The Educational Value of

Reading and Teaching Literature

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Abstract

In this thesis, I investigate the role and power of literature in education. Literature is generally connected to broader educational aims, but its importance has been underestimated. In order to achieve the multiple aims of education, reading and teaching literature need to be emphasized. In this thesis, I endeavor to clarify the connection between literature and education more systematically and explicitly. By evoking narrative imagination, reading literature promotes the moral capacity of empathy. Hence literature can be a valuable resource for achieving multiple educational aims. I first elaborate the key aims of education and how reading literature can serve the purpose of education by facilitating personal autonomy, promoting human flourishing and cultivating citizenship. A discussion of basic principles for literature curricula follows. This discussion sheds light on four criteria for literature works that fit the purpose of education: the stability of values, interpretive complexity, emotional vividness and imaginative richness, and a focus on global diversity. Finally, I suggest three pedagogical implications to guide literature teaching. Teachers are encouraged to incorporate critical reading methods with pedagogical tools. I argue that while individual reading response should be respected, students should form a horizontal relationship with books and read with moral criticism. A cultural-centered dialogical approach is vital to classroom discussion. In addition, teachers ought to question and challenge students' responses. This thesis implies that it is important for educators as well as students to recognize and reinforce the educational value of literature.

Résumé

Dans ce mémoire, j'enquête sur le rôle et le pouvoir de la littérature dans le domaine de l'éducation. Nous savons que la littérature nous aide à atteindre divers objectifs éducatifs, mais son importance a été sous–estimée. Afin d'atteindre les multiples objectifs de l'éducation, la lecture et la littérature doivent être soulignées. Dans ce mémoire, je m'efforce de clarifier plus systématiquement et explicitement le lien entre la littérature et l'éducation. En évoquant une imagination narrative, la lecture littéraire aide à favoriser la capacité morale de l'empathie. Donc la littérature peut être une ressource précieuse pour la réalisation de plusieurs objectifs éducatifs. D'abord, j'explique les principaux objectifs de l'éducation et comment la lecture littéraire peut servir l'objectif de l'éducation pour faciliter l'autonomie d'une personne, pour la promotion de l'épanouissement de l'être humain et pour cultiver les citoyens. Ensuite, je précise une discussion des principes de base pour des cours de littérature. Ce débat met en lumière quatre critères des œuvres littéraires qui correspondent à l'objectif de l'éducation: la stabilité des valeurs, la complexité interprétative, la vividité émotionnelle et la richesse imaginative, et l'accent mis sur la diversité mondiale. Enfin, je suggère trois implications pédagogiques pour diriger l'enseignement de la littérature. Nous encourageons les enseignants à incorporer les méthodes de la lecture critique avec des outils pédagogiques. Je soutiens que quoique la réponse personnelle de chacun à une lecture est valide, les étudiants doivent construire une relation horizontale avec les livres et lire avec le criticisme moral. En classe, une approche dialogique axée sur la culture est indispensable à la discussion. En outre, les enseignants doivent remettre en question et challenger les réponses des élèves. Ce mémoire implique qu'il est important pour les enseignants et les étudiants de reconnaître et renforcer la valeur éducative de la littérature.

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Introduction

Inspired by Martha Nussbaum's works, this thesis illustrates the power and centrality of literature in education. Why should we teach literature to young people? More specifically, how can teaching literature be helpful to achieve fundamental educational aims related to fostering students' independence of mind, well-being and their awareness as citizens? Subordinate questions to this are what *kind* of literature will most effectively foster these aims, and what types of pedagogy are best suited to teaching literature. These are basic questions this thesis addresses.

In addressing these questions over the next three chapters, I build upon the work of philosophers who have discussed the significance of literature as a source of moral and epistemic insight. I draw especially on the work of Martha Nussbaum. In her book *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature*, Nussbaum (1990) investigates a set of answers to the question "how should one live?" by identifying the connection between philosophy, novels, and life. However, although Nussbaum's arguments and analyses are a source of inspiration and insight for my reflections in this thesis, I also expand on her work as it applies to issues of educational theory and practice. My own analysis in this thesis expands upon Nussbaum's work in at least two important ways. First, my discussion of the educational role and significance of literature is framed primarily in terms of its relevance to K-12 schooling rather than to higher education. Second, my analysis seeks to establish systematic and continuous analytical link between the educational role of literature and two aims of education that are widely accepted as having fundamental importance in schools – the aim of promoting students' personal autonomy and the aim of promoting their capacities of democratic citizenship.

Before proceeding further, one preliminary comment is in order. As many readers will know, Nussbaum herself has occasionally addressed the educational implications of her

arguments about the importance of literature. For example, her most sustained treatment of educational issues is contained in her book *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education.* There is some overlap between her treatment of educational aims in that book and my own in this thesis. Her discussion of Socratic self-examination bears a close resemblance to what I refer to as "personal autonomy;" and her conception of global citizenship overlaps with my own discussion of democratic citizenship as an educational aim. However, Nussbaum does not always clearly distinguish between these two aims, and thus the different ways in which literature may influence their development can be obscured. For this reason, throughout the thesis I follow Harry Brighouse's clear and systematic analysis of the moral and political aims of education—in particular those of autonomy and citizenship respectively—as they pertain to the role of literature as a mode of educational growth.

In the rest of this introduction I expand on the reasons why a thesis examining the role of literature in promoting fundamental aims of education might be necessary or at least a valuable contribution to scholarship. There are definitely a variety of reasons that we read fiction, for fun, for information, for unheard-of fantasies, and for life guidance. Although our relation to the books we love is already messy and complex, we do "read for life" (Nussbaum, 1990). Nussbaum points out that when reading, we bring

> to the literary texts we love (as to texts admittedly philosophical) our pressing questions and perplexities, searching for images of what we might do and be, and holding these up against the images we derive from our knowledge of other conceptions, literary, philosophical, and religious. And the further pursuit of this enterprise through explicit comparison and explanation is not a diminution of the novels at all, but rather an expression of the depth and breadth of the claims that those who love them make for them. (p. 29)

Reading stories consisting of cultural and historical views, and interpersonal communication illuminates human conscience and human dignity. We see what is shared by human beings regardless of race, gender, class, etc., such as sympathy for the disadvantaged and the effort people make to accomplish self-fulfillment. In the meantime, we are exposed to the astonishing diversity of how people live their lives. This challenges our presumptions and cultural stereotypes. In fiction reading, we are not passively absorbing information from stories, but inevitably confronting different values, testing our conceptions; and, most importantly, we are learning one of the very fundamental truths of the world, plurality. In these created realities, we trust the guidance in the story and "see, for the time, the world through those eyes, we are led by love, outside the bounds of straight moral judgment" (p. 44).

I can still recall my excitement when I was reading my first novel, *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank. Before laying my finger on the paper cover, I knew very little about the Second World War. Neither did I have much knowledge of Jewish people. Through my reading, I gradually came to realize the time and space I lived in were not separated from those in the book, however physically far away they seemed. I later developed a profound interest in WWII history. The more fictions set in the war I read, the more confidence I had in the fact that we could share the memories of war as well as our emotions, such as fear, love, and eagerness for peace. At the age of ten, I experienced the moment when I was connected to some unknown space and time through that book, just as Anne is observing through the hole on the movable bookcase that conceals their secret annex. I imagined the dim light of the hiding place, heard people whispering behind the wall, trembled with fear of being caught. All of a sudden, I realized the contemporary moment of my being was not completely isolated from the past written in the book and the past of millions of people living on the other side of our planet.

Since, I have read fictions that perfectly seize my emotional turmoil and unrest. Some stories unravel my confusion on the way to truth-seeking. In a subtle way, fictions teach me how to reasonably imagine and situate myself in others' positions. They also warn me of hasty judgments and stereotypes. I am assured by my reading experience time and again that reading fictions provides people with far more than information about other realities. By reading literature, we obtain the wisdom of how to self-reflect, empathize, and live in a collaborative way.

Whereas, Nussbaum mentions there is criticism that views emotions activated by literature reading as not as reliable as intellectual calculations (pp. 40-41). She refutes this argument by indicating how emotions have a cognitive dimension. Emotions such as love, fear, and pity embody some of our most deeply rooted views "of how the world is and what has importance" (p. 41). Emotions are intelligent parts of our reasoning process and responsive to the workings of deliberation. In some cases, without emotions, it is difficult to pursue a full rational judgment led only by detached intellectual calculation. She gives an example by saying in order to prevent an access to one's grief or one's love, one needs to fully understand what has taken place when a loved one dies. Emotions are inevitably involved, and empathizing is called on. An emotional response is evoked when empathic imagination sensitizes people to particular situations. By exercising empathy, people are able to envision multiple contexts and gain practical wisdom (Fletcher, 2016). Reasoning accompanied with emotions engenders a more reliable practical wisdom.

Reading literature is a combination of reason and emotion, a thinking mind and a feeling heart, being sensible and sensitive. Literature provides us with an ability that allows further growth and adjustment when we encounter new realities. It is this characteristic of literature that enables it to facilitate the capacities that education aims to foster. Nussbaum notices this connection and suggests that compulsory undergraduate literature curricula

would assist us significantly in accomplishing the multiple aims of education in contemporary societies.

In *Cultivating Humanity*, Nussbaum (1997) develops in more detail the argument concerning the role of reading and teaching literature in liberal arts education. She proposes that liberal education should aim to cultivate humanities that equip students with the following capacities: the capacity for critical self-examination and of one's own tradition; the ability to see oneself not simply as a citizen from some local group but also as a human being bound to others; the ability to think what it might be like to be in the shoes of others, in other words, the capacity of narrative imagination. In relation to the views about the emotional and cognitive dimensions of literature, Nussbaum indicates a significant conceptual relationship between literature and its role in education. Reading literature naturally evokes emotions and empathy, which are essential to reasoning; and rationality possesses dimensions of self-reflection and seeing relationships as collaborative.

However, the positive impact reading literature can have on one's ethical capacity has been widely affirmed and sometimes taken for granted. Nussbaum holds that there is a causal relationship between reading on a regular basis and the acquisition of dispositions that include appropriate and rational emotions, perspective taking and ethically necessary actions. Here I introduce Bruce Maxwell's paper that covers comprehensive works on this question to mitigate any doubts one may have that this process is less than empirical. This section explains that my aim in this thesis is to elaborate how literature can be viewed conceptually as a valuable resource for facilitating several fundamental aims of education.

Maxwell (2016) points out in his review of scholarship from cognitive psychology that there is some empirical evidence for the claim that reading or studying fiction promotes moral capacities for empathy, though this evidence is far from conclusive. According to Maxwell, the theoretical link between reading fiction and the development of moral

capacities, or in other words, the ethical dispositions Nussbaum proposes can be processed through three steps. First, reading works of fiction arouses feelings of sympathy; second, repeated experiences of feeling compassion gained from regular reading make people more sensitive to others' suffering in real-life situations. Third, people apply their increased ethical capacity to their behavior and thus act more altruistically. Maxwell introduces Oatley's study (1999), which supports the idea that the experience of reading fiction mentally stimulates real-world experiences. By imagining the activities of characters and events in fictions, readers are emotionally involved. Such emotional experiences have future impact on real-life actions. Studies by Batson (2011), Davis (1994) and Hoffman (2001) have proved moral capacities motivate pro-social acts. They conclude that the link between empathy and altruism is not only hypothetical but also well grounded empirically. Nevertheless, Maxwell is careful to point out that the causal relationship between empathy with characters evoked by reading and the development of a generic ethical disposition of affective perspective taking remains controversial.

Shapiro, Morrison and Boker's study (2004) helps clear up some doubts over whether fiction reading positively impacts empathy. They conducted an evaluation that showed that the literary experience of students had a statistically significant impact on affective empathy (as measured by the BEES) but not on therapeutic empathy. Bal and Veltkamp's paper, which received considerable media attention when it was published in the Public Library of Science in 2013, presented two experimental studies to test the hypothesis that "fiction reading is positively related to empathy across time, but only when the reader is emotionally transported into the story" (p. 4). Maxwell summarizes that although not many experiments have been done to support the fiction-empathy link in practice, this idea is more than a taken-for-granted hypothesis.

Maxwell's conclusions provide scholarly support for the project I undertake in this thesis. Since there are at least tentative empirical reasons to believe that reading and studying fiction can stimulate and expand people's sympathy and compassion for real-world experience, and since there is some evidence to suggest that such mental developments have practical and behavioral effects, reading fiction possesses a philosophical possibility to positively impact the achievement of educational aims.

This thesis discusses the normative question of whether literature provides a valuable resource for facilitating certain fundamental aims of education. The fact that empirical evidence is not definitive does not defeat the value of philosophical speculation about the potentially positive role of teaching and learning about literature in promoting capacities of empathy. My aim of examining the role of teaching and learning about literature in promoting aims of education actually reinforces the value of examining the philosophical arguments about literature's educational importance.

The Structure of the thesis

In Chapter One, I discuss several key aims of education and their interrelations, focusing on personal autonomy, human flourishing, and cultivating citizenship. By elaborating how literature can be a valuable resource to accomplishing these fundamental aims, I explain the role of literature and the necessity of recognizing the importance of literature in relation to education.

In Chapter Two, with a premise for making literature a compulsory undergraduate curriculum, I present four principles for literature curricula inclusion. There are indeed all sorts of fictions worth reading, but this chapter aims to clarify the kinds of works that better suit the purpose of education. They are approached from multiple perspectives and selected in the hope of achieving the educational aims discussed in the preceding chapter. I further address the dilemma of how to tackle literary texts with content that might be disturbing or

offensive to some students, which I refer to as “the problem of evil.”

Chapter Three explores pedagogical implications to facilitate the classroom dynamics of teaching literature. Under the guidance of major educational aims, I suggest three guidelines teachers are encouraged to adopt in teaching literature. By combining pedagogical approaches with reading methods, I enquire into the complexity of classroom dynamics. I argue teachers should motivate individual reading response, encourage students to read with moral criticism, and utilize a dialogical approach to facilitate discussions in multicultural contexts. Moreover, it is the responsibility of teachers to question and challenge students’ responses so that students’ understanding and identity can be enhanced through reading.

In conclusion, although many scholars recognize that literature is a vital tool for personal and social development, its value in relation to clearly defined and widely shared fundamental educational aims has not received the kind of sustained philosophical attention it deserves. This thesis is an attempt to address this weakness in contemporary educational scholarship. Nussbaum insightfully draws our attention to the role literature can play in education, but she does not show us in detail what should be taught in class and how pedagogical approaches should be implemented to achieve a better educational end. The value of literature needs to be explicitly and systematically associated with broader educational aims. This thesis portrays the connection more explicitly and systematically. It is written in the hope of emphasizing the importance of reading and teaching literature in the framework of liberal education. By identifying the principles of literature curricula inclusion and implications of teaching literature, this thesis helps educators to determine what literature is worth teaching, how to teach it, and, most importantly, why it is worth teaching in the first place.

Chapter One

Literature as a valuable resource for the facilitation of educational aims

The main aim of this chapter is to illustrate the conceptual relationship between teaching literature and the key aims of education, as these are understood by prominent contemporary philosophers of education. Although educational aims can be examined from multiple dimensions including epistemic, moral and political facets, this chapter's emphasis will be on how reading literature facilitates personal autonomy, human flourishing, and citizenship.

The first section introduces three key aims of education: personal autonomy, human flourishing, and global citizenship. A discussion about how these three aims relate to each other follows. The second section sheds light on how literature fosters multiple capacities and skills required by educational aims. To be specific, literature offers students various conceptions of a good life, equips students with skills associated with rational reflection and comparison, and evokes narrative imagination, which is critical to empathy. As for cultivating global citizenship, literature presents multi-cultural realities and raises the awareness of global social issues.

1.1 Key aims of education and their interrelation

Many philosophers of education (Dearden, 1972; Callan, 2002; Galston, 2002) consider skills associated with personal autonomy to be among the essential skills students must be equipped with through education. According to Brighouse (2006), facilitating autonomy is the primary aim of education, and for him this idea is rooted in a deeper principle that education should aim at enabling people to lead flourishing lives. Human flourishing is what Brighouse calls the central purpose of education, but personal autonomy is an essential means of leading a flourishing life. This section elaborates the importance of these two key aims and their interrelation.

