Starting from the Muses:

Engaging Moral Imagination through Memory's Many Gifts

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Abstract. In Greek mythology the Muses –patron goddesses of fine arts, history, humanities, and sciences– are tellingly portrayed as the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne, the goddess Memory, who is of the race of Titans, older still than Zeus and other Olympian deities. The relationship between memory and such fields as epic poetry, history, music and dance is easily recognizable to moderns. But bards/poets like Homer and Hesiod, who began oral storytelling by "invoking the Muses" with their audience, knew well that remembering, forgetting, and imagining are each to be esteemed as, in Hesiod's words, "gifts of the goddesses." The economy of memory is an important concern for moral psychology, philosophy of emotions, and philosophy of imagination. This chapter examines ways that amusements, both classically and today, can function to educate moral emotions in and though their multi-faceted engagements with the economy of memory.

1. Introduction: Mother of the Muses

In Greek mythology the Muses – patron goddesses of fine arts, history, humanities, and science – are portrayed as the nine daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne; she, the earthly goddess Memory, is of the race of Titans, older still than Zeus and the other gods of Olympus. We sense the Muses' presence in the expressive arts, but more widely in any study which we aspire to be good at. Hesiod felt his Muses in the hills of Mount Helicon where he purports to have both tended sheep and honed his skills as an oral bard. They inspired his poems including *Theogony* and *Works and Days.* In these poems the Muses' first home is Mount Olympus, where they are favorite daughters of Zeus. When the gods are at peace and leisure they bring a "mirth" and "gladdening of hearts" which then extends outwards to humankind. Mnemosyne's gifts to us are her daughters, and the comforts and joys they each bring. As Hesiod writes, *"Every man is fortunate whom the Muses love; the voice flows sweet from his lips.*"[1]

When a bard sits his audience down aside a fire, or addresses a crowd in a more formal public setting such as a festival, storytelling customarily begins, as we see in the proems to Hesiod's two great works, with a sort of ritual act of calling upon the Muses. In the Invocation of the Muses section which begins *Theogony,* Hesiod has the Muses collectively reply to the humans who piously call upon them; they encourage these beseechers to seek through them not only artistic inspiration but also knowledge and wisdom:

> *We know how to tell many believable lies, But also, when we want to, how to*
>
> *speak the plain truth… So start from the Muses: For when they sing for Zeus*
>
> *Father they thrill the great mind deep in Olympus, telling what is, what will be,*
>
> *and what has been…until the thundering Halls of Zeus shine in his laughter!*[2]

While a strong positive *pathos* (shared values and concerns) is created between bards, singing with a lyre, and the listening audience, 'invoking' the Muses also functions to strongly enhance these poets' *ethos:* their credibility and authority *for* their audience. However humbly they might give credit to the goddess for the truth and beauty of their words, they are establishing the storytelling as a sacred event, insinuating that epic tales is of divine origin, and confirming to their audience that poets, as keepers of cultural memory, are both honorable and wise. Since the Muses of poetry and story/history, through the will of Zeus, have the ability to memorialize the deeds and achievements of some but deny it to others, this power for all practical purposes is in the hands, or in the voice, of the poet. Homer's *Odyssey* has Odysseus entreat king Alkinoos' blind court poet to remember him alongside other heroes of the Trojan War, and even to first butter him up by proclaiming, "*All men owe honor to the poets—honor and awe, for they are dearest to the Muse who puts upon their lips the ways of life.*"

But connections of the arts and sciences to memory are much richer than emphasis on social functions of storytelling allows us to see. Hesiod's genealogical myth of Mnemosyne and her daughters runs much deeper. In "The Mother of the Muses: In Praise of Memory," Clara Claiborne Park points out that "to make the Muses the daughters of Memory is to express a fundamental perception of the way in which creativity operates…. The Muses, for Hesiod, inspire all those arts of communication that inform, delight, civilize, and link us with the past and with our fellows."[3] The relationship between memory and such fields as epic poetry, history or music and dance is easily recognizable to moderns. Each requires quite serious study and practice in order to even become proficient in, and "mastery" is probably a relative term. Oral story-telling certainly served functions of codifying a people's sense of identity; the epics, though they encompass not just a human but a supernatural or spiritual world, and human-divine

interaction, help create "tradition" (literally, 'to hand down') and moral lessons and exemplars. But commemoration, even in an oral culture running back through Homer centuries earlier than Hesiod, is not the only, even if it is the most apparent, value. What these poets knew who invoked the Muses with their audience, was that remembering, forgetting, and imagining should *each* be esteemed as, in Hesiod's words, "gifts of the goddesses." Such is the healing powers of the arts in ancient thought. Not only rememberings (commemoratings, memorializings, celebratings) but also forgettings and imaginings are appreciated as 'gifts' in the Athenian golden age.

