

in Vincent's text. Though Laslett and the University of the Third Age are mentioned, neither the writer nor the movement is discussed as challenges to the prevailing definition of either the elderly or the economic domination of funded educational provision. Chapter 6 covers the matter of the medicalization of old age and questions of sickness and death and the dangers associated with the medical model are thoughtfully dealt with.

My regret is that so much is left out: reminiscence work and the use of autobiography, aspects of the sociology of leisure (such as the development of the package holiday), issues of education (to do, for example, with more consideration of lifelong learning) and perhaps some extended exploration of religious beliefs. However, I would certainly recommend the book to students of the topic area.

REFERENCES

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CHERISHING THEM

Upheavals of thought: the intelligence of emotions. Martha C. Nussbaum, 2001. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; ISBN 0-521-46202-9, 751 pp., £30.00.

At one time it may have been accurate to say that Western society was frightened of emotion, but that has changed in recent years, and emotion has recently taken centre stage as the most fashionable issue in town. Work is developing at an extraordinary pace, in psychology, neuroscience and education to name but three disciplines, and is demonstrating from a variety of perspectives that emotions, far from being merely primitive responses to be suppressed, are at the heart of how we think, how we learn, and how we attribute meaning and value. We are recognizing, too, that we have the ability to do far more than respond blindly to feelings. We can think about them, organize them modulate them, moderate them, and shape them through reflection and learning (LeDoux, 1998). This perspective is often captured in shorthand by the term 'emotional intelligence',

which was supposedly coined by Mayer and Salovey, who defined it as: 'the ability to perceive accurately, appraise and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings which facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth' (Mayer and Salovey, 1997: 10).

Goleman (1996) popularized the term in his book of the same name, and argued that emotional intelligence is more influential than conventional intelligence for all kinds of personal, career and scholastic success. Although there have been significant criticisms that he overstated his case, his book certainly caught the popular imagination.

Concern about the nature and proper response to emotion is, of course, no twenty-first century fad. Aristotle clearly understood the challenges of responding appropriately to anger: 'Anyone can be angry – that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose and in the right way – that is not easy'. So it is fitting that perhaps the most considered recent contribution to the field has been made by Martha C. Nussbaum, a philosopher whose considerable powers of thought have brought some much needed clarity and depth of thought into this complex and controversial field. This may be a book that chimes with the modern zeitgeist by its emphasis on the centrality of emotion to personal and public life, but this is no airport best seller, and those who pick it up hoping from the subtitle for the same kind of journalistic romp they experienced with Goleman's book are in for a tough time. Although Nussbaum claims she writes for a general audience rather than for her academic peers, and is keen to present her work as being of use and social value, this is by no means an easy book. It is, however, a very rewarding one for those who are prepared to stick with its 700 or so pages, and appreciate the breadth of scholarship, the awesome ability to synthesize ideas from a range of disciplines without becoming facile, the elegance of the argument and the clarity of the writing. It is a book to read slowly, with care, and with plenty of pauses for reflection.

Nussbaum divides her book into three parts. In the first, 'need and recognition', she concurs with the mainstream view, outlined above, of psychologists and neuroscientists who are working in this area (for example, DeMasio, 2000), that the emotions are not 'irrational' distractions from rigorous thought, but an essential part of rational and ethical judgement, because they attach value to the objects of our experience (a point of view that jars with her rather odd choice of title for the book, suggesting as it does that emotions are distur-

bances of thought rather than its essence). This thesis may no longer be novel, but Nussbaum's particular take on it certainly is. Her justification is partly based on philosophical analysis, and in so doing she is correcting the tendency of philosophy itself to ignore emotion in favour of the notion of dispassionate analysis. She returns the discipline to its roots, and focuses particularly on the merits and demerits of the point of view of the Stoics, which she praises for its grasp of the central idea that emotions are judgements of value, while taking issue with its conclusion that the emotions are disruptive influences to be overcome and suppressed. She also roams widely away from her philosophical base, moving into the world of psychology, and more particularly the psychoanalytical theory of object relations developed by Melanie Klein and Donald Winnicott, which suggests that our personal emotional landscape is not only the essence of who we are, but is formed in the earliest years of our life, and that the first relations a child forms with their primary carer, usually the mother, shape all later relations. Most unusually in such an erudite book, although satisfyingly for readers of *Auto/Biography*, she illustrates her argument from personal experience, with a sustained account from her own life concerning her grief reactions to her mother's death, an experience that she concludes is the inevitable consequence of the high value her mother held for her – loss is the inevitable price of love.

Nussbaum is not content to restrict her consideration of emotion to the personal – given her own long-term interest in human rights and ethical development, she is keen to develop a social theory of emotion, which is a major contribution to this debate. In the second part of her book, she broadens out her argument to consider the essential value of emotion in social and political life, using the key notion of 'compassion'. Compassion represents a generalizing of the idea of personal attachment into a more general empathic judgement about the value of other people, allowing us to recognize that they have equal value with ourselves. Compassion is therefore not to be dismissed by those who are trying to fight for such issues as equity, justice, human rights as 'bleeding heart' sentimentality, as it is the foundation for our concern with these matters.

The final section of the book is yet another ground-breaking foray, examining ways in which emotion, and in particular love, has been explored in religion, philosophy, literature and music, and selecting key examples that she believes represent the essence of the Platonic, Christian and Romantic movements that have shaped the Western tradition. She subjects the treatment of love in her examples (whose extraordinary range includes Plato, St Augustine, Brontë, Mahler

and Joyce) to rigorous ethical scrutiny. She is no postmodernist, and is unequivocally evaluative in her commentary, concluding that her figures represent, in some ways, a 'ladder' of development, which culminates in the work of Whitman and Joyce, who manage to overcome the shame and disgust that mar our reactions to our emotions by 'restoring our love and attention to the phenomena of everyday life'. This generous acceptance and celebration of the full range of emotion is another welcome step forward. Much work that purports to be about emotional intelligence turns out to be ultimately recommending the suppression of emotion (impulse control, anger management, etc), in order to realize the dubious goals of personal success in the corporate world. Nussbaum clearly thinks emotion is far too important to be harnessed to the trivial goals of Microsoft, and this book provides a welcome antidote to what could be seen as this closet neo Stocism, focusing instead on the need fully to experience and accept our all our emotions, including difficult ones such as grief and guilt, cherishing them as the foundation of ethical personal and social judgement and action.

References

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WHAT DO MY MEMORIES CALL UP FOR YOU?

The last gift of time: life beyond sixty. Carolyn C. Heilbrun, 1997. New York: Ballantine; ISBN 0-345-42295-3, 226 pp., \$13.95 paper.

With the emergence of age studies as a discipline, a body of work is evolving that will no doubt soon be labelled – if it has not been already – 'autogerigraphy', the writing of one's old age. Carolyn G. Heilbrun's last book remains a welcome addition to the genre. It maps the upward years of a feminist scholar and novelist who, at the age of 70, added her insights into ageing to her previous views on life-writing and gender.