Autonomy is a widely used notion in politics, philosophy, etc. There are also variations of the concept of autonomy in different contexts. But what all these conceptions have in common is that autonomy is the degree of self-determination.

There is a fundamental idea that makes autonomy necessary, value pluralism (Callan, 2002). Autonomy would not be necessary if everyone were committed to living the same life—for example a life of narrowly prescribed religious faith within a single tradition. Pluralism, by contrast, implies the desirability of a diversity of conceptions of the good life (Galston, 2002, p.27). Value pluralism requires us to accept diversity as a permanent feature of social and political life. People who believe in value pluralism are committed to finding value in a very considerable range of different ways of life. In this sense, autonomy is a necessary condition of deciding what specific values to take on. In other words, to be an autonomous agent means when the consideration of diversity is included, one can determine his/her own goals and have the freedom to act to achieve them.

The reason why facilitating personal autonomy is particularly important in education is that the pressure from multiple parties, such as parents, religious authorities, and mass media, will deprive children of the opportunity to live autonomously. Brighouse (2009) points to religious choice, choice of occupation and sexual identity as three critical choices children should have autonomy over (p. 36), but which may instead be externally imposed upon them unless they are provided with an education that facilitates skills of critical reasoning and autonomous choice. He argues that children should be given the opportunity to make judgments about how to live their own flourishing lives.

This leads us to the question, what kind of life should people live? As I mentioned previously, the central aim of education is to equip students with capacities to live a flourishing life. Brighouse further explains, “the central point of educating someone is for her own benefit; that it will enable her to live a more rewarding life over which she will have

more control" (p. 37). Brighouse (2006) argues there are two essential facets of a flourishing life. A flourishing life should be worthwhile and it should be lived "from the inside" (pp. 16-17). In this sense, according to Brighouse, a worthwhile life is one that contains both objective and subjective values. By engaging in activities valuable for others, in most cases occupations, people contribute to the society and produce objective values. However, children are supposed to derive a sense of self-worth, in other words, subjective values from life as well. This points to the second facet "live from the inside." People vary in what kinds of life they will be able to flourish within. An important source of flourishing is the exercise of skills and talents that suit one's personality and interests. Brighouse explains:

> The idea is that children have an interest, entirely independent of whatever interest they have in being equipped with job-related skills, in being acquainted with the greatest cultural goods that our civilization has produced. That interest derives from the fact that those goods can be goods for them, in the way they live their lives; the good constitutes what is sometimes referred to as the intrinsic value of education. (p. 54)

This view of a flourishing life naturally reveals its relation to personal autonomy. Life can be good and worth living when lived in the way children's parents pass on to them, without their necessarily being autonomous. Children still may not, however, flourish.

Furthermore, personal autonomy and human flourishing both contain a social dimension. Human beings can indeed achieve a degree of self-determination only in the context of a deeper dependence on others, a dependence that belongs to our humanity in the first place. We can act as free agents because we are institutionalized by a world where this concept has meaning. It is the shared agreement on this concept that allows us to act upon it. Berger and Luckmann (1966) introduce the idea of primary and secondary socialization in their *The Social Construction of Reality: a Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. They

make a point that we experience both directions of socialization, dialectically. We are socialized into society and secondarily internalize the outside into inner subjective reality, "self." We build our "self" identity through reaffirmation in social interactions with others, which means we cannot be socialized without others. People then develop two identities. One is social identity, a role in society; the other self-identity, an internalization of society into one's self-understanding. Real personal autonomy does not exclude the social dimension of human being.

Sharing a similar vision, British literary critic Terry Eagleton (2010) supports the sociality of human being. "It is because and only because we are social animals, able through language to share our inner life with others that we can speak of such things as autonomy and self-responsibility in the first place" (pp. 11-12). Autonomy has a deeply social aspect, not least because human beings are deeply social beings.

Correspondingly, a flourishing life is not unrelated to the people around. Individuals do not flourish separately from others; their interests are bound up with those of other people, and their reflection takes place within a given social context. People are more likely to flourish when they are connected within social networks. Emotionally, people gain sense of belongingness, kinship and approval from interaction with others. Practically, no job can be done without collaborations with others.

I have addressed how personal autonomy functions as the fundamental element for living a flourishing life. If we view human flourishing as a self-benefit, then being a well-functioning citizen is a benefit to others. Brighouse (2006) specifies that:

> The child who becomes a well-functioning citizen in a democratic society may or may not gain from being so; but her fellow citizens benefit considerably, at least if she is accompanied by a critical mass of well-functioning citizens. If the children of today become the good citizens of tomorrow, they will commit less crime, be less rude, and

> contribute more carefully thought-out political input than if they become bad citizens; and everyone else will benefit from that. (p. 62)

Both Brighouse and Nussbaum believe personal autonomy (and the skills and capacities associated with it) is also essential for developing capacities of good citizenship. In diverse and democratic societies, being capable of interacting and deliberating with other citizens in a spirit of mutual respect and tolerance is among the basic requirements of citizenship. To be specific, Brighouse observes three central components of good citizenship. It consists of a disposition to abide by the law, a disposition to achieve justice and pursue personal legitimate interest through legal channels, and a disposition to participate in public reasoning with respect to those who adhere to values other than one's own. While the first two are fairly uncontroversial, the third is somewhat blurred and challenging, especially in multicultural societies. Political theorists Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson (1994) describe the third disposition as the "norm of reciprocity," and explain:

> Any claim fails to respect reciprocity if it imposes a requirement on other citizens to adopt one's sectarian way of life as a condition of gaining access to the moral understanding that is essential to judging the validity of one's moral claims. (p. 57)

In short, to be good citizens, people need to engage in political participation using public reasoning while showing mutual respect to others.

The social dimension of autonomy and human flourishing embraces a wider definition when Nussbaum (1997) adds a global perspective to it. Nussbaum examines the notion of personal autonomy in the light of a wider focus as she advocates that education should cultivate citizens for a global community. Global citizens should be aware that one is connected to all other human beings by ties of recognition and concern. One does not merely belong to a certain culture or group but, above all, is borne along as one of the billions of human beings in the world. Nussbaum regards the process of coming to realize the humanity

of all as a lifelong education. Well-facilitated personal autonomy based on self-examination and sophisticated understanding of others' situations within the highly plural world is indispensable to global citizenship.

1.2 Capacities and skills associated with educational aims

After identifying these key aims of education, we naturally come to wonder what kind of education students need to have in order to develop the necessary skills and capacities to lead autonomous and flourishing lives and to function as global citizens. In this section I consider broader issues related to this educational question before turning to considerations that pertain directly to the teaching of literature.

As mentioned briefly above, personal autonomy acquires special importance as an educational aim for societies that purport to embrace pluralism and diversity. In such societies, the school is the first and the main place in which the state is directly in charge of determining what the child learns and how he/she will learn it. The school exerts a powerful socializing influence on children, and in diverse democratic societies it is expected to do so in a way that is consistent with the values of cultural and religious pluralism. Brighouse (2006) observes that the composition of the school and its ethos are important for the facilitation of autonomy:

> An autonomy-facilitating school will be composed of both children and adults who come from a diversity of backgrounds, and who have differing outlooks on the world and how to live their lives. … A school in which the teachers have a variety of faiths and ethnic backgrounds, and between them display a diversity of personal enthusiasms, will do better than one in which they are all cut from the same cloth. (pp. 21-22)

In this way, students are encouraged to explore wider horizons of possibility than the family is expected to provide or, in most cases, can provide. In short, the school provides students

with opportunities to become autonomous by introducing them to ways of life beyond those they encounter in the family and local community, and in doing so it enables them to experiment and test whether such alternatives might be attractive and fulfilling possibilities for themselves. In addition to interacting with children from different family and cultural backgrounds, engaging with works of literature is perhaps one of the most important avenues the school can provide for developing a sense of autonomy.

Outside of school, children are raised and educated in a relatively homogenous environment. Children learn about how to live a good life from people they are familiar with, such as family members and friends. At school, and perhaps by participating in activities such as sports teams, dance classes, or drama groups, they interact with a wider circle of people. Even though children are exposed to a wider and more diverse range of acquaintances—perhaps if they attend a culturally diverse public school – they may have relatively little access to the inner details of others' lives. In a community with a homogenous culture, the range of qualitative differences across the lives of different individuals is relatively narrow. At the same time, parents often consciously pass their values to their children, even in a highly pressured manner. For instance, in respect of religious and cultural commitment, parents do not typically offer children the option to choose, and often they may strongly restrict children's awareness of alternatives. These situations represent the myriad of ways family life can restrict children's autonomy by restricting their awareness of and access to different possibilities and alternatives of how to live a fulfilling life. Here is an obvious place where teaching literature might play a role in facilitating children's autonomy. Novels and stories provide what parents cannot provide, or what parents actively dissuade children from learning—a rich and detailed point of comparison from which to evaluate the stories, characters and role models that family life provides them with.

Moreover, the decision whether to revise or reject certain ways of living ought to be made after thorough examination of possibilities. Critical thinking skills involved in autonomy can neither be developed nor exercised without ease of access to a considerable amount of information. Brighouse (2006) refers this as a specific area of knowledge:

> Inspired guesses, trusting the reliable communication of another, and manipulation by reliable others, can help us to discover how to live well. And rational deliberation confronts barriers. But in the absence of fortunate guesses and well-informed parents, children will be much better placed to enter alternative good ways of life if they are well informed about alternatives and are able rationally to compare them. (p. 19)

Knowledge as well as the capability of making rational judgments based on it are necessary to develop personal autonomy.

Emily Robertson (2009) focuses on these 'epistemic' aspects of the aims of education. In particular, Robertson makes a distinction between propositional knowledge and applicable understanding (pp. 19-21). Understanding, which is different from the awareness of facts and information, has to do with the capacity to discern underlying patterns and connections. Robertson argues students should be taught the skills to discover and select information so as to decide what to believe. In addition to truth, educators should aim at teaching students how to justify their own beliefs. Robertson continues to illustrate the necessity of including other elements in the domain of knowledge, for instance, cognitive skills, know-how and intellectual judgment.

As an aspect of personal autonomy, the decision about how to live a flourishing life, as Brighouse (2006) puts it, is the result of well-thought-out judgments. Such decisions and judgments should be made on the basis of abundant information and thorough consideration. Facts and knowledge of alternatives are far from enough. People also need "self-knowledge, habits of mind, and strength of character to make the appropriate alternative choices"

(Brighouse, 2009, p. 36). He also reminds us that autonomy is neither self-absorbed nor isolates a person from outside social forces and relationships. An autonomous person has sufficient knowledge of the relevant variables and sufficient fortitude to allow parental pressure to exert a very small influence on his/her choice; whether, ultimately, he/she chooses for or against will depend on his/her own independent judgment of the fit between the occupation and his interests.

We can hence summarize the two aspects or educational objectives included in personal autonomy and human flourishing: the knowledge/information about alternative ways of life and the skills related to rational reflection and comparison.

Resonating with Brighouse's interpretation of autonomy, Nussbaum (1997) argues that liberal education should be Socratic and committed to activating students' independent minds (p. 19). Living an examined life, to borrow the words of Socrates, requires abundant knowledge of not just one's own way of life but also that of others. She also notes that an independent mind contains respect for reason and rational freedom. "Becoming an educated citizen means learning a lot of facts and mastering techniques of reasons and being capable of love and imagination" (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 14).

While the first and second capacities are similar to knowledge/information and skills of rational refection and comparison, the third capacity, being capable of love and imagination is mostly required by a global citizenship. Nussbaum explains what she means by the capability to love and imagine as follows. She proposes that to prepare students to be good citizens in a global community, education should cultivate three key capacities: the capacity for critical self-examination; the ability to see oneself as a human being bound to others; the capacity of narrative imagination. Narrative imagination means the ability to think what it might be like to be in others' shoes and an intelligent reader of others' stories. By practicing narrative imagination, students are exposed to pluralistic concerns from a variety

of different norms and traditions. Mutual respect, empathy and intercultural cooperation, which are essential capacities of global citizenship, are hoped-for results of this practice.

Regarding narrative imagination, Nussbaum maintains literature that represents the specific circumstances and problems of people of many different sorts is a great stimulator of narrative imagination. The power of literature transcends boundaries. She cites Rousseau who says:

> Let him [the reader] see. Let him feel the human calamities, unsettle and frighten his imagination with the perils by which every human being is constantly surrounded. Let him see around him all these abysses, and, hearing you describe them, hold onto you for fear of falling into them. (1997, p. 93)

Reading literature naturally evokes imagination and conduces to sympathy and empathy. We see the lives of those who share general goals and projects with us, despite the fact that they might come from a remote community and speak another language. Nussbaum regards literature as "a vehicle of citizenship" (p. 94).

One might object that there are many ways in which such knowledge and understanding might be acquired, and reading and studying literature is only one among many pedagogical possibilities for autonomy development. What is so special about teaching and learning literature? Brighouse claims that children's exposure to alternative ways of life is better done "in a controlled and non-pressured way but also in a way that reflects the reality of the lives lived according to these commitments" (Brighouse, 2006, p. 25). It is neither impressive nor convincing to merely articulate how life can be lived alternatively. Here, literature stands out as an accessible resource that not only loosens "control and pressure" in learning but also presents how diverse lives are lived in detail.

All in all, the capacities and skills required by the three key educational aims can be roughly divided into two parts: those associated with personal autonomy and human

flourishing, and those emphasized by the necessity of cultivating citizenship. In order to promote personal autonomy and live a flourishing life, students first need knowledge and information about varied conceptions of a good life. Second, students should rationally compare alternative kinds of lives and make reasonable judgements. As for global citizenship, in addition to what is needed by the other two aims, students should be capable of employing narrative imagination. This skill not only raises students' awareness of global social concerns, but also enhances mutual respect and understanding. In the next section, I will present how literature helps to foster these capacities. My discussion of the educational role of literature in relation to the aims of education here is quite general, since I examine issues of pedagogy and curriculum in depth in Chapters Two and Three.

1.3 The role of literature in facilitating autonomy and human flourishing

In this section, I illustrate two key aspects of literature's role in facilitating personal autonomy and human flourishing. First, reading literature sharpens our perception, thus making us more sensitive about life's happenings. Also, by reading a variety of stories, students are exposed to diverse conceptions of the good life. However, students should learn to reason and make decisions about what alternative ways of life to choose. The second aspect is how literature fosters rational reflection and comparison.

1.3.1 Literature's power in training sensitivity and showing possibilities

First, I examine the role of literature in sharpening sense perception. I want to suggest that learning to read literature in a way that enables or expands one's sense of personal autonomy involves learning to read literature in a particular way—what I call reading with sensitivity to other ways of life. This pertains to literature's role in sharpening sense perception and to its role in enabling us to experience emotions more intensely, but also to evaluate our emotional reactions more accurately.

When reading with sensitivity, readers cannot shut themselves off. Instead they open up their imagination. Readers are reminded that human life goes beyond the facts. Mingling sense and emotions neglected in daily life, literature nurtures readers to become sensitive and empathetic interpreters of others' stories and their own. For example, a person absorbed in James Joyce's *Dubliners* can come from a working class family on the east coast of China. He, inconceivably, feels a mysterious longing and familiarity with early 20th century Ireland. He has almost learned nothing about Dublin in school and has seldom seen European films or documentaries. But he smells its smell, tastes its food and hears its sounds. A city that meant nothing more than a name now is peopled with characters he can observe and listen to. The mild winter rain seems to be touching his face. Feeling a chill in the air, he turns the next page with a shiver. Such sharp sensitivity to life is necessary to capture the multiple dimensions of life.

In addition, literature exposes readers to various layers of knowledge related to reality. It expands the horizon of their knowledge by giving them the chance to confront and respond to realities different from their own. Sometimes fiction presents adventures that most readers will never have a chance to experience. Also, people find similar as well as foreign viewpoints about their own lives. By providing numerous lived experiences, literature allows readers to live with distance both crude and subtle. Readers are given the chance to deliberate on what they have taken for granted. Reading literature encourages the critical examination of oneself and one's traditions. We learn what others have said or written about us. This is what Emily Robertson (2009) calls the knowledge and beliefs acquired through the testimony of others (pp. 23-24).