Each of these three, this chapter will argue, holds some direct bearing on the development of the moral emotions.[4] We will examine ways that amusements, broadly understood, engage with the economy of memory, and function to educate the moral emotions. The moral economy of memory and representation is an important focus of study for moral psychology, philosophy of emotions, and philosophy of imagination. We will seek to naturalize the generous activity of the Muses by examining the economy of memory, and the ways that amusements engage the moral imagination and the psychological functions of remembering and forgetting.[5] While initial examples of the moral value/disvalue of rememberings, forgettings, and imaginings are mostly drawn from classical Greek and Chinese cultures, these points I will suggest may also be applicable to the best design of networks and computer-games, and to what Chris Bateman (2018) terms cyber virtues and vices.

But to follow a bit further our initial foray into the claims to universal concerns which humor and comedy, and not just more serious or somber arts may encourage, let me finish this introduction with a few further thoughts about the positive functions of satire. Traditionally, comedy and humor are not seen as addressing what is universal in the human condition. Aristotle

at least, in the *Poetics*, reserves that for epic poetry and the tragic theatre which most directly draws upon it –and, of course, for philosophy. Comic plays in Athens often dealt with the politics of the day, topics including political upheavals that were oftentimes sensitive, open wounds for the audience. While it would seem that this could very much involve universals of the human condition, Aristotle seems to associate comedy with its origin in satyr plays and dithyrambs; this is associated with the piety of the festivals of Dionysus, but for Aristotle seems to lack the universal concerns expressed in the plays of the great tragedians such as Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Yet this brings me to an initial thesis: On this point I want to hold that Aristophanes the comedic playwright, rather than Aristotle, is correct. Perhaps to rebut such opinions, and to respond to the appearance that all wisdom is in the more traditional forms, Aristophanes has one of his characters bravely declare, "Comedy, too, can sometimes discern what is right. I shall not please, but I shall say what is true."[6]

The intellectual value of good satire includes the ability to utilize cultural differences to critique one's own culture's assumptions. This is something that Michel do Montaigne, for example does with "On Cannibals," where simpler, natural virtues of the 'savage' encountered by Europeans in the age of discovery, are used to counter ethnocentric bias and to expose the much crueler and more authoritarian – more 'cannibalistic' – European society lying below its civilized veneer. The greater the moral and cognitive dissonance that the satirical perspective instigates, the more that these incongruities work to create humor. In these respects too, *bemusement* might be just as important as amusement, since bemusement perhaps more clearly brings in the universals of the human condition, putting in ironic focus our human frailties and biases, and our inability to see them (see also Lauren Olin, this volume). Bemusement retains its

importance whether one takes a panglossian, skeptical, or melioristic interpretation of the evidence of our cognitive shortcomings.

Montaigne's essay "On Cannibals" and Aristophanes' many satiric plays deal with 'uncomfortable' topics of violence and power, reason and the passions, our civilized and our natural state. In their political context, these political satires could be seen as affronts to the governing body. But humor excuses much, especially when presented as only personal musing, or as a play for the annual City Dionysia. Also, while the all-male stage actors and audience of the plays performed in the Athenian amphitheater could easily choose to ignore such ironies as women running the city better than them, or their wives using a sex-strike against them to force cooperation and compromise with the Spartans to make an end to forge peace out of bitter war, in the best interests of all. These comic 'absurdities' were at least lessons in perspective-shifting, and in the possibilities of more cooperative thinking, generally. At a deeper level they are also invitations to more radical moral and/or political reform. Whether Aristophanes truly meant them as such, and why and how the audience could partake of the play but then go back to daily political life without any genuine moral impact, are two questions we must set aside. But a fine example of humorous incongruity which clearly involves the audience in timeless or universal questions comes from Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae* (*Assembly of Women).* In this play Athenian women, (purportedly as a strategy of last resort since nothing *else* has worked), come in charge of the Assembly (or Parliament). Almost immediately they begin to propose major utopian-*qua*-egalitarian reforms. Conceptual incongruities arise as utopian dreams collide with unquestioned moral traditions and political institutions.[7]

Praxagora: I want all to have a share of everything and all property to be in common; there will no longer be either rich or poor; [...] I shall begin by making land, money, everything that is private property, common to all….

