixing. The true value and potential of literature in education rests in our commitment to the tale we choose to author.

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