On the one hand, people read about a totally different life, which gives them a vision that alternative lives are possible. Take *Anne of Green Gables* as an example, probably many

readers have never been to Prince Edward Island, some may not have had a miserable childhood like Anne's, while others may have suffered far worse.

However, most readers learn about life in the Green Gables farmhouse and the friendship between Anne and Diana. In addition, going along with Anne's adventure, readers gradually realize there is not necessarily a causal relation between growing up in an orphanage and leading a miserable life. An adopted orphan can go to the academy to earn a teaching license just because she wants to and works hard to do so. The whole story sounds remote at the beginning but turns out to be inspiring. Readers may close the book with a renewed vision of life. No matter how bad a life may be at its beginning, people can determine how their lives will be lived.

At the same time, besides learning about differences, readers also learn about common elements in a good life. A good life should be economically sufficient, but it does not have to be necessarily wealthy. Even if unloved by parents, a person can seek love and companionship from friends. A career that suits one's interests and ambitions provides constant energy for a good and autonomous life. All kinds of situations and life conditions in fiction can strike readers. Readers can reflect on their own lives and the way ahead. They can realize that they do not have to follow the doctrines and principles their parents passed on to them. They can visualize new possibilities and how to find a way out. Even if at length they decide to follow the religious beliefs or occupations their parents chose for them, doing so is the result of their own consideration and judgment.

On the other hand, readers encounter representations of their own lives and traditions. Following Socrates, Nussbaum (1997) empathizes the significance of living "the examined life." One is encouraged to live a life that questions and accepts those values that survive reason's demand for consistency and for justification (p. 10). When localizing oneself in stories that interpret and represent the reader's lives from a wholly alien perspective, the

reader realizes what he/she has taken for granted can be approached differently. This marks the beginning of one's rethinking of life.

Readers might find the short story "Araby" in Joyce's *Dubliners* both nostalgic and astonishing. Living in the North Richmond Street of Dublin, the narrator is an unnamed boy who feels suffocated by the drabness of his life. His increasing infatuation for the sister of his friend Mangan is the only emotional salvation for his tedious life. One day, the girl mentions the splendid Araby bazaar that she cannot attend. The boy promises to buy something for her from the bazaar. While reading, the reader would probably get impressed by his fidgety tension in anticipation of the bazaar, his impatience while waiting for his uncle to return home to give him the train fare, his feeling of helplessness when the train gets intolerably delayed. When he arrives at the bazaar eventually, nearly all the stalls are closed. Failing to purchase anything for the girl, he stands in the darkness, angry and disappointed.

In everyday life, a reader might be accustomed to mundaneness. One has never entertained the possibility of changing since one has yet to realize one's life is so insufferable. Even if he once had a similar illusion about a new love or distant places and endeavors in vain to pursue them, the experiences seldom hit him as intensely as reading about them. For the first time in his life, the reader is so vividly reminded of the agony and shame, whereas finding himself gradually getting drawn into the humdrum of his life. Seen from a distance, fulfillment and contentedness remain foreign to him. "Araby" exposes the reader to a novel and sharp way of perceiving life. For the Dubliners in the story or people around the world leading a similar life, there is hardly any exaggeration. Joyce writes deeply and sharply. What the reader has ignored or lost sensitivity about is emphasized in the story. The reader is struck by the boredom of his life. Although Joyce did not give a solution in the story, the reader could. Suddenly, the reader is caught by an impulse to change.

Stories reveal the unnoticed layers of life. In this way, even if fiction does not contribute to presenting conceptions of the good life, it may helpfully warn us how life should *not* be lived.

The above discussion shows that stories provide one way in which students can acquire knowledge and understanding of alternative ways of life and, in so doing, provide an avenue for developing a sense of personal autonomy. In reading literature, readers become concerned with what is possible instead of asking what inevitably follows. After all, we are not only interested in the choices we are going to make, but in choices we could make. Sometimes it is not the content of those possibilities that appear most fascinating to readers, but the existence of alternatives. In short, by showing the variety of life and warning people to be cautious about the negative side of life, reading literature fosters our sensitivity to other ways of life. A sharp sensitivity and thorough understanding of life are indispensable to personal autonomy and human flourishing.

1.3.2 Literature develops skills of rational reflection and comparison

Aside from providing students with diverse conceptions of a good life, literature is an important resource for rationally evaluating the comparative worth of different ways of life. On the one hand, an autonomous life cannot be led without the information about what constitutes living well. On the other hand, providing the opportunity to imagine other ways of life requires that we educate children in the skills of rational reflection and comparison usually associated with autonomy (Brighouse, 2006, pp. 18-19).

What we take from reading fiction is the thinking process of intertwined confusion, wondering, and realization. As long as we enjoy the plot of stories, we naturally compare what we are reading with our previous experiences. We detect how this book is similar or different. While reading, we entertain all sorts of hypotheses. We are aware how these hypotheses come into being and the rationales behind them. Literature triggers our empathy

by encompassing us in an imaginary world. We consequently become attentive to what another person says, enter into others' minds, and investigate causality before judging.

Regarding this, literature serves as, first, a carrier of knowledge and facts and, second, resources from which students can learn about know-how and patterns and conduce rational reflection.

Literature as a carrier of knowledge and a lens to learn other subjects

In the first place, literature teaches facts and information that are necessary for reasoning and making judgments. Literature offers students various kinds of information that is supplementary to what they can learn from textbooks. Most children probably have learned from children's stories that the Moon goes around the Earth before they read the statement in textbooks. They might have wondered why polar bears and penguins never meet each other. Then they learned to distinguish the two icy lands on the Earth. One is called South Pole, North Pole the other. Although a child has never seen a spaceship nor walked in outer space, she has read the fascinating story of a courageous astronaut who fought against monstrous aliens. The more she reads about rockets and stars, the more interested in physics and astronomy she becomes. The child learns why astronauts need to wear spacesuits and how the loss of gravity would make life far more difficult. More importantly, what the child learns from stories may linger longer than the dry statements and examples in books.

We learn knowledge from detailed and impressive representations in literature that help us visualize specific occasions and gain a better understanding. Economics, social relationships, political experience and opinions come alive because they are lived by characters whom the reader can envisage and hear. Novelists convey the historical context by language, making reference to the contemporary political situation, or by vivid descriptions of everyday actions and objects. The material setting is often carefully illustrated.

Take the novels by Jane Austen as an example. She filled her stories with ordinary people, events and places. Social reality within her own time and class (the gentry class of southern England in the early 19th century) is deliberately portrayed in her fictions. Adventurous as it may sound for us now, Jane Austen described the very commonplace for her: preparations for countryside hunting, girls' excitement for balls and strawberry picking. As stories develop, we also get to know what each event means in the social context. After all, her writing discloses the fact that fiction writing had become a major entertainment for the middle class in her time.

Aside from teaching facts in an intriguing way, literature can be a lens through which students learn about a variety of disciplines outside of the humanities. Insights gained from literature concerning history, philosophy, social science enrich students' understanding of business, law and even biology and medicine. Grasping the big picture of how a certain law comes into being or a brief history of bilateral trading between two countries certainly contributes to a deeper understanding of current situations. The humanities complement the applied sciences by attaching their sensitivity and humanistic concerns to the subject.

Literature is an especially valuable educational tool since it teaches information or "propositional knowledge" in ways that model their use (or misuse) in practical reasoning. For instance, in the case of a doctor's attempt to treat a patient, there can be two kinds of practical reasoning: one medical doctor's medical knowledge is put to the service of skilful and humane treatment of a patient, whereas, the other physician's medical knowledge is combined with his utterly obtuse insensitivity to create the suffering of a patient. Abundant medical knowledge might qualify doctors, but empathy gained through literature and arts can enable them to understand the perspective of patients and to alleviate their suffering. The humanistic implications of disciplines such as medicine and engineering should be explored

much more thoroughly. Through fiction reading, humanistic knowledge is more easily integrated into a broader understanding of the professions and their relations to private lives.

I am not suggesting literary works are primarily beneficial because they teach propositional knowledge, but that stories function as supplementary texts of knowledge. It is unreasonable to assume that teachers in school can teach everything. What teaching literature attempts is the creation of interests and skills that make continuing self-education possible.

Literature presents the complexity of situations

By showing the complexity of relationships in human affairs, literary stories develop our sensitivity to the dangers of oversimplifying cause and affect. A profound understanding of the complexity of various situations is basic to figuring out patterns and connections. It warns us of hasty judgments and ill-informed decisions. Rational reflection and comparison cannot take place without such understanding.

In works of fiction, readers are shown how the beginning of a story develops into astounding, bizarre or fascinating incidents and how acts of characters contribute to the progress of plots for good or for ill. Readers also see all sorts of events that happen to characters that lead their lives in certain directions. Readers find clues in conversations, conspiracies that undermine some significant plans, and the mental and physical struggles behind decisions. In contrast to a consistent and well-organized story, we easily lose track of some issues in real life. What we see are mere fragments, and it is hard to discern the pattern. Fortunately, a great number of fictional stories (but not all stories) are embedded with considerable details to maintain the consistency of the plot, which makes it easier for us to learn about patterns and connections among incidents.

Taking historical novels as an example: children can gain and enjoy a knowledge of history by reading literature. In history textbooks, names and pictures of heroes are given so that they can be memorized. But history is far more than a chronological list of happenings

and distinguished names. History is there and then, pictured by thousands of lived experiences. The extraordinary arises from the ordinary people whose stories have hardly been heard or cared about. Literary works, realistic novels in particular, create a stage for ordinary people.

The big names of heroes and villains (if we call them that) are like the crests of waves. But when we want to understand where waves come from, the complete movement of the ocean's surface has to be studied to see the energy passing through it. Transformative and/or deconstructive movements such as historical revolutions resemble tsunamis. We are more often told how high the waves are than how and why they happened. Novels dealing with historical events show us the concealed underwater disturbances such as earthquakes, landslides, or volcanic eruptions. People with no name in history are brought to life in novels. The invisible are seen. Novels as such vividly allow us to imagine how the past has possibly made the present.

Although people might question the authenticity and accuracy of historical stories, we ought to distinguish historical fictions from history. Michael Wood (2005) argues that sometimes in literature it is imaginary people doing real things; other times we see real people doing imaginary things (p. 44). We can never be sure that the imaginary people are not true. Bluntly, as Wood continues, historians get the date and places right but the people wrong. Novelists get the people right but mysteriously put them in the wrong times and places. Although the use of "wrong" in Wood's context is arguable, he blurs the boundaries between the true and the fictional. William Randall (2014) gives us an alternative perspective by stating that the historian's job is to tell plausible stories. All past events are potentially historical "facts." What we learn as facts are those chosen to be narrated (p. 131).

In the meantime, a great number of fictions vary and even contradict each other in background setting and worldview. Those who get confused or unconvinced are free to pick

up another book and see different aspects of the contradiction, and later they will formulate their own theories. What we see in history, after all, is the waves and tides. We could never repeat the exact motions underwater, but could only attempt to give plausible theories. Novels invite us to interpret. Interpretations are to a degree representations or imitations of reality. In this sense, fiction provides us with imaginary capacities to see the contingency of history. The willingness to ponder on the likelihood of historical events is also an important feature of rational reflection in the present. When making judgments, students might learn to take possible errors into account and learn to leave room for uncertainty. When students are able to imagine possible alternatives and anticipate different possible ways in which things might turn out, they can evaluate and reason in a more rational and comprehensive way.

Fiction cultivates the capacity of rational reflection in another critical way. It challenges conventions. Fiction points us in new directions – fiction can play a utopian or dystopian role by presenting us with alternative visions of the future. Pinker (2011) regards literature as a hothouse for new ideas about moral values and the social order. We are familiar with social and political fables such as George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World.* Some books are even more than transformative but have made an impact on society with revolutionary views on racism, feminism, individualism, etc. For instance, *Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank has become a symbol and reminder against racial persecution. As a proponent of feminism, Virginia Woolf has inspired women from generation to generation through her essay collection *A Room of One's Own.* It is almost impossible to estimate how these books have contributed to the development of civilization as well as the intellectual evolution of human kind.

To sum up, in terms of cultivating skills of rational reflection and comparison, literature is a valuable resource to present the complexity of situations as well as new visions of the future. On the one hand, readers discover the clues that lead a cause to its effect, which

gives them a sense of causal relationships; on the other hand, readers entertain the probabilities of multiple likelihood—imagine what might happen (have happened) if a single incident intervenes. The two aspects of understanding serve as complementary. They teach us not only about the complex causal relationships that usually characterize human events, but also about something normatively important, namely, about appropriate and inappropriate responses to complex situations.

1.4 Literature cultivates global citizenship

As discussed above, reading literature stimulates the narrative imagination. The narrative imagination requires the engagement of emotions, which helps students to sympathize and empathize. Morality and emotions are important for public reasoning. Moreover, through empathy, students realize they are connected with others in a public domain. Social issues and the concerns of others are not unrelated to them. Such an awareness is fundamental for people to become well-functioning citizens.

Nussbaum (1997) points out that children acquire essential emotional and moral capacities through literature. Even the most basic storytelling experience helps children know themselves and their limits. While limits can be understood as the boundary of their ability, they can refer to the realm of what is acceptable in a social context. Children learn to situate themselves and behave in specific social situations. The experience of reading brings our evolving sense of principles to bear on concrete contexts and stimulates emotions guided by reason, as Nussbaum (1995) argues in *Poetic Justice*. The capacity of sympathy and fancy is "indispensable in order to make rational moral and political judgment" (p. 121). James Boyd White (1984) concludes that all literature necessarily has an ethical and political dimension.

The emotions evoked by literature are also important in the sense that emotions can be universalized, which makes reading literature an enlightening and educational experience. Emotion is more a universal language than a cultural invention. Reading literature seizes the

reader in a way that intensifies the emotional connection between the reader and the characters she is reading about. When we read poems and novels written by authors from other cultures, centuries prior to our own, we can recognize the emotions described. In addition to exposing us to situations and emotions that we find familiar, reading with sensitivity can also expand our range of emotional experience and help us to reflect upon new and unexpected emotional reactions.

As one of the most read novelists in history, Jane Austen proves that the genuine feelings and emotions of characters resonate with people, regardless of time or cultural differences. Though the reader's life is massively different from that of the Bennets in *Pride and Prejudice*, he can still sympathize with Elizabeth's slight embarrassment when she overhears Mr. Darcy call her "tolerable." Perhaps one can even feel a hint of disdain toward Mr. Darcy because of his arrogance. For a Chinese mother in the 21st century whose daughter has yet to marry, she would probably have similar concerns and anxieties as Mrs. Bennet. Sometimes the empathy stimulated has nothing to do with gender. A female reader of *Emma* could possibly feel the jealousy of Mr. Knightley when he sees his beloved Emma Woodhouse show romantic sentiments towards Frank Churchill. Without being stated explicitly, the inner struggle of Mr. Knightley is evident, which gives us the hint of his later disagreement with Emma. Readers learn to estimate the misfortune of others and come to be aware of their own vulnerability. In contrast to circumstances they have already experienced, readers' pre-understanding and emotional actions can also be challenged. As I mentioned in the case of "Araby," the reader might have never experienced that feelings of frustration and hopelessness, but absorbing himself into the mind flow of the protagonist, he is surprised to find out how other people could possibly feel. Although those emotions are new and unfamiliar to him, in a specific situation vividly portrayed in literature, the reader finds them intelligible. The reader further constructs new understandings of what these emotions could

mean to a person. This power of literature is particularly important in intercultural communications. For example, when we read about some unheard-of social issues of other societies, it might be difficult for us to capture how severe the problem is and why people act in certain ways. However, by taking a peep at the emotions of those people, we sympathize and understand. Such new and unexpected emotional experiences build bridges between people.

As private as one may assume emotions and morality are, they contribute to the emergence of beliefs and judgment. The latters work in the public domain. Morality is not a distraction from politics. “Morality is not just about personal life, neither is politics just about the public one” (Eagleton, 2010, p. 14). In this way, literary works construct crucial elements for public rationality and are valuable guides to appropriate responses in society. In addition to shaping emotions and the ability to imagine what it is like to live the life of others, literary imagination is essential to public thinking. Novel reading bridges readers “to a vision of justice and to the social enactment of that vision” (Nussbaum, 1995, p. 37). Public reasoning is the central political value literature offers. The heart is not only for compassion, but also the reason. Therefore, literature goes beyond the limit of time and space, provoking intellectual and emotional responses to universal problems.