Blepyrus: But who will till the soil?

Praxagora: The slaves.[8]

2. Rememberings

a. Commemoration and Competition

The recognition and commemoration of greatness in Greek and Roman cultures of antiquity illustrates how central their own cultural history was to them. Narrative structure implicates memetic connections: a story must itself be remembered, the metered verses put to memory and typically sung to the accompaniment of a musical instrument. Their sacred narratives or mythology provided the bulk of narrative content for the arts to work with, but there were statues and commemorations of many sorts, for what is unique is the ways that the Greeks sought to recognize and remember greatness of many kinds. In this respect Nietzsche tells us that orators, painters, sculptors, musicians, poets, and stage choreographers, no less than champions in physical contests and Pan-Hellenic games, might vie for special recognition. Competitions in the emerging arts were of such interest to the Athenians that if they couldn't hope to achieve cultural immortality in the way of ancient heroes who interacted with the gods, the Greeks still

saw themselves as competing for honor and glory under the constant gaze of those gods from above. More practically, success might well mean having their names inscribed in stone as winners, and as benefactors of the city, and receive 'meals and a pension' (as Socrates, after his conviction, tells the jury that as teacher and benefactor of Athens, he deserves 'far more than punishment').

We can remember from different moral emotions of pride and shame.[9] Hesiodic 'good *Eris*' creates the kind of jealously or strife 'between potter and potter," the arts flourished and winners were commemorated and remembered in ways that add their achievements to cultural memory. Nietzsche comments on how telling was Hesiod's account of their being not one, but two goddesses *Eris*: jealousy. The competitions of the occasional Muse festivals were not as regular either as the City Dionysia or Pan-Hellenic games. But Nietzsche also recounts several instances of people being remembered for shameful, unjust or unfitting acts, pettiness, and bad *eris.* Hesiod begins *Works and Days* with this distinction between striving for excellence and the kind of jealousy he associates with killing, and mastery over others. Bad jealousy or strife is not of the good kind associated with the ordered rule of Themis (Divine Law) and her civilizing daughters (Justice, Order, and Peace), but rather with those frightful but undeniable forces, the 'Children of Night' (Thanatos; Nemesis; the Keres or battlefield goddesses of cruel and unnatural death, the vengeful Furies and many more).[10]

In the "Homer's Contest," an essay written shortly after *The Birth of Tragedy,* Nietzsche skillfully explains how *agonistic* Greek society was, and because of this how useful good *eris* or competition was in serving to redirect of 'channel' aggressive drives –those bloodlusts, conquering or vengeful, which predominated in the earlier Homeric age and in that of the Mycenaeans featured in Homeric epic. Although we cannot digress, it is important to note that

Nietzsche places the philosophers within, rather than above, this competition for recognition as wise. The mythos/logos distinction and the uniqueness of natural and speculative philosophical inquiry from both poetry and sophistry is a complex set of issues, but in the cultural context of Athenian society it is part of the philosopher's competitive claim to wisdom.[11]

b. Museums and Cultural Memory

Besides Zeus' shining halls and human settings where creative and artistic excellence is fostered or specific crafts (*techne;* τέχνη) like astronomy, history, or medicine are pursued, the other earthly home for the Muses is the museum, originally simply meaning 'Shrine to the Muses.' The politics of museums can serve as a prime example of amusements that directly involve us in moral debate over cultural memory and its ownership. When a museum's collections have a history stemming from war, colonialism, or economic and cultural dominance, their leading narratives have come under scrutiny. Today for example there is ongoing debate about the ethics of collecting artifacts such as native people's bones, and African or native people's rituals ornaments. Attitudes towards museum holdings appear to be in flux. The older 'white man's burden' rationale of removal for the sake of preservation and appreciation is increasingly challenged by persons who identify with groups whose cultural memory is on display and found to be presented with a certain 'master' narrative. The most high-profile case in point is the long-standing debate concerning whether the British Museum should maintain its ownership of the Parthenon Marbles or submit to pressure to repatriate them to their native Greece. That these were, until only recently, widely referred to and identified as the "Elgin Marbles" after the colonial appropriator Thomas Bruce, Seventh Earl of Elgin, who removed them from the Parthenon and Acropolis (he claimed with consent of the Ottomans who ruled

Greece at the start of the 19ᵗʰ Century) and sold them to the British government, is itself part of the long-standing battle over how they should be remembered. The renaming of the marbles by their name of origin rather than collector may be a significant step forward, even while the Museum maintains its stance against demands for their repatriation.