In addition, readers are shown a variety of social relations and given the chance to perceive life in the eyes of other identities, such as a daughter, teacher, brother, etc. Literature presents forms of human needs and desires in specific social situations. The understanding of how different identities communicate and interact with each other will possibly have a positive impact on the actions of readers. This kind of knowledge not only helps readers interpret the complexity of current situations but also prepares them for potential identity changes in the future. More importantly, after reading how characters in stories overcome

difficulties in life, readers recognize the necessity of healthy collaboration with others. Literature is a natural incentive to the socialization of children.

Admittedly, people hold significantly different political and moral opinions owing to religious beliefs, social classes, etc. In modern societies, it is commonplace to encounter conflicts of interests and values. What makes such conflicts worse is the difficulty for us to apply our moral values in ways that render good judgments since we are imperfectly informed about the details of others' lives. Only by distancing ourselves from some of our deepest beliefs can we respect other people's moral agency and give them space to make their own judgments about what is good and how to pursue it. Fiction gives readers opportunities to look at their lives from a critical distance. Readers could scrutinize their values that they have taken for granted. From stories dealing with diverse values, readers learn where different and contradictory ideas come from. Knowing details and the history of others' lives and beliefs, if it does not contribute to a better understanding, at least it makes mutual tolerance possible. The more people know about others, the more people can see why others make certain decisions and commitments. What's more, as I mentioned before, fiction suggests the complexity of situations. Interactions and communications based on such understanding conduces to mutual respect and makes collaboration possible.

1.5 Conclusion

In this section, I have argued that literature can be a valuable resource to achieving multiple educational aims. I first introduced three key aims of education: personal autonomy, human flourishing, and global citizenship. The primary aim of education, personal autonomy is fundamental to living a flourishing life. Since we are now living in multicultural societies, global citizenship is a natural and hoped-for result of a flourishing life, from the political

perspective. In order to achieve these aims, education should promote the following capacities of students: exposure to various conceptions of the good life, abundant knowledge and skills to make rational judgments, and narrative imagination in order to empathize.

Nussbaum gives us the insight to consider the role of literature in accomplishing these goals. Reading literature promotes personal autonomy and contributes to human flourishing by training students' sensitivity to life and presenting them with a diversity of possibilities. Literature also teaches facts and knowledge that are necessary to reason and make decisions. Moreover, reading literature makes students be aware of the complexity of situations and elevates their ability to form rational judgments. Finally, reading literature stimulates emotions that can be universalized to tie human beings together. Moreover, students learn about global concerns from diverse literary works. The empathic capacity enhanced by reading literature enables students to think and act appropriately as global citizens.

Chapter Two: Teaching literature and the school curriculum

2.1. Introduction

In Chapter One, I advanced two main arguments for the central importance of literature for education. First, I argued that literature provides an important vehicle for promoting students' personal autonomy and human flourishing. Second, I argued that teaching literature facilitates capacities of democratic citizenship through its thematic portrayals of multicultural understanding, respect and awareness of global justice concerns. In this chapter, I turn to a more specific question about the educational role and significance of literature: What kind of literature should be included in the school curriculum? My previous arguments show that literature should be a central and mandatory part of the curriculum. However, those arguments do not specify what kind of literature should be included. Not all literature is equally valuable in promoting capacities of autonomy and democratic citizenship. Therefore this chapter provides principles that might usefully guide school officials who are concerned with promoting educational skills associated with personal autonomy and citizenship.

In line with my discussion in the previous chapter, "appropriateness" is defined in terms of the fundamental educational aims of personal autonomy, human flourishing and citizenship. Here, I identify and discuss four principles that enable teachers to determine what qualities they might look for when choosing literary texts that will be well suited for promoting these educational aims. The first principle, stability of values, focuses on values that have been tested and appreciated throughout history. The second principle is interpretive complexity. Educationally worthwhile literature must convey stable values in ways that exemplify the complexity of how these values may be redefined, reinterpreted and rediscovered across generations. Third, I argue that curricular selection should take into account the principle of emotional vividness and imaginative richness. Fourth is a principle

of cultural pluralism and diversity. Literature from non-mainstream culture provides an idea of transcendence and otherness, and simultaneously undermines assumptions and stereotypes—each of these qualities enhances the students' capacity for personal autonomy and good citizenship.

Next, I consider a separate but related question pertaining to curricular inclusion: Are there literary texts that might be so gravely harmful that they should simply be prohibited from inclusion in the curriculum on moral grounds? This question is sometimes referred to as "the problem of evil" in literature. In my discussion, I refer to it as a problem of "educational moral harm." In other words, I ask (and attempt to answer) the following question: Do some texts—novels, in particular—portray "evil" themes in such a way that they would induce serious moral harm in students? Once again, the idea of 'moral harm' is defined mainly in terms of the aims of education discussed in Chapter One. That is, a novel or other literary text would supposedly be subject to curricular exclusion if it portrayed evil themes or subject matter in such a way that it undermined students' capacities for autonomy, flourishing and/or good citizenship. I address this question through an examination of the work of JM. Coetzee, whose novel *Elizabeth Costello* raises the "problem of evil" in literature as a central question. I argue that although Coetzee/Costello's reflections on this issue raise very important and illuminating insights about certain educational considerations regarding curricular inclusion, these concerns about the morally harmful effects of 'evil' literature are mostly exaggerated and overblown. As such, I argue, this problem does not present itself as a strong ethical constraint on teachers' choices about what to include in the curriculum.

2.2 Principle One: stability of values

The first principle of literature selection is to include works that convey stable values of educational worth, despite the fact that a great number of values seem highly variable and transitory across time and cultural boundaries.

Eagleton (1996) argues that a literary work becomes valuable only because of what people have said about it. People interpret literary works to some extent in the light of their own concerns By sharing interpretations and values within the public domain, readers add values to original texts. At the same time, readers' concerns, assumptions and values shift over time or in different contexts. Therefore value judgment can be historically and culturally variable. More or less, people are constantly changing their minds about the grounds they use for judging what is valuable and invaluable. As Eagleton concludes, value is actually a transitive term.

Nevertheless, there are values that remain fresh and illuminating to human beings in spite of cultural difference and shifts in time. John Kekes would give the majority of those values another name, deep conventions. Kekes (1993) makes a distinction between socially variable conventions and deep conventions. Deep conventions are values that are universal and pertain to interests and values common to all human beings, such as death and morality. They are natural values, Kekes believes, part of human nature and should be acquired. They represent the fundamental values of human civilization. Although deep conventions also to some degree vary from culture to culture, they are more stable and universal than others. We encourage students to read literature that conveys deep conventions. Classics are spectacular inheritances of deep conventions tested by all kinds of transformations in history. Classics celebrate the stability of some values amid cultural and historical variability. My argument here does not imply that deep conventions are necessarily unconditionally right or

appropriate. Deep conventions are limited and they need to be examined and challenged. Literature has a role to play in this process as well. I will address this problem later.

Don Quixote, a novel from 1605, has enjoyed worldwide readership for centuries. It has likely been included in "must-read" lists since such lists were first created. Apart from its adventurous storyline, the constant popularity it has received should also be credited to its exploration of the theme of madness.

In the beginning of the story, our hero has been reading books of chivalric romances. He fails to untangle the distinctions between fantasy and reality. Readers are simply told that Don Quixote goes mad. However, Don Quixote's madness is arguably chosen. Voluntary madness differs from medical madness. It's noteworthy that Don Quixote is basically only mad for chivalry. On all other topics, he is sane, courteous, kind and even intelligent. Thisher (2004) points out that Don Quixote, with a mad coherence, "lives out the logic of late medieval epistemology. As Foucault might have argued, Quixote's project demonstrates with comic rationality that to hold onto a worldview, once its discursive practices are no longer accepted, is to be mad" (p. 86). Don Quixote is confident in beliefs whose truth is independent of or "indifferent to" the material world. He practices his beliefs as a result of reasoning, albeit in a crazy way. Of the same importance is that Don Quixote is always ready to confront difficulty and take responsibility. He becomes a lunatic when things come with chivalry. His madness can be read as a craziness to achieve something, and he does not yield to evil desire.

If a person dreams not of chivalry, for instance, but of becoming a well-known painter or inventing an epoch-making spaceship, do we still call it madness? There is another name for this craziness, ambition. What about the case of the Wright brothers? Two human beings wanted to fly. Although their dream was considered crazy, they believed in and utilized the

testimony of intellect and reason. They worked insanely hard to create the world's first airplane.

Such madness is one of the stable values appreciated from the late medieval age. With a different name, ambition, we have seen a large number of wonders bred from such madness. I do not believe Cervantes created Don Quixote only for him to be mocked and teased as a lunatic. Craziness is a somewhat cherished part of Quixote's identity. As we see in the story, even his dearest friends cannot convince him to abandon it.

Serious chivalry may sound remote and a bit hilarious now, whereas madness never goes out of fashion. There is rationality behind some kind of madness. Sometimes people need to go "crazy" to acquire something. One pushes oneself further and goes beyond the limit. We appreciate and praise the values of perseverance and reasonable risk-taking actions that are brought by a certain degree of madness. Therefore, although chivalry might be a socially variable convention, there are deep conventions such as loyalty, humility, and responsibility that lie within the value of chivalry. Those values are culturally and historically invariable and worthwhile to be acquired by students.

The inclusion of literature that teaches stable values helps students to understand the fundamental values of human nature. Literary works that portray characters whose decisions and actions depend on such values show students how these stable values construct human beings. The more students read about deep conventions, the more they know about themselves as well as the society they live in. Such knowledge is beneficial to personal autonomy as well as human flourishing. Students definitely will acquire self-knowledge and knowledge of society on daily occasions, but literature ensures that students exercise imagination to visualize values in specific situations. Literature also provides students with far more diverse values than they could encounter in their everyday life. Therefore, stability of values is an essential principle of literature curricular inclusion.

2.3 Principle Two: interpretive complexity

The second principle sheds light on the interpretive complexity of literature works that curricula should include. While the term "complexity" is ambiguous, we can approach it from the following three aspects. First, interpreting complex literature requires intellectual effort. This process is beneficial to formulating rational reflections and critical thinking. Second, values embodied in the selected literature works can serve as a pool for both collective consciousness and individual importance. Open-endedness is the third dimension of complexity that makes rediscovery and re-examination possible. I now explore each of these dimensions in turn.

2.3.1 Intellectual effort

Usually, deciphering codes in sensational works and mass literature does not require too much intellectual effort. They are either written in plain language or only contain superficial and temporary attitudes and values. On the contrary, codes in good works possess a complexity and depth that demands intellectual effort to decipher.

In *How to Read Literature*, Eagleton (2013) identifies that as civilization has grown more complex and fragmentary, so has human experience (p. 124). As the literary medium, language in modern fiction reveals how people grapple with such transition. That is also why works of modernism are more resistant to interpretation than realist ones. He takes Henry James as an example. James's prose challenges the instant consumption of language used as a mere tool for the plot. His works force the reader into "a sweated labor of decipherment" (p. 125). Readers are invited to unpack the author's meaning through examining the extreme subtlety of his language.

Portrayed in deeply layered encoded narration, complex literature works demand reading with intellectual effort. When reading realistic novels, readers might need to tackle information from varied fields, for example, historical knowledge and language habits.

Modern fictions might require more thorough analytic thinking. In some cases philosophical or metaphysical mindsets are also needed. In order to investigate the intertwined connections and discover clues in stories, readers must make an effort to think, compare, predict and reflect.

In a word, deciphering the complexity of great literature is training for the mind. The deciphering process equips readers with critical skills of rational reflection and reasoning. As I discussed in Chapter One, these capacities are all essential to living a flourishing life as well as being a good citizen. The benefit students can gain from reading complex works is more constructive and mechanical than the temporary entertainment offered by popular literature. Although the positive impact that mass cultural works could have on students should not be negated, selected works for a literature course should take into consideration interpretive complexity.

2.3.2 Collective and individual dimensions of values

Another aspect of complexity in literature is that it portrays both collective and individual dimensions of a single, particular value. Awareness of collective consciousness prepares students to behave better in social contexts. Literature works that possess an individual dimension of values motivate students to explore the personal importance of the works to them. One of the reasons that works from literary canons are evident in a majority in literature curricula is that they embody the possibility for both collective consciousness and personal importance to emerge.

Classics are, as Calvino (1993) summarizes, books that "exercise a particular influence, both when they imprint themselves on our imagination as unforgettable and when they hide in the layers of memory disguised as the individual or the collective unconscious" (p. 10). The definition includes two dimensions of classics.

One is that classics are books that have left traces in the collective consciousness (unconsciousness). Our generation and generations prior to ours have been marked with the values elaborated in classics. Significant to collective construction, this dimension is similar to stable values. In particular, canons of specific cultures or societies become resources for national values and cultural icons. Collective consciousness includes the knowledge of how people behave and interact in a certain society, in other words, the traditions and cultures of a society. Being aware of collective consciousness is a necessary step in learning to collaborate with others. A citizen cannot function well in a society without knowing the general concern and values of that society.

The other dimension suggests classics are profound enough for individuals to draw personal significance out of them. Each of us detects diverse values and charms from the same story. For example, a fan of the Brontës might find the twisted plot and suspense of *Wuthering Heights* a good treat for the mind. And *Jane Eyre* might echo the reader's imagination of the gloominess of English country life. In the meantime, another reader who considers the plot overdone and pretentious might be impressed by the personalities of the characters. Some readers might be entertained by Jane Austen's Victorian life pictures, and other admirers, as Watt (1963) remarks, might read her novels as "a means of escape into a cosy sort of old English nirvana" (p. 41). Every work mentioned above has the potential to teach collective values. But their contribution to collective consciousness does not conflict with their importance with regards to individuality. Communication between a reader and a fiction clicks when the fiction answers the reader's questions and raises something particular for the reader to ponder. One's own book of importance is a book to which one cannot remain indifferent, and which helps define oneself in relation to the world.

To sum up, literature curricula should include good works that convey values that are not only collective, but also allow personal importance to emerge. This aspect of complexity

ensures that the individuality of reader response can be respected, which helps facilitate personal autonomy. Knowledge of collective consciousness is indispensable to living and functioning as a good citizen in a society. As such, there are powerful reasons for including novels that provide vivid and rich illustrations of such values in the school curriculum.

2.3.3 Open-endedness

Whether the value of literature emerges collectively or individually, educationally worthwhile works are usually open-ended. This open-endedness makes the rediscovery and redefinition of values possible and necessary. Books change over time in the sense that a specific time period possesses a limited quantity and quality of decipherable codes. Although classics bear the aura of previous interpretations and have left their traces in culture, due to the development of interpreters' competence, new codes might be discovered; or old codes might be deciphered in a different way. As such, readers are motivated to reconsider the values conveyed in fictions and reflect accordingly. People achieve a better understanding of the current social concerns that are important to citizenship cultivation.

The open-endedness of literature allows values to be rediscovered and redefined in light of new social justice issues and concerns. Eagleton (2013) raises Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* as an example:

> If Richardson's Clarissa has become freshly "readable" again in our time, after its contemptuous dismissal in the nineteenth century, it is partly on account of the modern women's movement.…Clarissa could not shed light on feminist theory for its contemporary readership, but it can do for us. (p. 142)

Perhaps few readers at the time appreciated women's personal autonomy or gender equality while reading *Clarissa,* but a 21st century reader would possibly deliberate somewhat on these issues. Similarly, readers nowadays are more likely to consider the problem of slavery when reading *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and we start to question the relationship

between parents and children, when reading Confucian works that put great emphasis on filial piety.

Aside from to reading old works with a new perspective, in open-ended works we can also reflect on issues that have been addressed and pursue further actions. One of Virginia Woolf's best-known nonfiction works, A Room of One's Own (1929), examines the difficulties that female writers and intellectuals face because men hold disproportionate legal and economic power over the future of women in education and society. In this book-length essay, Woolf summarizes two adventures from her professional life. One is killing the Angel in the House, which she thinks she has solved. The angel in the house is a reference to an ideal woman figure in the Victorian age who takes good care of housework and scarifies herself for others. But Woolf confesses she hasn't solved the second adventure and she doubts that any woman has solved it yet. She articulates:

> The obstacles against her [a woman] are still immensely powerful—and yet they are very difficult to define. Outwardly, what is simpler than to write books? Outwardly, what obstacles are there for a woman rather than for a man? Inwardly, I think, the case is very different; she has still many ghosts to fight, many prejudices to overcome. Indeed it will be a long time still, I think, before a woman can sit down to write a book without finding a phantom to be slain, a rock to be dashed against. And if this is so in literature, the freest of all professions for women, how is it in the new professions which you are now for the first time entering?

Woolf wrote the preceding paragraph in 1929. Approximately one century has passed. Can women speak for themselves now and find no obstacles to enter whatever professions? Woolf believes a woman must have money and a room of her own if she wants to be a writer. Are these two elements enough for a woman to become whatever she wants to be? In the 21st century, what else does a woman need to live a life of her own choosing?

Reading literature offers a good opportunity to see how social concerns have developed and therefore challenges conventions that are socially and historically constructed or limited. Although literature works are marked by interpretations from prior generations and left traces in our collective consciousness, the open-endedness of good works encourages new readers to ponder and question values. We cannot help but ask, is that true in contemporary societies? Is there any limitation of these values and how have circumstances changed? Within a more developed civilization, new generations rediscover, reflect on and examine what those works convey.

Just as every generation has their own social problems and moral crises, they also have their own encounter with literature. Literature works with inspiring open-endedness continue to prove their timeless worth when new encounters with them take place.

Literature's role of serving as a resource for challenging conventions is not incompatible with the role of teaching universal and unchanging natural values, or deep conventions. People from different societies and at different points in history practise and interpret conventions in various ways. Conventions have their limits and can be viewed from renewed historical and multicultural perspectives. In this sense, literature could be a perfect material to represent the double-sidedness of conventions. Including this principle ensures that students are aware of both the universality and limitations of conventions. What each generation takes on from literature is a thorough understanding of the complexity of conventions. This principle of curricular inclusion is especially important since recognizing the diversity as well as the universality of values is critical to being a well-functioning citizen.

2.4 Principle Three: emotional vividness and imaginative richness

The third criterion is that educationally valuable literature should represent stable values in ways that evoke the kinds of concrete, rich and vivid emotional responses that

approximate people's reactions in real life. I have discussed how reading literature trains our sensitivity and how by evoking narrative imagination it cultivates students' empathy. These capacities induce personal autonomy and citizenship by elevating students' abilities to make judgments about novel situations, to anticipate different possible future happenings, and to respond respectfully to others' feelings.

Nussbaum and some other critics draw our attention to realist novels in particular because realist novels shed light upon the lives of those who share general goals and concerns with us. Within a realistic realm, we can see how the circumstances in stories influence the characters and thus find it easier to reflect through imagination. Readers learn how to make decisions in specific situations and reasonably anticipate possible future happenings.

In terms of emotional vividness, the smallness of Jane Austen's worlds directs readers to the moral qualities of empathy. When it comes to great novels, people tend to associate greatness with something epic. But there is no point in measuring importance by size. Literature works also have great value when they accurately portray the depth of the experience they communicate. Austen's sensitive vitality and her genuine concern for human feelings in concrete situations capture our hearts. The emotional vividness and imaginative richness her works turn her "smallness" into an empathy-trigger. We learn to perceive and respond carefully to others' feelings. Such vividness of literature is important for fostering citizenship on a global scale.

Another example of imaginative richness is the technique of streams of consciousness. Writers endeavour to reveal the psychic being of characters as an attempt to analyze human nature by applying the technique of interior monologue. Often used interchangeably with normal narration, streams of consciousness aim to present characters more accurately in multiple layers and thus realistically. Virginia Woolf's short story "The Mark on the Wall" stands as one of the prime examples of her use of this technique. She

privileges the imagination and liberty of creation in the narration. The narrator sees a mark on the wall and tries to untangle what made the mark. The narrator's thoughts go from the recreation of the past to the mystery of life and time. Woolf does not engage reader's feelings strongly for or against the characters on the basis of their moral or intellectual traits. She is simply showing a possibility for readers to confront whatever is in their minds and hearts.

Representations of such human interiority indicate that there are diverse ways to reason about matters of common concern. Usually we are more aware of others' opinions rather than their reasoning processes. Streams of consciousness give us more information about how decisions and judgements are made on the basis of characters' concerns. Involved in the flowing minds of characters, we realize our own consideration is not the only way of thinking. Reading about how others' form judgments and make decisions simply reminds us to make more discreet decisions and respect others.

Romantic works are also great sources for exquisite natural imaginary and intense emotions. The poems of Wordsworth, Robert Burns, Alexandre Dumas, etc. sharpen our senses and make aesthetic experiences most comprehensible. This is how literature trains our sensitivity. With a spectacular approach, the fictions of dark romanticism, for example, Gothic fiction, tackle the darkness of the human heart. A reader of "The Fall of the House of Usher" may first be attracted by the desolate and bleak view of the house of Usher, and later feel a sensation of horror because of what happened in the house. While reading "The Black Cat", along with fear, one might also develop curiosity for the narrator's murderous sentiments and insanity. When finally the corpse in the wall was found because of the voice of the missing cat, the reader might start to question the indefinite boundary between the real and the supernatural. With a manipulation of horror, guilt and death, and sometimes the supernatural and occult, Gothic fiction shows us the unseen and forces us to confront the

unknown. With a mastery of modern psychological science, religious thoughts, and philosophy, Gothic fictions offer an illustrious reading experience.

With emotional vividness and imaginative richness, literature works unveil aspects that receive little attention in everyday life. Students realize they can be connected through imagination and also see the multiplicity of ways of reasoning. Literary works selected for curricula are expected to train and sharpen students' perception and imagination. Reading works that are closely intertwined with psychology, philosophy and aesthetics sparks student's interest and kindles what has been asleep inside. We are exposed to the miscellaneousness of lived experiences in fictions, empathizing with emotions as if we are in the positions of others. These capacities induce personal autonomy and citizenship by elevating students' abilities to make judgments about novel situations, to anticipate different possible future happenings, and to respond respectfully to others' feelings.

2.5 Principle Four: global diversity of literature

The fourth principle of literature curricular inclusion is a global focus on diversity. This principle is required by the aim of education to cultivate citizenship proposed by Nussbaum. The contents of literature courses should include works from non-mainstream culture, which provide an idea of transcendence and otherness. Exposure to the diversity of literature leads to two dimensions of a critical understanding. One is the pluralism of values and cultures, and the other is the universal humanity concealed in variety. The first dimension challenges conventions and stimulates self-examination. Multicultural literature unveils values other than those of our parents and teachers. The second dimension indicates the possibility of mutual respect and cooperation. We find answers to our concerns in foreign cultures as well. Educators could therefore utilize literature grounded in values of global diversity to foster well-functioning citizens in a global community.

The urgent necessity of this inclusion lies in the fact that most literary canons are rooted in a dominant culture. These canons are strong advocates of where they come from, which undermines the fundamental value of diversity and pluralism. There is an obvious "whiteness" in western classics. A report by Karen Peterson (1994) on the most frequently recommended books for high school seniors and college freshmen suggests works of European or European-American males are most favored. In contrast, works by women and people of color are marginalized. Arthur Applebee (1991) finds canon expansion does not acknowledge the need for an understanding of the complex issues surrounding the ideological, historical and social contexts of multicultural society. As I mentioned briefly, deep conventions are not necessarily universally right or appropriate. There is a need and possibility for people to examine and reevaluate conventions. On the one hand, as civilization develops, new social justice issues and awareness emerge; on the other hand, encountering other cultures casts doubt on our conventions and reduces cultural misunderstandings. Beyond the limits of our generation and our own social milieu, multicultural literature contains arguments against and resistance to the norms we take for granted.

Multicultural literature is a possible tool to change this situation. Although there are varied criteria to define multicultural literature, generally speaking, it encompasses not only racial and ethnic minorities, but also the incorporation of categories of gender, religion, nationalities, and socioeconomic status (Edwards & Queen, 2002). This definition broadens the scale of what can be included in multicultural literature curricula.

Patricia Polacco's *Pink and Say,* which is published in 1994, tells a story of friendship between an African American and a white soldier during the Civil War. Before reading this book, some readers might assume it mostly presents tense race relations. However, Polacco bridges cultures in the midst of the fight against slavery, shedding light on more complex representations of history. People who presume that African American literature often

expresses negative attitudes or offensive tones will be surprised by the diversity of modern African American works. Genres of African American literature are as colorful as the contemporary life of African Americans. Moreover, the modern Japanese female writer Nanae Aoyama presents us a tender flow of life in her story, *A Perfect Day to Be Alone (Hitori biyori)* (2006). While non-Japanese readers might be familiar with Japanese popular culture and often associate it with exaggerated animations and entertaining television programs, the daily trivial and subtle human relations depicted in Aoyama's story disclose a different kind of charm. With the delicateness of a female writer, the story shows a picture of how people from different generations interact and understand each other. The under-stated friendship between the twenty-year-old woman Chizu, the protagonist, and the hostess, Ginko, in her seventies, is intriguing and somewhat heartwarming. People who expect some tense conflicts between a rebellious Japanese young woman and a rigid old lady will be disappointed.

While embracing the diversity of humanity with more authenticity, educators should be cautious that too much emphasis on differences might not necessarily undermine presumptions. Reading multicultural texts written by authors from dominant cultures might reinforce stereotypes, since outsider writers observe and interpret via the lens of their origin cultures. We should not forget that recognizing the universal humanity shared by diverse cultures is as important as understanding cultural differences. The label of non-mainstream can be a double-edged sword.

Sadly enough, some books become popular only because they cater to readers' presumptions. It is possible for outsiders' curiosity and enthusiasm for exotic culture to hinder the discovery of connections and similarities among cultures. The phenomenal book on the national characteristics of Japan, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture,* is a good example for this. Written by American anthropologist Ruth

Benedict in 1946, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture* has received tremendous readership in the United States, China and South Korea. This book was initially a World War II–era study of Japanese traditions and culture, sponsored by the U.S. Office of War Information. It is considered a must-read for people who are interested in the cultural study of Japan and has caused a big sensation in Japan as well. As an academic work on Japanese culture written by an outsider (Benedict has never been to Japan), the book intrigued a nationwide self-examination of Japanese people. Unsurprisingly, some scholars harshly attacked it. Japanese philosopher Tetsuro Watsuji (1950) questioned the data analysis process of this study and called the conclusions invalid (p. 23). He also criticized Benedict for over-generalizing the life patterns in Japan. Similar criticism was given by Japanese sociologist Takeshi Kawashima (1950) who asserted that Benedict premised the homogeneousness of Japanese people and that she failed to notice concrete differences in terms of class, region, and occupation, etc. (pp. 7-8).

Why, given that Benedict's data and sample analysis are now criticized as unreliable, does the book still receive constant attention and continuous readership? It is reasonable to presume that the popularity of *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* is to a degree credited to outsiders' presumptions about Japan. Benedict's observations about the hierarchy in Japanese society and the oppression of personal feelings support the way outsiders imagine this remote and mysterious country in East Asia. Intentionally or not, she empathized more with the uniqueness or remoteness of Japanese culture rather than with some universal traits in human beings. By overemphasizing the distinctions between the "East" and the "West," Benedict's book might only reinforce cultural stereotypes.

It is this "natural" reluctance to read something contradictory to one's presumptions and conventions that makes a mandatory multicultural literature course significant. Quite ironically, sometimes it is not a lack of reading that makes people narrow-minded, but the

fact that people read too much in their niche that reinforces their existing viewpoints. Without proper instruction, students tend to read books that fit into their existing worldviews or interpret books in a biased way. Such reading does not contribute to effective intercultural understanding. It is educators' responsibility to undermine cultural stereotypes and eliminate presumptions that are made upon no evidence, through a good selection of literature works. I will discuss how teachers could effectively utilize multicultural texts to promote mutual understating in the following chapter.

One solution is to include literary works written by people who are insiders of the culture. Literature curricula should not be satisfied with texts that *deal with* minorities, especially those written by outsiders, but should instead include texts that aim to portray realities embedded in the narratives of people who come from the cultures they describe. Moreover, educators should keep in mind that presenting cultural differences is not the only purpose of including multicultural literature works. Recognizing the universal humanity embodied in diversity is of equal importance. Through reading multicultural literature, students should be expected to see their own culture as only one possible way of living. Students should be expected to realize they do not only belong to a single group but are bound to people around the world.

All in all, this principle requires educators to include more works written by people from non-dominant cultures and also attach more importance to works that suggest the universality of human cultures rather than stressing cultural differences. The first dimension helps students to visualize various domains of thoughts and activities, thus promoting mutual understanding and respect. The second dimension further enhances empathy and makes intercultural cooperation possible. All these capacities are crucial to cultivating global citizenship.

2.6 The problem of evil

In the preceding section, I presented four principles by which literary works should be selected for literature curricula. As educators are aware, some books go deeper into the dark side of the human mind and the cruelty of crimes. Like in Gothic fictions, certain writing techniques are likely to cause discomfort in readers. In addition, some fictions deal with issues that might traumatize readers such as sexual assault and murder. Taking this into account, there is a reasonable concern that there may be some books so disturbing and immoral that they should not be handed to students. Reading these books might be worse than useless: it could cause moral harm with no benefit. Such fictions are often referred to as evil.

This section addresses the question of whether some literary material should never be taught in schools and, if this is the case, on what grounds such a judgment might be justified. My starting point is a discussion of themes arising from the novels of the Nobel laureate in literature J.M. Coetzee. Specifically, Coetzee asks us to consider not merely whether it is inappropriate to teach certain material in classrooms, but whether it is wrong for anyone ever to read certain texts, on the grounds that doing so risks inducing a profound moral harm. Coetzee's question constitutes an extreme case—indeed, it is one that on the surface appears quite remote from the dilemmas that most teachers will face in selecting material for the classroom. Teachers' decisions about what novels to teach are usually restricted to some extent by government mandated curricula. And in most cases, the profoundly 'evil' novels that concern Coetzee will already be excluded or even explicitly prohibited from such lists before teachers have the opportunity to make selections for their classrooms.

Nevertheless, I argue that Coetzee's question is more relevant than it first appears for two reasons. First, the principles of curricular inclusion and exclusion I discuss in this chapter are not solely meant for teachers' choices at the classroom level. They are also meant to apply to broader policy decisions—specifically, about what kinds of literature are

legitimately approved for inclusion in government-mandated curricula in democratic societies. Second, even if most of the choices teachers actually face at the classroom level do not pertain to the profoundly evil works that Coetzee has in mind, considering the extreme cases Coetzee focuses on is helpful for identifying and evaluating principles that might apply in less extreme cases. Although Costello in the story has specific reasons that justify her claim that evil fictions should be excluded, my argument is to challenge her idea of "exclusion." I argue that she does not consider the (potential) educational value of learning about evil. Neither does she take appropriate reading approaches into consideration. To be specific, if students read with moral imagination and ethical criticism, educators would not be too alarmed by the problem of evil. Fictions of evil can even be utilized as valuable resources for moral education. For all of these reasons, there may be solid, but often overlooked, pedagogical grounds for including so-called 'evil' themes in literature in the curriculum. Or so I shall argue.

In one chapter of his novel *Elizabeth Costello* (2003), Coetzee engages us in "The Problem of Evil." The protagonist, Elizabeth Costello, an Australian writer who travels around the world to give lectures on various topics, such as animal rights, literary criticism and philosophy, is going to speak on "Witness, Silence and Censorship." She has intended to use the novel *The Very Rich Hours of Count von Stauffenberg* by Paul West as an example to defend her argument. Costello feels disgusted by the novel's representation of authentic horror. She refers to the extraordinarily vivid description of the execution conducted by Hitler's hangman as obscene. Therefore she accuses *The Very Rich Hours* of being evil. Costello criticizes Paul West, saying that his writing indiscreetly attaches some pleasure to immorality and risks making murder attractive. Writing as well as reading this book only increases the world's supply of wickedness, according to Costello. Pondering the problem of evil, she realizes that storytelling and fiction-writing do not always do people good. Costello

finally concludes that fictions that represent the workings of evil too intensely must be silenced.