This of course is but one instance of the debate over cultural memory as if affects the modern museum, since the repatriation-of-antiquities movement has been gaining strength over recent decades. "Preserving – saving" is for some a euphemistic phrase for confiscated property. As Graham Black points out in "Museums, Memory, and History," "The process by which communities and nations remember collectively itself has a history. For museums, as for the official memory written by historians, selectivity has been a key element. The core criticism of museums as instruments of the state is that the version of the past they have given form to is based on the selective collection, preservation and presentation of evidence of past human society." For Black the key critical concern is the prioritizing of elites: "Objects relating to wealthier classes have a far higher likelihood of survival… [I]n the process of collecting this material, museums both create knowledge and manipulate it, and through interpretation and transmission they define its relative importance or authority. Meanwhile, the silences in a museum's collections and narratives is just as revealing. What goes unacknowledged, accidentally or purposely 'forgotten'?"[12]

Supporters of this repatriation movement, including groups of native peoples, see a return of artifacts as a symbolic means of healing a past wrong, and a kind of restitution for earlier humiliation. In this sense it allows forgetting of wrongs, insofar as museum collections much like trophies from safari's, were the handmaids of colonialism. Although focused on the more overt case of Hitler's confiscations and plundering of art during WWII, the book and film, *The*

Monuments Men has in an indirect way spurred thinking about what distinguishes the colonial-era acquisition of certain high-profile museum collections from mere exploitation. The response to demands for repatriation of antiquities is typically one that concedes the colonial background, but bids people to set this aside as now historical, and to join in the educational ideals of the "universal museum": One should be able to experience all things in one place, under one roof. The "return" of artifacts presupposes the fiction that the activists are owners of particular cultural traditions, and reflects cultural particularism or segregation.

c. Laughter, Mockery, and Democratic Values

In a recent collection, *Greek Memories: Theories and Practices* (2019) Mirko Canevaro writes, "In fact, memory of the past, of the laws, of the culture, even of the day-to-day life of the city was a necessary attribute of the Athenian citizen." Any citizen is the new democracy might present themselves in an oratory role, such as a funeral oration, a theatre production, a symposium, or whenever called upon as a testifier or even a juror in the Athenian court. There were expectations that came back as judgments of personal and civic virtue. "The Athenians expected the speakers to show a high degree of cultural, historical and legal knowledge and memory."[13] Isocrates, an orator with whom Socrates is thought to have been familiar, and who set up a school of rhetoric in Athens some years after Socrates' death (but before the self-exiled Plato returned to Athens and opened the *Lyceum*), makes this expectation upon citizens for right use of cultural memory explicit: "For the deeds of the past are, indeed, an inheritance common to us all; but the ability to make proper use of them at the appropriate time, to conceive the right sentiments about them in each instance, and to set them forth in finished phrase, is the peculiar gift of the wise."[14]

These demands on proper or virtuous memory, especially as amplified by a focus on oratory and rhetoric, must be seen together with concerns about unvirtuous laughter, and personal but uncivic/uncivil *hubris.* The criminal charge of *hubris,* or *graphē hubreōs*, played a role in what John Lombardini investigates in *The Politics of Socratic Irony* (2018). In Athens, the prosecution of *graphē hubreōs*, while it may not have occurred regularly, had special connection with democratic values, and so much so that as odd as it may seem, acts of hubris in the form of verbal abuses by masters even against their own slaves could be a chargeable crime.[15]

Today we have serious issues of "rancorous humor," where superiority and put-down leads to an escalation of polarized and polemical discourse. Rancor-promoting actions and bad *eris* go closely together, and both butt up against freedom of speech.[16] But since well before Plato's *Philebus* and the Taoist book of wisdom, *Zhuangzi,* the ancients engaged in debate over what makes something appropriately laughable. The latter is a witty and light-hearted set of narratives which highlight strong connections between well-being and play. "But there is laughter and laughter of course," writes Michael Nylan, author of *The Chinese Pleasure Book* (2018). The summer cicada can understand nothing of the progress of the seasons, nor the turtle dove and quail whose whole lives are limited to brush and branches, understand the soaring heights and long journeys of the great bird Peng. So they mock it: Who should have need or desire to fly so high? Just where does he think *he's* going?