The conclusion of Coetzee's (and his alter ego Costello's) musings is that there are powerful reasons for simply silencing—eliminating, destroying or permanently sequestering—certain literary texts. If these reasons are compelling, then it follows that there are certain texts that should never be taught to students or, indeed, read at all. Compelling reasons are: first, evil books trigger overwhelmingly negative emotions that are morally harmful to readers and of no value. Furthermore, overly vivid representations of evil deeds might make evil attractive to readers, which could possibly lead them to commit evil deeds in reality. The question to which I now turn is what implications, if any, Coetzee/Costello's view may have for decisions about whether certain novels or other literary texts should be excluded from school curricula.

There are basically two points about which we can inquire. First, can the portrayal of evil in novels be educationally beneficial? Is empathy with immoral texts always morally corrupting? Second, presumably educationally valuable literature is not supposed to be completely emotionally positive. Therefore, can negative emotions be educationally worthwhile? And how could educators reduce the impact of harmful emotions?

A premise for our concern is that readers will naturally imagine and empathize with the circumstances and feelings related to the evil deeds described in literature. And such mental involvement does not only cause negative emotions but also might lead to moral corruption. Amy Mullin (2004) shares a similar concern with Costello and cautions that "even a single instance of such an imaginative experience can destroy a kind of moral innocence, in which, for example, some kinds of cruelty had simply never occurred to one" (p. 252).

Although Mullin's argument fails to pinpoint a compelling reason for thinking literature can induce moral harm, it provides clues that lead to a better argument. The problem with Mullin's argument is her claim that moral harm equates with loss of moral innocence. As I have argued, from an educational perspective, moral innocence is in and of itself far from something to be regretted; it is in fact part and parcel of any set of worthwhile educational aims. I want to suggest that Mullin is nevertheless on the right track when she alludes to the ways in which literature can, in some cases, induce morally harmful "imaginative experience[s]". What we need in order to understand more clearly the precise nature of moral harm is not Mullin's idea of "moral innocence," but something else.

I believe that the notion of moral imagination, raised by Natalie Fletcher (2016), helps to illuminate the missing piece. In her article "Envisioning the Experience of Others: Moral Imagination, Practical Wisdom, and the Scope of Empathy," Fletcher clarifies the complexity of empathy by making a distinction between narrow empathetic scope and practical wisdom supported by moral imagination. She asserts that moral imagination enhances our perception and helps us to envision contexts we have not encountered in lived experience, and to compare real situations with alternative realities. According to Fletcher, there are three features crucial to moral imagination: acknowledgment of limited perspectives, recognizing human commonality and being receptive to competing considerations. When applying moral imagination properly, one becomes a virtuous empathetic agent and better empathizes with others. This practical wisdom, as she calls it, is significant when considering the imaginative process of visualizing evil actions. When reading fictions that delicate reveal criminal minds through moral imagination, readers are "not expected to partake in the emotional experience of the criminal—say, the anger that motivated his behavior—but to sincerely (rather than resentfully or disdainfully) commit to reconstructing his vantage point through an envisioning

of his context from multiple reference points" (Fletcher, 2016). In other words, readers do not have to commiserate nor mentally ally with the criminal.

Correspondingly, Wayne Booth's insights on reading experience resonate with Fletcher's. Since no literary work exists outside a social and institutional reality, a reading experience is to a degree shaped by various contexts and the complexity of its subject and object, the book and the reader. Reading as deciphering inevitably involves value judgment, or, in the words of Wayne Booth (1988), "ethical criticism." It is worth clarifying that talking about ethics in literature appreciation may falsely suggest we are only interested in judging stories and their effects on readers, but ignore the ethical quality of the experience of narrative (pp. 9-10). Booth identifies two kinds of reading experience: one he calls aesthetic reading transactions, which refers to the sheer fun of reading something fantastic. The other kind he calls efferent transactions, which refer to reading motivated mainly by a search for something to carry away, for instance, special wisdom and life guidance. The second kind can be understood as a "value-taking" experience, taking away decipherable values according to the work's ethical quality. Great works inspire a balanced combination of both experiences. Since we cannot read without ethical judgment, there is always an ethical domain to literary works.

The shocking scene of depravity that unfolds in Paul West's work indeed stimulates imagination and negative emotions. But readers are not passive agents devoid of spontaneous value judgments. Using practical wisdom supported by moral imagination and reading with ethical criticism, readers can sense the cruelty behind and make distinctions between virtues and vice. Furthermore, as discussed previously, the emotions evoked by novel reading contribute to public rationality. The portrayal of immorality possibly receives more attention and deeper investigation because of the painfully negative emotions it causes. It is also

reasonable to expect that works that portray immorality will inspire rational discussions and reflection on related topics, which is certainly of educational worth.

Indiscreetly written, *The Very Rich Hours* lacks the ethical quality of fiction reading experience. The description of Hitler's hangman, as Costello contends, ties us too close to immorality, thus making the narrative unpleasant. However, Costello goes as far to suggest sealing the work up and silencing it forever. I am suggesting that Costello "overreacts" to the immorality or evil in West's novel because she fails to consider the value of learning about evil. Neither does she consider the possibility that reading might happen in a well-structured educational context, under the direction of a skilled and knowledgeable teacher. To put it simply, if students are capable of practical wisdom and reading with ethical criticism, they will not necessarily be morally harmed by "evil" literature. On the contrary, when a competent teacher teaches evil literature with the goal of fostering empathetic virtue and encourages students to employ practical wisdom and ethical criticism, the problem of evil can be conducive to worthwhile moral education. In other words, the dangers of moral harm envisioned by Costello can be forestalled by effective teaching.

Nevertheless, Costello has her own reasons for overreacting to the problem of evil. Her specific situation shows us that at times it can be necessary to apply some techniques for thoughtfully selecting literature?. The pedagogical method of using trigger warnings is a possible solution to reduce potential harm when dealing with the problem of evil.

In the story, Costello once underwent a violent sexual assault and kept it secret. The return of her repressed horrid memories led to her hysterical reaction to West's novel. Usually, people traumatized in similar situations find it very difficult to confront memories that have been stirred up unwillingly. For them, the negative emotions that come with these memories stand very little chance of being educationally positive. Under these circumstances, using a trigger warning is a possible method to protect students without undermining the

educational value of literary texts. By using trigger warnings as a more moderate measure to protect students against possible moral harm, educators might not need to resort to the extreme measure of "banning" literature.

The use of trigger warnings as a pedagogical method has recently gained attention. The practice originated for the benefit of PTSD suffers and it entails warning readers about the inclusion of contents in works that might cause trauma, such as sexual violence and war combat. A public discussion is currently taking place regarding potential function of this practice in university lectures. Kate Manne (2015), an assistant professor of philosophy at Cornell University, observes that more and more professors are using trigger warnings in syllabuses in the hope that students who are sensitive to certain issues might better prepare themselves for reading.

Indeed, civilization is not free of immorality including crime, violence, suffering, injustice, and oppression. Just as we are genetically vulnerable to illness, we are not immutable to immorality. However if we consider immorality as an illness, we can then do something about it and hopefully be cured, at least of part of it. Forbidding the reading of immoral books is like putting students in an aseptic room with the presumption that students cannot rationally reflect on what they read. It is pessimistic and of no help. Booth (1988) eloquently argues that the ethical and moral influence that stories exert on our lives and the development of personal character is simply inescapable. MacIntyre (1981) declares that stories constitute the dramatic resources that individuals use in constructing their own moralities and evaluating the moral and ethical sensibilities of others in their world. Depriving children of stories of moral life, he writes, "leave[s] them unscripted, anxious stutterers in their actions as in their words" (p. 201). Openness to the world, including vice or corruption, should be encouraged, for "the worst vice," quoting Booth, is "to be self-protective" (p. 487). This sort of openness is not an end in itself, but a means to various ends.

The use of trigger warnings does not close the door to self-challenge and development. It is neither overprotecting nor patronizing. It simply reminds both educators and students to handle texts with care. In a literature course, trigger warnings help students to foresee mental reactions and prepare not to be eaten up by fear or depression. Students could make a conscious effort to keep themselves from indulging in negative emotions. When discomfort and disgust are minimized, students are more likely to apply practical wisdom and conduct rational reflection.

Now we have answers to the questions raised earlier. The portrayal of evil can be educationally worthwhile and not necessarily cause moral harm when students apply practical wisdom and ethical criticism. Imagination stimulated does not necessary corrupt readers. Negative emotions can lead to rationality, thus making the reading experience educationally worthwhile. Utilizing trigger warnings, educators can teach materials that might be disturbing to some students. Reading morally sensitive and controversial texts offers students the opportunity to confront darkness and challenge themselves. In fact, we can expect educational benefits from this process.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter identifies four principles or criteria for selecting works for mandatory literature curricula. These principles ensure students are exposed to diverse possibilities and values, which encourages critical and convention-challenging thinking. Meanwhile, reading fictions that are canonical in certain cultures places a reader within the collective consciousness of her society, revealing group connections. Such processes reinforce the individual and collaborative dimensions of a real autonomous human being. Exposure to diverse literature advances the educational aim of cultivating global citizenship.

I have also argued, borrowing Fletcher's idea of moral imagination and Booth's theory of ethical criticism, that reading morally controversial literature can be educationally

worthwhile. Furthermore, the application of trigger warnings reduces the possible harm that might be caused by certain texts. When these principles and pedagogical methods are used in conjunction, the reading and teaching of literature can address educational aims.

Chapter Three

Pedagogical implications: guidelines for teachers in the literature classroom

In Chapter One, I introduced three key aims of education and their interrelations and further elaborated how reading literature can help to achieve educational goals. In Chapter Two, I proposed a number of principles in selecting literature works for the curriculum. After exploring the rationales of why and what we should teach about literature, in this chapter I shed light on the role of teachers in a literature classroom. Compared to reading alone, we expect the influence of teachers to make a significant and positive difference. On the basis of an analysis of several of the most used reading methods and how they could be employed to accomplish educational goals, this chapter suggests a few pedagogical implications teachers are encouraged to adopt.

The three teaching guidelines suggested below are derived from a combination of pedagogical approaches and reading methods developed by educational theorists. The primary pedagogy framework I refer to is what Bryan Warnick and Spencer Smith (2014) discuss in their study "The Controversy over Controversies: A plea for flexibility and for 'soft-directive' teaching." Warnick and Smith develop their idea of "soft-directive" teaching as a way of teaching controversial issues. As such, they do not explicitly apply their arguments for this approach to teaching literature. My main purpose in this chapter is to show how Warnick and Smith's idea of how to teach controversial issues provides insights as how to activate educational discussions about literature given that literature interpretation is usually open-ended and somewhat controversial. I argue that the notion of soft-directive teaching is very well-suited to the particular case of teaching literature for the purposes of developing the dispositions, knowledge and attitudes associated with personal autonomy, human flourishing and citizenship.

Warnick and Smith defend soft-directive teaching as a means of addressing

controversial issues in the classroom. The purpose of soft-directive teaching in this context is to teach students how to deliberate independently and rationally about widely disputed issues such as abortion, etc. In order to understand this pedagogical approach, it is first important to clarify what Warnick and Smith mean when they say "controversial" issues, as opposed to non-controversial ones. Once I have explained in more detail Warnick and Smith's position, I will show how their insights apply to the particular case of teaching literature, which as my discussion in Chapter Two has shown, provides a rich and detailed context for exploring controversial and disputed moral, political and epistemic questions.

Warnick and Smith follow the educational philosopher Michael Hand's distinction between controversial and non-controversial issues. Hand (2008) builds his theory on the works of Robert Dearden, who states that issues are controversial "when contrary views can be held on to it without those views being contrary to reason" (Dearden, 1984, p. 86). In this sense, prejudice, racism, the theory of evolution, and global warming are not controversial issues, given that contrary positions to these views violate reason. Warnick and Smith accept Hand's way of making the distinction between controversial and non-controversial issues; however, they challenge and propose modifications to the pedagogical implications Hand derives from this distinction.

Warnick and Smith's idea of "soft-directive" teaching is derived from their critical analysis of Michael Hand's influential distinction between directive teaching and nondirective teaching. Hand explains that directive teaching is when teachers endorse one view as the correct one and actively encourage students to adopt this position. Hence, when a view is non-controversial, teachers can teach it directively. By calling directive teaching "steering," he implies the ultimate aim of directive teaching is to arrive at a predetermined conclusion—namely, the truth. For example, when addressing the problem of global warming, the teacher can teach directively by indicating the phenomenon is truly happening

and actively encourage students to take it as an unarguable fact. On the other hand, when a view is controversial, it should be taught "non-directively." The teacher should "remain neutral and impartial" (p. 213). Warnick and Smith believe Hand's defense of directive teaching is overly simplistic and requires modifications. However, they agree with Hand on one very important point: Warnick and Smith accept wholeheartedly Hand's claim one that the key aims of education should be to develop students' capacities of rationality. The disagreement comes over the question of how best to foster these capacities. Warnick and Smith eloquently argue that Hand is wrong to rigidly associate directive teaching with non-controversial issues and non-directive teaching with controversial issues. Instead, they argue, a better approach is to adopt what they refer to as "soft-directive" teaching— an approach that they argue is more attuned to the psychological realities of how students actually learn how to reason when studying complex material and which takes into account complex features of the classroom context where controversial and noncontroversial issues are addressed.

First, however, it is necessary to examine Warnick and Smith's notion of soft-directive teaching more closely. The notion of soft-directive teaching challenges Michael Hand's arguments for directive and non-directive teaching.

Hand believes that directive teaching involves two elements: one is a favored position; the other is the attempt to encourage and persuade students to take that position. When teaching non-controversial issues, teacher neutrality as the contrary to directive teaching sends a message of moral and epistemological relativism. Students might lose confidence in rationality and be discouraged to use reason as an effective tool in resolving social controversies. Refraining from endorsing claims that are supported by compelling evidence undermines rational thought and action.

Warnick and Smith agree with Hand that good teaching sends the message to students

that evidence and argument matter; they also believe that good teaching fosters a sense of confidence in using and applying skills of reasoning that employ judicious use of evidence and that rely on well constructed reasoning and arguments. However, they dispute Hand's claims about the educational effects of teacher neutrality. As mentioned above, Hand believes that teacher neutrality sends the message to students that evidence and arguments do not matter, at least when teachers are addressing noncontroversial issues. In evaluating Hand's position, Warnick and Smith identify two separate issues that need to be considered. The first issue pertains to the epistemic status of non-controversial issues. If an issue is epistemically non-controversial, then its truth is well established. Hand's argument is that it would be irresponsible for teachers to suggest otherwise to their students. It would be tantamount to deceiving them—suggesting that something is epistemically dubious when in fact it is not. This is why he objects to teacher neutrality as a way of addressing non-controversial issues—teacher neutrality effectively sends this irresponsible and deceptive message to students, according to Hand. Warnick and Smith agree that it would be educationally irresponsible to send such message when addressing noncontroversial issues. However, they disagree with Hand that teacher neutrality necessarily sends such a message. As they point out, teachers may have many and varied reasons for maintaining a neutral stance, and students may take home messages that are very different from those of the epistemic skepticism that Hand assumes they will take. Teacher neutrality could indicate that teachers want students to find their own answer, which also implies teachers' trust in students and confidence in their rationality. In short, Warnick and Smith show that teacher neutrality does not indicate epistemic hopelessness or undermine students' rationality. Soft-directive teaching suggests a position that is open to being challenged and shows teachers' trusts in the power of the evidence and arguments.

After examining the complexity of teacher neutrality and educational aims, Warnick

and Smith advocate a "soft-directive" way of teaching with more flexibility, without arguing that directive and nondirective teaching are to be avoided in all cases. This softening of directive teaching is important in teaching literature because literature interpretation is by nature relatively subjective and controversial. In addition, none of the key educational aims, personal autonomy, human flourishing, or citizenship, can be simply achieved through directive teaching. Capacities and skills associated with educational aims require educators to teach literature with care. Actively endorsing a favored position of the teacher could weaken students' confidence in literature interpretation, which impedes personal autonomy facilitation. Complete teacher neutrality that fails to alert student to bias and immorality might miss the chance to cultivate the democratic values required for global citizenship. Soft-directive teaching makes room for accomplishing multiple educational goals through reading and teaching literature.