> The first chapter of *Zhuangzi* introduces the mocking laughter exemplified
> by the complacent cicada, turtle dove, and quail. We know these types well:
> thinking they know everything, they heap ridicule on anyone or anything
> unlike them, when, in actuality, they have not left themselves open to new

experiences. This sort of dissociating self-satisfaction exacts too high a price, as does the superficially affable laughter designed to trap the unwary.[17]

The Taoist sage aims to lighten and enlighten oneself and others. "A willingness to accept pain and vulnerability as necessary, even valuable components of the human condition, plus a lightheartedness –this is precisely what is lost in most of the pious academic accounts of Zhuangzi.... So in an era that valuing dramatic oratory and rhetoric, Zhuangzi would [have us all] steer clear of virtuoso performances and forget the slights that daily life inflicts, the *ressentiments* that gnaw away at one's core."[18]

In the Athenian context, Socrates' accusers clearly try to link his purported anti-democratic tendencies with purported instances of his using inappropriate laughter of a 'put-down' sort. Especially in an honor culture, mockery becomes a hot-button issue, as is clear from Xenophon's treatment of Socrates, also. Socrates' irony (*eirôneia*), and his 'gelastic practices,' were at least subtext to his indictment as a 'corruptor of the youth,' and we clearly see this in how Plato defends him in this regard, both in the *Apology* and elsewhere. In Plato's thematized account of the trial, the jury is reminded by Socrates' accusers of 'sophistical Socrates' in Aristophanes' comic satire, *Clouds,* staged at the Athens City Dionysia of 423 BCE. Lombardini comments,

[T]he ambiguity surrounding the Socratic practice of humor in the Platonic dialogues is perhaps indicative of the contested legacy of humor in the fourth

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century. While, as [Stephen Halliwell, *Greek Laughter,* 2008] argues, the Platonic Socrates does not engage in overt, face-to-face mockery, he does deploy irony as a mode of tactical ridicule…and is often harsh in mocking himself and the arguments in which he participates. What Plato offers us, in sum, is 'an ambiguous, double-sided figure where laughter is concerned' [and] 'it is probable…that this ambiguity was part of Plato's conscious response to a larger, ongoing contest for the memory and posthumous image of the man himself.'[19]

I would add that if Nietzsche is right, philosophers are not above this contest of claims-to-wisdom, but very much in it. The philosophers invent a "new kind of agon" which they describe as truth and wisdom-directed, but which also explains how a figure like Socrates could inspire resentment. Nietzsche thinks of philosophers such as Plato, Thales and Xenophanes as actively competing in and expecting to win 'Homer's Contest," for "we do not understand the full strength of Xenophanes' attack on the national hero of poetry [Homer], unless—as again later with Plato—we see that at its root lay an overwhelming craving to assume the place of the overthrown poet and to inherit his fame…."[20]

To summarize and conclude this section, Greek society was highly preoccupied with cultural memory, and with the prospects of male citizens in their own time to gain some semblance of the immortality-through-memorialization seen as being enjoyed by the heroes and demi-gods of the mythic past. But in agonistic societies like Athens and like our own the distinction between good and bad *eris* remains morally significant. If we look we can find many instances of both motivations in the ways that the past is remembered.[21]

3. Forgettings

The passage of time and the availability of amusements and interests in arts, literature, or science greatly aids our ability to cope with, and to recover from distress or sufferings of our own. Hesiod speaks of the *emotion* of amusement in terms of "respite from cares" through "care-free hearts" moved by song, story, and other a-musements (no-troublings/cares). Attention-diverting pleasures, whether of arts, science, or simply of humor or good conversation with friends, are forgettings which grant repose to persons from distress, anxiety, fear, or grief. As early as Solon's *Prayer to the Muses* (6th century BCE)*,* scholars have pointed out, the gifts of Muses were understood to include "not only in the grief- destroying power of song but also in the persuasion and the 'intellectual' achievement of the king who succeeds in talking the parties of a lawsuit into a peaceful settlement of their conflicting claims."[22]

On the social scale, forgetting and forgiveness allow for the ebbing of cycles of vengeance and the re-emergence of social compacts and of the mutual benefits of trust. Dan O'Shannon in this connection notes the old saying, "Tragedy plus time equals comedy." The value of *safe distance*, he suggests, "allows us to enjoy pain on several levels. There may be a conscious or unconscious element of relief in laughter, as in the sudden realization that we can be close to this experience of harm and yet not be hurt."[23] (Ironically for a god many feminists describe as a 'master rapist,') Apollo is a god associated with healing, and if this were only through the actual medical arts then the poets would not be depicted as often in the company of the Muses, and as having Thalia, the masking and unmasking Muse of comedy and humor, his most genuine romance. Thalia, whose name is etymologically connected with "flourishing" and "joyous," is a goddess of not just of theater but more generally of laughter and joyful play. Now mocking humor and even Socratic irony was, as we will later see, a contentious issue in the new Athenian city-state, as it was taken by many to connote anti-democratic values or traits of

character. But our human *aptitude* for laughter, and the benefit we derive not just from theatre but from all study of arts and sciences is mythologically an *aphthonos*, or "generous activity" of the gods. It is a gift-bestowing to humankind consequent from divine laughter instilled in mighty Zeus by his loving and ever-surprising daughters.[24]

Words inspired by the Muses are classically associated with peace, the results of sweet soft words versus their harsh contraries. Forgetting, to the extent that it allows rebuilding or building trust, is a unifier. Like Homer and Hesiod, Aristophanes within his own poetry (*Frogs,* performed 403 BCE) finds time to laud "the noble poets".

> *Look how right from the start the noble poets have been useful—been teachers: Orpheus taught us initiations and avoidance of bloodletting, Mousaious taught divination and cures for sickness, and Hesiod, the working of the soil and the seasons of harvest and plowing.*[25]

One literary example of this is the *Aeneid* and its central themes. Greek and Roman poet often engaged in etymological 'play' with the names and associations of the gods, and here Virgil juxtaposes Juno's grudges and plans for vengeance with the memory actively fostered by the Muses, which by their nature seeks *concordia* and works through concordant purposes. The healing power of forgetting and moving on supports reconciliation and renewal. As Alex Hardie in "Juno, Hercules, and the Muses at Rome" (2007) comments,

> 'Mindful anger' and its corollary in revenge is of course a very old idea (indeed the homophone endings *memorem ... iram* might be designed to recall the sound-similarity of Greek *menis* ("anger") and *mnēmnō* ("mindful"); anger, in other words, is inherently endowed with a long memory). Juno's "mindful anger"

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evidently has to do with the goddess' capacity for harbouring grudges, and it is

recognisable, in terms more immediately applicable in the civic sphere, as the

standard political fault of *mnēsikakein* ("harbouring grudges").…. Juno's inability

to set aside former *causae irarum* in the interests of general harmony is a

fundamental component of her discordant character within the poem.[26]

Ancient tragedies dealt deeply with universal themes of retribution and grief. "Such is

life," wrote Sophocles. "Laugh, if you can." Martha Nussbaum and others who appreciate

tragedy's contributions to educating moral emotions will agree with the Greeks and with

Aristotle (and contemporary psychology) that the experiencing of negative emotions and even of

suffering is not without purgative and educative value.[27] But Nussbaum's book *Anger and

Forgiveness* (2018) provides rich discussion with of both historical and literary examples of

overcoming cycles of violent retribution and of the zero-sum or loss-loss thinking the fuels it.

While acknowledging it some inevitability, she tries to show how anger is often a confused and

damaging or pernicious moral emotion.

Nussbaum's own main literary example of such virtuous forgettings is Aeschylus' tragic

trilogy, *The Oresteia,* which is known to have won first prize at the Dionysia festival in 458

BCE. The trilogy is named for the central character Orestes, who sets out to avenge the murder

of his father Agamemnon by his own (undoubtedly abused) mother, Clytemnestra. Vengeance or

vendetta and justice, and the emergence of law out of a more primitive system of vendettas, are

its central themes as Nussbaum articulates them. But what she finds especially insightful is its

concluding scenes. The slaying of Clytemnestra and her lover by Orestes does not end the cycle

of violence, but unleashes the Furies, divine avengers, to pursue and punish Orestes for his act of

matricide. The justice of their retribution on Orestes is eventually brought to trial before the gods, with wise Athena aiding the pardon of Orestes and proclaiming that matters of retribution or punishment be henceforth settled in court rather than being carried out personally and outside of law. But to undergird this societal shift in the conception of justice, one which quelled endless cycles of retaliation and analogized them to a curse, Athena actually renames the force from the Furies. She names them the Eumenides, meaning the "gracious ones," which in effect disconnects justice from backward-looking retribution and attaches it to a broader set of forward-looking concerns including social stability, and the welfare of the polis and its citizens, and the healing of wounds. Besides *The Oresteia* concluding on these surprisingly optimistic themes of renewal and moving beyond cycles of vendetta-justice, the audience would have seen a short comical satyr play to conclude the evening's official festivities, and to ensure they are ushered out into the streets in a high mood of revelry.