This chapter attempts to incorporate this "soft-directive" pedagogical stance by applying it to several reading methods that teachers might employ in teaching literature with a view towards promoting the educational aims of personal autonomy, flourishing and democratic citizenship. These methods include reader response theory, moral-centered criticism and a culture-centered dialogical approach. Reader response theory focuses on the central role of readers in text interpretation. It appeals to the possible contribution that a reader as an active agent could make. The role of a teacher is to motivate students to read and respond as active agents and to contribute to interpretation. The respect of individuality in literature interpretation is essential to building self-esteem and promotes personal autonomy. Moral-centered criticism requires readers to read with ethical judgment and carefully examine what the author offers through texts. Teachers' responsibility is to suggest a horizontal relationship that students could form with books and provide enough evidence for students to make sound judgments. This process is conducive to personal autonomy and

citizenship as it trains students' skills for reasoning and critical thinking. A culture-centered dialogical approach is especially important for fostering citizenship. When encountering multicultural literature works and peer readers from diverse backgrounds, a dialogical approach allows multiple voices to be heard and to negotiate in the same space. This helps maximize the function of literature in cultivating global citizens.

3.1 Teachers should encourage individual reading response

As a form of art, literature uses metaphor, characterization, narrative perspectives and genres to construct diverse representations and meanings. The multiplicity of literature is also reflected in the diversity of its readers. Every reader as a uniquely constructed social being has a unique reaction to what they read. Correspondingly, the central idea of reader response theory is to recognize that every reader has something to contribute to the meaning making of text. There should be no single proper way to interpret literature works.

Traditional approaches to teaching literature, for example teacher-led, text-centered approaches, have made their limits obvious in this discipline. Teacher instruction and text-centered approaches hinder students' access to the meaning making process and undermine their confidence to make their unique voices heard. The risk here is that students may learn to become passive receivers whose individuality and autonomy is not respected, instead of active agents who apply their capacities of autonomous reasoning and emotional response to the reading of literary texts. Reader response theory (RRT) counteracts this tendency by promoting multiplicities, and more importantly, engaging readers in the exploration of the possible selves and possible worlds that literature affords. Reader response theorists believe a reader creates literary meaning for herself, not for anyone else. Everyone's response has some value.

When used in pedagogy, reader response theory is a species of student-centered approach. However, fruitful discussion and reflection cannot be achieved without a solid

understanding of the text. Generally speaking, in order to improve students' willingness to read literature works and increase the works' readability, teachers need to offer students information about the author, the time period in which he or she lived, and why and how the work was written, as codes in works are difficult to decipher without adequate information. This necessity calls for a combination of student-centered pedagogy and soft-directive teaching. As Warnick and Smith observe, directive teaching and a student-centered approach are not incompatible. In the case of literature teaching, showing respect to individuality in literature appreciation does not conflict with giving lectures on texts. One possible way directive teaching can be compatible with student-centered pedagogy is to provide students "all available arguments and evidence and tell them to construct their own answer" (p. 235). The role of teachers in this process can be summarized in the following way: employing directive teaching, teachers provide students with useful information to further decipher texts; in the meantime, utilizing a non-directive teaching method is conducive to the individuality in reading response.

Let's take the poems of Robert Frost as an example.

"Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" is one of the most beautifully written works of the well-celebrated American poet Robert Frost. There is much to say about this poem. One way of teaching is to focus on its exquisite use of rhyme. The instructor of my American literature course spent most of his time explaining the structure of rhymed stanzas from line to line. He asked us to memorize the special rhyme scheme and compare it with Shakespeare's. With direct exposure to the information on rhyme, I was persuaded and inclined to appreciate the linguistic aesthetics behind it. However the beauty of rhyme did not add much personal importance to me. Although some of my peers found the rhyme brilliant, we were not given an opportunity to develop self-meaning, as RRT would require. The lecture ended there, and to a certain extent, this implied that rhyme was the only thing worth

reading carefully in Frost's works. We were somewhat forced to take the position of the teacher, who appreciated the well-written rhyme more than anything else.

It was not until I read some other poems and critiques of Robert Frost that I realized I had been taking his poems too literally. One of the enlightening works for me was "The Road Not Taken." What Frost is talking about in this poem is not trivial leisure time activity but decision-making in life. Since works by the same author often share common references, I turned to his other poems. I continued by reading "Mending Wall" and "Birches." Both of them proved Frost's poems could be read from a philosophical perspective. In *The Poetics,* Aristotle famously articulates the feeling I had when I realized this: poetry "is more philosophical and more serious than history: in fact poetry speaks more of universals, whereas history of particulars." I was inspired and decided to revisit "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening." This time it sparked me profoundly. I came to sense a smell of desperation and death in the last stanza, which later turned out to be my favorite part of any poem ever.

The darkness is so tempting. With easy wind and snowflakes, the wood seems a lovely place for relief. The strong feeling strikes me most when I am about to yield to pressure and frustration in life. "But I have promises to keep. I have miles to go before I sleep," I say to myself time and again. These lines have helped me get through some hard times. This experience also reaffirms me that the process students go through when they discover interrelations between works and their self-identity is one of the main reasons we teach literature. Sometimes, when a student doesn't appreciate a work of literature, it is because the work does not resonate with her, but because the way the work is taught impairs the value that could be derived from the text.

Imagine the poems of Frost were taught by a teacher who adopts RRT to encourage students to seek personal importance in the texts. Before interfering to give any lecture about

the rhyme, the teacher first asks students to express how they feel about the texts. Students like me might read it literally and take "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" as a poem of nature imaginary. Then the instructor could explain why the poem is considered incredibly beautiful in terms of the rhyme. Students' ability to appreciate the poem would be elevated by this introduction. However, the lecture would not end here. The teacher could present more materials from Frost, including his other works and people's critiques. Reading supplementary materials would not only reinforce students' understanding of Frost's technique of rhyme but would also reveal more potential codes to discover meanings unique to the students. A teacher who respects students' autonomy and trusts students' ability to justify their own reasons could now motivate students to speak up. Some students might conclude that they had strengthened their ability to decode rhyme from this reading. Some students might find philosophical insights as I did. Either way, the students are the active agents who determine what the text means to them. With the help of a teacher who increases the readability of work, the poem would achieve a renewed significance to the students.

Reader response theory or a student-centered approach draws our attention to the personal significance of certain works. Recognizing that not everyone shares the same reading experience, this approach fully respects individual diversity. But it needs to be combined with directive teaching so that shallow and simplistic responses can be improved. My own experience of reading Frost alone could have happened in the classroom if the teacher paid more attention to readers' respective responses.

There are a number of factors at play: the text, the author, his other works and others' interpretations. Reader response should not be considered as a determined factor. Work can be done to gain a deeper and more comprehensive appreciation. A mere opening to reader response with no intellectual support is a waste of good material.

3.2 Teachers should facilitate reading with ethical criticism

In this section, I turn from RRT to the moral-centered criticism approach. This approach provides another way in which teachers might facilitate students' personal autonomy and cultivate rational reasoning through literature. It does so by directing teachers to encourage students to explore and express different opinions not only from other readers but from the author him or herself. As this approach suggests, by encouraging students to develop an intense and intimate intellectual relationship with the text they are reading, students can 'test' their interpretations and responses to the text. The connection with autonomy and critical reasoning should be reasonably apparent. As discussed in Chapter One, personal autonomy is enhanced by being exposed to, and imaginatively engaging with, ways of life and ways of thinking about human values that are very different from and even opposed to the values and ways of life one is most familiar with. Furthermore, as I have argued above, reading and learning from literature provides an opportunity to engage with diverse ways of life in a detailed, rich and concrete way. The moral-centered criticism approach to teaching literature capitalizes on this insight by calling on students to engage in a highly personal and intimate "imaginative engagement" with someone whose perspective is inevitably quite different in at least some respects from their own—that of a novelist or poet. Let's now explore how this approach might work in more detail.

Literature works created by an author who is a social and cultural production embody references to a particular set of historical, social and economic conditions. A work does not exist by itself, that is, outside relationships of interdependence that unite it to other works. The author has a social origin as well. What cultural producers have in common is a system of references, in other words social institutions. Every work is invested with values by its author and the social milieus. A good relationship between the reader and the book allows the reader to keep a critical distance from what she reads and gives her more confidence to

criticize and reflect.

Reading is an active wrestling with multiple facets of social constructions. When one is engaged in reading and naturally responding to the text, one is occupied by the thoughts of the author. As a reader, one does not see the world through "an omniscient eye" but through the "filter of the consciousness of protagonists in the story" (Bruner, 1986, p. 25). The world is rendered for the reader through the consciousness of a story's protagonists, which are created by the author. When the reader is entangled with the thoughts of the author, she lets the author lead her on a psychological and moral journey.

Nevertheless, although the author guides this journey, it is dangerous for the reader to take whatever is offered without scrutinizing the role of author. In other words, the reader should and can choose to follow the journey or not. To be specific, reading with moral criticism, the reader has the option to reject or accept what the author offers. Wayne Booth (1988) regards it as the reader's responsibility to always in a sense decide whether to accept a given journey (p. 141). By accepting this responsibility as a reader, one either accepts the values the author offers or sees how they conflict with her own and refuses to be changed.

How can teachers enact this role in practice? The role of teachers in this journey is to not let students wander and stray because they fail to examine the values offered by the book. Teachers can equip students with a tool that would constantly caution them against such a danger. The tool is the lens of moral criticism.

Regarding how to teach students to read with moral criticism, there are at least two dimensions teachers can use to make a difference. One is to suggest a healthy and interactive relationship between students and books. The other is to encourage and facilitate reading and discussion with ethical criticism.

First, teachers should caution students against blindly accepting the authority of books. Instead, teachers could suggest a horizontal relationship between student readers and fictions.

Generally, we view fictions as a body of interesting information open to interpretation. But teachers could point out new perspectives as to how students can see fictions. For example, literature has also served as a companion to readers. Both Nussbaum (1990) and Booth (1988) argue that reader and book can be bounded by a kind of friendship. Though it is nothing new to call a book a friend, this metaphor sheds light on how we can maintain a critical distance from what we read.

As we have different kinds of friends, readers could form different kinds of patterns of friendship with fictions. There are friends we usually turn to for advice and mental support. Such friends are life mentors. Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha* stands out to me as one of them. This extraordinary book had been acclaimed for its incredible insights on the everlasting topic of truth seeking. Coelho (2008) claims *Siddhartha* spoke to his restless soul as it spoke to many other young idealistic men and women across the West.

Meanwhile, some witty and sly friends tend to offer sharp remarks, but are not necessarily immoral. Some of our friends are not that well behaved or do use decent language, but with them we can still hang out and be entertained. The controversial novel *The Catcher in the Rye* possesses some of these qualities, yet is worth reading. The key point here is that within a friendship, the two parties are in a horizontal position. There is space to argue, just as we argue with friends from time to time. Books or stories are not authorities to obey. One of the most important jobs of teachers is to make students aware of their right to argue, to reject as well as to accept.

On the one hand, students can argue with the characters in stories. Teachers can motivate students to deliberate on characters' deeds in certain situations or in general. Some students might find *The Catcher in the Rye* resonates with them. The rebellious and misunderstood protagonist, Holden, speaks to a great number of teenagers. Teachers can ask students to ponder on whether or not they would spend days smoking and drinking if they

shared Holden's angst. Although students might sympathize with Holden's rebellion against the phoney adult world, they might realize they could do much more than whining. By encouraging students to examine the character from a more comprehensive perspective, teachers can warn students of seeing Holden as a role model. Holden is a somewhat privileged teenager and should have opportunities to do something good. Students could understand that Holden's solutions, or rather his choice to vent to his anxiety, are reasonable and to some extent acceptable, but not the best one can do. Forming a horizontal relationship with books gives students the confidence to talk to certain characters as friends, saying "I am sympathetic for your situation, but there's a better way to deal with it."

When discussing *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, some students might not understand the problem of slavery, since Huckleberry forms a friendship with Jim, the slave. But it is obvious in the story that Huckleberry believes slavery is right. The responsibility of teachers is to point out the ethical problem wrapped in the seemingly unproblematic context. How the novel represents slavery still remains ambiguous and controversial. Similar, how to interpret the relationship between Huckleberry and Jim is indeed open-ended. When the student reader is aware of her right to argue, she may formulate more complex feelings towards Huckleberry. In spite of the somewhat heart-warming friendship between a slave owner and a slave, the student reader realizes Huckleberry's kindness does not justify slavery. The fundamental idea that one person can be superior to and own another becomes problematic.

On the other hand, students might possibly also argue with the author. For instance, teachers can ask students to try writing Holden's story on their own. Although Salinger has well portrayed a picture of adolescent concerns, students may question if the author has made the character of Holden extreme, carelessly sending the message that every teenager is self-obsessed, and adolescence is nothing but miserable and suppressing. Within a friendship,

students could dispute with the author. Students therefore see that the author as well as the work may have flaws.

Teachers should respect individual interpretation. However beyond subjective opinions, there are fundamental moral judgments that students should be able to make. The awareness that one can disagree with the author and refuse what is conveyed in the work marks the beginning of a deeper critical reflection.

Based on a horizontal relationship, the strategy of reading with moral criticism can be better implemented. How to address morality in literature has been a controversial question. Some people feel reluctant to give explicit views of moral judgment towards literature works. Nussbaum (1990) criticizes the trending resistance against such ethical criticism on literature reading. She points out that some people mistakenly associate ethical criticism of literature only with dogmatic and simplistic judgment. Aesthetic interest is not actually distinct from practical interest; neither is ethical assessment of an aesthetic work a crude error (p. 231). Parini (1995) articulates, "knowing how much or how little emphasis to put on ideology in interpretation strikes me as the beginning of wisdom" (p. 52).

So far in this section, I have tried to explain how the moral centered criticism approach to teaching literature works in practice. Before illustrating this in detail, I want to examine how the moral-centered criticism approach and RRT relate to each other. Recall from our earlier discussion that RRT emphasizes the importance and value of readers exploring and expressing their own interpretations. RRT fosters autonomy by urging students to challenge the pressures that inevitably arise when they attempt to accept historically established, or culturally authoritative interpretations. The student is urged to resist that pressure and examine her own mind and imaginations for alternative. However, I want to suggest that the moral-centered criticism approach to teaching literature discloses a weakness or gap in the RRT approach. Specifically, I suggest that reader response theory overemphasizes the

importance and value of the individual reader's "originality" in interpreting texts, and this overemphasis weakens its educative function. Not every interpretation of a novel is equally good or valid. *The Old Man and the Sea* cannot reasonably be interpreted as a novel that celebrates the serenity and calmness of old age. *Hamlet* cannot reasonably be interpreted as a slapstick comedy in the vein of contemporary TV sitcoms. Some readers' judgments are based on inadequate information, intellectual laziness or bad evidence. The reason we encourage and try to persuade students to look deeper into literary works is that we have found and also look forward to both the aesthetic and cultural contributions literature makes. RRT, while emphasizing individuality and subjectivity, seems to leave a gap between the aesthetic and moral values that can be derived from literature could. The application of moral-centered criticism to pedagogy fills this gap by providing a necessary supplement and an important corrective to the 'individuality' emphasized in RRT. Willinsky (1991) argues:

> When we isolate literature from the world, allowing only for a brief background of the author and the time to introduce the work, students have little chance of understanding how books work and how readers make something of real importance out of them… What is public, historical, and cultural about [the literature transaction] is most often left unspoken, although these are arguably aspects of literary accomplishment. (p. 195)

Literature appreciation calls for reflexive ethical criticism. The experience of reading is not an action that follows a single-direction and ends with the reader, but is recursive, moving from the text to the reader, then to the scrutinizing of what is offered, and finally to the decision about what to take away. Personal engagement in reading experience without ethical criticism or evaluation is no more than a reaction. A response, in contrast, is a result of the examination of consciousness, cognition and judgment. In the midst of the "struggle of interpretations" of texts within communities or institutions, we should be cautioned that

"certain meanings are elevated by social ideologies to a privileged position" (Eagleton, 1996, p. 132).