We could also find ancient Chinese examples of successful and failed forgettings.[28] One of the most famous plays of China is *The Peony Pavilion*, a tragi-comedy of the human condition written in the Ming style by Tang Xianzu, who lived contemporaneously with Shakespeare and is sometimes referred to as the 'Shakespeare of China.' The play features a young woman, Miss Du, who falls asleep in a peony field. In the dream sequences typical of the Ming style (and often of modern Peking opera) she meets and falls in deeply love with a young, handsome scholar. This young man Liu is real, but she has never met him and upon awakening to find his memory but a dream, she develops an all-consuming love sickness, and a utopian desire for a kind of pure, unfettered love that would have been impossible in the character's structured society. At the end of the first act Miss Du, unable to forget, eventually mourns herself to death. But in the second act, Liu's passing on foot through the garden where she is buried, years later, learns her

story through a self-portrait she left before she died. True love wins out after Liu falls into a love with the dead girl so genuine that the Flower Goddess and the Judge of Hell eventually get involved, and conspire to resurrect Miss Du in order to fulfil what is seen as a destiny that time and circumstance had unjustly prevented. The two characters' inability to forget brings them great sorrow, yet through the power of their virtuous forgetting of the rigid social roles and codes, their true love in the end prevails.

The healing power of time, and of the arts as diversions and sources of amusement connects with psychological study of the *Fading Affect Bias* (FAB), which refers to the demonstrated greater dwindling of unpleasant compared to pleasant emotions in autobiographical memory. The FAB appears to be a ubiquitous emotion regulating phenomenon in autobiographical memory. T.D. Ritchie (et. al.), (2015) for example disclose studies showing that positive affect fades slower than negative affect. "Results suggest that in tandem with local norms and customs, the FAB may foster recovery from negative life events and promote the retention of the positive emotions, within and outside of the USA."[29] Affective fading is generally greater for negative events/memories than for positive events/memories, but this greater dwindling of unpleasant compared to pleasant emotions is impacted by other traits. Dysphorics and those with depression or anxiety disorders show a smaller fading affect than non-dysphorics.

To conclude this section, Marx and other materialists have seen retreat into constant amusement as a dysfunctional response to one's state of alienation. Critics of big media have worried that we are, in Neil Postman's terms, "amusing ourselves to death" (1984), and they sound a Huxleyan warning of its goal of pacifying its consumers and keeping them glued to advertising or political agendas. Escapist withdrawal through endless amusements might give

one a sense of individual autonomy, while in reality leaving individuals more isolated and less motivated or equipped to find the solidarity with others. Amusements and the forgettings they allow might be sought as compensation for a deficit of opportunities for meaningful choices and genuinely human relations. Still, today's teens do not demote virtual realities as past generations arguably have. Contemporary amusements and virtual world are, but are not *only,* 'escapes' from troubles. With Jean Baudrillard today's youth tend to accord reality to simulations along a spectrum, and reject the Platonic binary of one's being either "in reality" or "under illusion." Years ago when I presented the Matrix movie's choice between 'taking the red or the blue pill,' uncomfortable truth or pleasant medicated illusion, to my philosophy students almost unanimously vowed they would take the red pill no matter how far down the rabbit hole they might fall. It seems to me not merely anecdotal that today by comparison many more of my students, when presented with 'Cypher's Choice' or 'The Experience Machine thought experiments that have been staples of introductory philosophy classes for decades, will say that while truth and freedom are values, their decision would also turn on just how badly "reality" sucks.

4. Imaginings

According to contemporary enactivists and narrativists like Daniel Hutto and Peter Goldie, the emotions have a structure that is "ripe for narration."[30] Pleasure comes from anticipation, from direct experience, and from reminiscing our past experiences. The first and third of these modes of pleasure, at least, are structured by narrative imagination. Many scholars have also described how vital stories are to our sense of individual identity and collective belonging. Some go further to assert and develop the educative value of stories, which may present conflicts and

dilemmas that spur critical reflection. Larry Hill, a Seneca storyteller, writes, "Our stories were

us, what we knew, where we came from and where we were going. They were told to remind of

us of our responsibility, to instruct, and to entertain. There were stories of the Creation, our

travels, our laws. There were legends of hard-fought battles, funny anecdotes - some from the

smokehouse, some from the trickster - and there were scary stories to remind us of danger,

spiritual and otherwise. Stories were our life and they still are.""[31]

Let us briefly return to Nussbaum's work, since she has been one of the strongest and most

eloquent proponents of the benefits of literature and narrative imagination for moral

development. In *The New Religious Intolerance* (2012) she discusses how sympathetic

imagination makes others real for us: "A common human failing is to see the whole world from

the point of view of one's own goals, and to see the conduct of others as all about oneself…By

imagining other people's way of life, we don't necessarily learn to agree with their goals, but we

do see the reality of those goals for them. We learn that other worlds of thought and feeling

exist." Nussbaum calls on educators to counter new and old forms of intolerance "through

deliberate cultivation of the imagination."[32] The "participatory imagination" she takes as a

primate inheritance, but as already inviting us to see others as intelligibly pursuing human goals.