Here I return to Warnick and Smith's "soft-directive" teaching method, as it explicitly explains how teachers should approach controversial issues in class. The narrative of ethical evaluation makes and remakes us. The characters in a novel do have an enduring effect on the habits of conduct of a reader. Every reader must be his or her own ethical critic. Some people might be concerned about the influence of detective stories that depict a great deal of evil deeds. A number of stories even elaborate in detail how a certain crime is committed. Teachers should encourage the argument of ethical criticism and endeavor to make the wrestling visible. Teachers should constantly ask students to ponder whether this work of art would turn the reader towards virtue or vice. What kind of company are they keeping? What is to be taken from such stories? Keeping this in mind, it is not difficult for students to come to the conclusion that the value of detective story is the ultimate realization that crimes should be and generally are punished and that puzzles should be pushed to the bitter end regardless of consequences.

Teachers do not speak for students. Teachers display materials and related arguments and let evidence speak for itself. When reading stories such as *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* that show tolerance to slavery and inequality, teachers could present accurately how temporary values are developed over time and later reexamined or even abolished. In ethical decision-making, evidence helps students test existing assumptions, identify constraints within various contexts, and make more informed decisions. Finally, the stronger position often speaks for itself without teacher or school endorsement.

Hence, by encouraging critical and effective ethical judgment, we improve our chances of finding educative value in literature beyond aesthetic value. In fact, no narrative will be good or bad for all readers in all circumstances. But it need not "hinder us in our effort to

discover what is good or bad for us in our condition here and now" (Booth, 1988, p. 489).

As mentioned previously, the moral-centered criticism approach provides a necessary supplement and corrective to the "individualism" and "subjectivism" of RRT. Teachers can play an important role in motivating students to formulate a horizontal relationship with fictions and keep a critical distance through a lens of moral criticism. By employing soft-directive teaching, teachers can promote students' effective ethical judgment without denying their individual interpretations. The use of collaborative methods reinforces and strengthens students' ability for rational reflection as well as moral capacity, which are beneficial to personal autonomy and citizenship.

3.3 Teachers should allow multiple voices to be heard and negotiate in the same space

The previous two sections have addressed how teachers can apply RRT and the moral-centered criticism approach to teaching methods. Let us not forget that a well-functioning citizen in global society is supposed to be capable of multicultural understanding. In order to foster this capacity, I proposed in Chapter Two that literature curricular selection should focus on global diversity. However, a study by Richard Beach (1997) unveils that some educators are encountering increasing resistance from students regarding multicultural literature curricula. When asked to give reasons for their resistance or unwillingness, students cite their difficulty understanding the linguistic and cultural practices portrayed in the texts. The third pedagogical implication teachers could implement is to utilize literary texts to activate multicultural dialogues, making the classroom a hothouse for a variety of opinions.

A dialogical approach allows multiple voices be heard and negotiate in the same space. For students from non-dominant cultures, dialogue provides chances to legitimate their images, heritage, and cultural experiences and further build self-esteem. Dialogue allows student readers from dominant groups to verify their assumptions and clear up confusion caused in reading. While reading literature, young adults might have formed some idea in

terms of social issues and solutions, but seeing alternatives and other options raised by classmates from diverse backgrounds challenges their social identities and restructures their human experience. The ultimate goal of dialogue, according to editors Rogers and Soter eds. (1997), is to make visible underrepresented groups and to counter negative images and stereotypes. Therefore, the significance of dialogue is expanded from understanding the conceptual content of stories to democratic inquires into society.

However, there is always a risk of dialogue ending up in claiming the superiority of one's own culture. In multicultural dialogues, we might feel excited about defending ourselves and persuading others what we believe. Everyone tends to challenge each other's viewpoints rather reconsider their own. Peter Elbow (2008) observes that when smart people are trained only in the tradition of doubting, they get better and better at criticizing the ideas of others that they don't like, which is not the same thing as reading with critical insight and may sometimes even obstruct genuine insight (p. 6). In short, mere ideological doubt or skepticism on its own does not cultivate autonomous reasoning, deliberation or response to literary texts.

Most of time we are obsessed with the doubting game because it in a sense justifies us for criticizing what we do not agree with or do not like. When we feel a threat to our ideas or unexamined assumptions, we use our doubting skills particularly well. But criticizing existing ideas or pointing out illogical arguments does not necessarily improve the situation or stimulate a positive change. Regarding this, Elbow casts doubt on our proudly advocated "critical thinking." He suggests it is time we switch positions to engage in the "believing game" and build a richer culture of rationality—richer than mere doubting or critical thinking. This would lead people to people try to believe ideas that they do not agree with or do not want to believe.

To eliminate resistance and misunderstanding in multicultural literature reading,

teachers usually encourage students to empathize with experiences of discrimination and recognize the limitation of their own cultural stances (Beach, 1997). A great number of students seem unaware of the ideological, historical and social privileges they have experienced. It is difficult for them to examine the norms that add to their success (Rogers & Soter eds., p. 155). Also, some students are so aware of ideologies that they intentionally neglect certain cultural norms.

By employing the Believing Game as pedagogy in a literature classroom, teachers can organize activities that give students concrete situations in which to position themselves. A major advantage of activities based on literature reading is that fictional stories naturally evoke imagination and empathy. Another advantage is that fictions explain contexts for student readers where they can see the development of characters and rationales for their deeds and psychological movements. With these advantages, it is easier for students to position themselves in concrete circumstances.

Role-play activity is frequently used to aid students in adopting an alternative perspective. One possible implementation is to ask students to write narratives from the perspective of others, for instance, characters in stories who have different cultural backgrounds from the student. Sometimes it does not need to be a completely foreign background—simply changing the gender can make a difference as well, for example, to ask male students to write narratives for female characters and the other way around. Teachers also could ask students to defend ideas or justify the deeds of characters they don't agree with, encouraging students to deliberate what they will do, given specific moral dilemmas under specific circumstances.

Another way to simulate role-play activities I suggest is to ask students to write or imagine the reader response of other students in class. For example, when reading stories covering colonial history, students from former colonial countries and colonized ones could

write how they think the other group would like the story. Compared with writing critiques and responses from one's own perspective, trying to imagine how others would respond to the same story demands that the student truly understand and believe other positions.

In either case, there must be a diversity of competing voices within and among students. Sharing students' written responses and their investigations into the ideological, historical, and social contexts of novels helps to show them how incomplete their understanding of the world is. Sometimes the problem we have is more serious than narrow-mindedness. It is that we have wrong assumptions and flaws in our thinking. The Believing Game has a significant role to play here. We cannot simply defend others' points of views without changing our positions. To understand where an idea comes from and why it is here requires one to believe it in the first place. The believing game invites students not only to acknowledge diversity but also to trace the effects and sources of difference through cultural, political and economic spheres. After really putting oneself into another's shoes, we could then ponder the following questions:

> Now who is speaking and in what voices? What are my motives for assuming a certain voice? How do these voices reflect attitudes toward race, class or gender? How are these voices constituted by discourses of religion, the law, education and so forth? (Gee, 1990: Lemke, 1995)

The Believing Game, as Elbow indicates, also helps us find flaws in our own thinking. Those flaws are invisible until we try entering into different ways of thinking or points of view that carry different assumptions. We are more likely to discover hidden virtues embodied in positions that are supported by opposing arguments. Through dialogue, wrestling with various social and political voices, we do not only participate in the lives of others but also see our limitations and correct mistaken assumptions. We fill a culture and knowledge gap via dialogue and expand our visions for social and community life.

Facilitating discussions that engage multiple perspectives in the classroom also encourages students to learn from their peers and as a result feel more responsibility for contributing to the learning that occurs in their classrooms. On the one hand, they better clarify their own views when confronting different perspectives, which is beneficial to public reasoning. On the other hand, the recognition of complexity and the need for intellectual humility is mental preparation for civic life. Such dialogues socialize students into seeing disagreement as a normal part of democratic life.

Another critical concern with multicultural dialogue is that students may be "carried away" by numerous cultural differences. While allowing various voices to be heard, teachers ought to be cautious not to overemphasize distinction instead of universality. The paradox of culture, as Elrich (1990) discusses, is that on the surface cultures appear to be all different, while in reality, they are all the same. Cultures all represent "adaptions to similar demands of a living group existence" (p. 3). Just as Rogers & Oster (1997) articulate, "the power of literature is not in its capacity to present a "truer" version of differences, (and resolutions of difference) but to open up dialogues about the construction and negotiation of difference we observe and live" (p. 36), the ultimate goal of dialogue is not distinguishing diversity but actually universality. No matter how diverse human cultures are, for good or for ill, in the end we will coordinate, for that is how people live together. It is the responsibility of teachers to make sure multicultural dialogue ends in a conclusion that emphasizes the universality in humanity.

Literature already shows lives other than those of readers. The combination of the Believing Game and the cultural-centered dialogical approach helps fully utilize this otherness to promote personal autonomy and citizenship. Classroom activities directed by this pedagogical implication stimulate the narrative imagination of students. By situating oneself in another's position, a person visualizes the details of the other's life and identity.

This process unveils the complexity of the situation and reduces ill-informed judgment, thus leading to mutual respect and rational reasoning.

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued it is possible for teachers to use literature as a way to help students develop capacities for making autonomous and independent decisions. I have also argued that it is both possible and necessary to do this while also teaching students that there is more to literary interpretation, appreciation and criticism than their own subjective, individual opinions and interpretations. I have suggested that one of the roles teachers have is to help students understand that not all subjective interpretations are equally worthwhile or insightful. I have argued that teachers have a responsibility to discourage or correct or challenge misinformed, uninformed, careless and capricious responses to literary texts. The role of teachers is more than to simply act as a passive and neutral referee, or as a cheerleading audience, regardless of whether student views show genuine insight or willful ignorance. A good teacher of literature—a teacher who keeps students' personal autonomy, flourishing and citizenship in mind—is more than merely a facilitator who only creates the space for open discussion. The view I have defended in this chapter is well captured by Cahn (1978), who claims that one of the fundamental pedagogical problems that must be faced by teachers is "created by the wealth of misinformation, misconception, illusion, and dogmatism which students bring with them to class" (p. 139). In other words, the teacher's role in teaching literature is not neutral with respect to the ethical and epistemic values education should promote.

Although teachers should not be neutral about epistemic and ethical values in teaching literature, commitment to autonomy and citizenship also requires that teachers respect students' diversity of perspectives, and this requires allowing students considerable leeway in exploring their own original, sometimes idiosyncratic and offbeat understandings of literary

texts. The discussion of "soft-directive" teaching was meant to capture this other side of the teacher's role.

Soft directive teaching shows teachers' confidence in students' ability to reason and respects the complex ways that students develop capacities of reasoning. One inevitable and necessary part of the reasoning process is the leeway to explore mistaken and wrong-headed paths. Unlike directive teaching, soft directive teaching is concerned with balancing a focus on the "goal" of helping students to avoid mistakes and unreasonable conclusions, with a sensitivity to the complex, varied and contextually dependent ways in which individual students "construct" their capacities of reasoned judgment. The soft directive approach thus helps to explain why RRT is insufficient for teaching literature and needs to be supplemented with other methods; but it also helps to explain why RRT remains an invaluable tool in the literature teacher's portfolio of pedagogical approaches. Soft directive teaching also helps to explain why moral criticism approaches and dialogical/citizenship approaches are valuable in promoting epistemic and ethical capacities. But the soft directive approach also helps to remind us that such approaches needs to be employed in practice with flexibility and tact and, especially, need to be attuned to the individual and contextual differences that shape learners' experiences of "coming to reason and autonomy."

Indeed, there is no single answer to how to teach literature. Following the four guidelines, teachers can maximize the function of literature to achieve educational aims and we can expect values to be examined, prejudice eliminated and rationality enriched.

Quoting Socrates's thinking academy, Nussbaum (1997) believes liberal education should be "committed to the activation of each student's independent mind and to the production of a community that can genuinely reason together about a problem" (p. 19). I have argued that teachers can play an important role in ensuring that literature reading, under

the proper instruction and facilitation of teachers and as an indispensable part of education, helps students reflect on how to be autonomous and live together.

Conclusion

This paper set out to identify the role of literature in promoting some of the fundamental aims of education. By elaborating how literature can enhance personal autonomy, human flourishing, and citizenship, I have presented basic principles for selecting texts for a course or program that includes teaching literature as one of its main components, and I have outlined several pedagogical guidelines for teachers to teach literature. Although the broad importance of reading and teaching literature in schools has long been widely recognized, in this thesis I have sought to deepen and illuminate in more detail our understanding of the educational role of literature in democratic societies and schools by exploring the connection of literature teaching to central educational values. Meanwhile, how educators can better achieve educational aims through literature needs to be explicitly investigated. This paper sought to answer two questions:

1. What is the value of reading and teaching literature in enhancing human flourishing?
2. How do these values translate into specific principles for shaping school curricula and pedagogy?

The main arguments were summarized within the respective chapters: Literature as valuable resources for the facilitation of educational aims; Principles of literature curricular inclusion and the problem of evil; Pedagogical implications: guidelines for teachers in the literature classroom.

Chapter One addresses the first question, exploring the educational values of reading literature. First, a discussion revisiting the key aims of education was carried out. Borrowing ideas from Robertson, Brighouse and Nussbaum, this chapter argues that the facilitation of personal autonomy is the primary educational aim. Human flourishing based on personal autonomy is the central purpose of education. The cultivation of global citizenship is an

indispensable dimension of liberal arts education in a global context. The role of literature is concluded to be a valuable resource for achieving these goals. To be specific, literature exposes students to diverse conceptions of a good life and equips them with capacities to reflect rationally on and compare alternative ways of life. Literature further teaches the social dimension of personal autonomy and motivates students to live collaboratively. The ability to sympathize, cooperate, and learn from each other acquired through reading literature is crucial to a flourishing life. Such ethical capacities are also required by a functioning citizenship in multicultural societies. Hence literature has a significant role to play in accomplishing these aims of education.

Chapters Two and Three attempt to answer the second question, which can be divided into two subordinate questions: what should students read and how should teachers teach? Chapter Two presents four principles for selecting works of literature that serve a better purpose of education. First, good educational literature should embody stable values that have been tested and appreciated throughout history. Second, the interpretive complexity in literature requires student readers to make intellectual efforts to discover multiple dimensions of values. Students thus learn about collective consciousness as well as derive personal importance. The open-endedness of literature invites students to redefine values and examine previous interpretations. The third criterion is the emotional vividness and the imaginative richness of literary works. This is particularly beneficial to fostering ethical capacities. The last criterion focuses on the inclusion of global diversity content. Students can scrutinize their cultural presumptions and reduce stereotypes through reading. Apart from the principles of literature curricular inclusion, this chapter also discusses whether or not we should teach literature that presents evil. The Trigger Warning strategy is suggested as a possible solution.

After gaining a vision of what to teach, the third chapter inquires how to teach educationally worthwhile materials, by shedding light on the pedagogical implications in a

literature classroom. Incorporating teaching methods with reading methods, Chapter Three illustrates four guidelines that teachers could follow to facilitate discussions. The first guideline emphasizes the central position of students in literature interpretation but also suggests the possibility of decisive teaching. Second, teachers should make sure students do not take books as authorities and should motivate students to read with moral criticism. Third, by employing the strategy of the Believing Game, teachers should create a space for effective multicultural dialogues. Last but not the least, it is the responsibility of teachers to question and challenge students' reading response. Following the direction of the value and aims of the classroom, teachers should be professional about when and how to share their opinions.

This thesis elaborates the conceptual relationship between literature and education. It proposes that the educational importance of literature should be recognized and emphasized. The principles for curricular inclusion and pedagogical implications help enhance the role of literature. This thesis has shown that it is necessary and critical to make literature courses mandatory, as Nussbaum (1997) advocates.

This study encounters a number of limitations, such as how to prioritize the criteria for selecting literature works and address different emphases on the aims at distinctive levels of education. In order to reinforce the implementations of the principles and guidelines and generate policy strategies, there is also a need for empirical evidence. For example, case studies that investigate how reading and teaching literature can practically strengthen empathic understanding would support the conceptual argument in this thesis. Future research that examines literature discussions can provide insights to improve classroom dynamics.

As a valuable resource for facilitating multiple educational aims, literature plays a significant role in our life. Literature offers us a vision of how to be autonomous and live a

flourishing life in contemporary society. Reading and teaching literature cultivate students' capacities and prepare them for this way of life.

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