The participatory imagination can raise awareness of what John Rawls calls the 'burdens of

judgement,' and to this extent support tolerance and mutual respect (what Rawls terms

reasonable pluralism). For empirical support, Nussbaum cites the studies of Daniel Batson as

showing "that vivid imagination leads, other things equal, to helping behavior." She also holds

that with the development of empathetic (moral) out of participatory imagination, people learn to

"move in a direction opposite to that of fear. In fear, a person's attention contracts, focusing

intently on her own safety, and (perhaps) that of a small circle of loved ones. In empathy the

mind moves outward, occupying many different positions outside the self."[33] This shift from contracting to expanding moral attention aids development of moral judgment and cooperative, win-win strategies of problem-solving. Empathy she concedes can have its own narcissism, and partiality can also be a "pitfall of imagination." But the directional difference from contracting to expanding one's moral attention show imagination as, on balance, "valuable as an antidote to fear's narcissism."[34] Nussbaum's stance is one that draws not just on literature, but on psychology and on John Dewey's pragmatism. Dewey held that reason is an imaginative capacity, and proclaimed, 'imagination is more moral than moralities.'[35] Habit, imagination, and judgment are intimately related; the faculty of imagination has the ability to make things present which were previously absent.[36] Other pragmatists like Steven Fesmire credit Dewey for framing a theory of ecological imagination that is compatible with contemporary cognitive research.[37]

But there is also a skepticism or pessimist that runs contrary to this optimism about the benefits of narratives that we have seen Nussbaum and others express. Skepticism may begin with a political realism about cultural or collective memory, and proceeds from there. Andrew Leutzsch investigates these confliction views in *Historical Parallels, Commemoration and Icons* (2019). One focus of the study is the inflationary erecting of monuments and other ways that historians, professional or amateur, "prefigure the future by constructing the past."

> [A]rchives store and destroy; and historians select and ignore sources –
> sometimes accidentally, sometimes on purpose but always because all of them are
> embedded in a discourse and in a net of connotations, which tells them and us
> what matters and what does not…. Memorials are both an indicator and a factor
> of the political discourse – they represent history and contribute to the making of

it. [As Reinhart Koselleck puts it], 'To commemorate the deceased belongs to human culture. To commemorate the fallen, violently killed, those who in battle, civil war or war died, belongs to political culture.'"[38]

Leutzsch acknowledges the politics of memory, but remains optimistic about historical narrative. "Whereas the contingency of the future compels us to consider what might come next, the past makes us reflect about why events transpired as they did and contributes to the reduction of the future's contingency."[39] (3) But other authors are still more critical of the "historical fallacy," and of the value of narratives in pursuing epistemic goods of knowledge and understanding. On this minority report, story-telling and self-deception often go hand-in-hand.

As Baldwin observed in a much-discussed 1970 exchange with Margaret Mead about identity, race, and moral sentiments, *"What we call history is perhaps a way of avoiding responsibility for what has happened, is happening, in time."* [40] Perhaps the fullest recent development of pessimism about the moral and cognitive value of historical narratives, is Alex Rosenberg's *How History Gets Things Wrong: The Neuroscience of Our Addiction to Stories* (2018). Rosenberg critiques our long-standing reliance on auto-biographical, biographical, and historical narrative, presenting numerous examples of its unreliability. The narrativization and moralization of events typically go hand-in-hand, and most often our stories re-enforce us/them divisions. So much are they a reflection and re-enforcement of group biases that they undermine history's pretention to provide real understanding of the past, present, or future. Rosenberg argues for three provocative claims counterpoint to Dewey and Nussbaum: "that our confidence in history, our taste, our need for it, indeed, our love of history is almost completely hardwired,

that history is all wrong, and that its wrongness is the result of the later evolution of what was originally hardwired...."[41]

Nussbaum's narrative optimism and Rosenberg's narrative pessimism are two contrary moral appraisals of storytelling, two contrary responses to the narrativist-enactivist claim that the emotions have a structure that is ripe with or for narration. We need not feel bound to choice between them; Rosenberg's critique of history, even if it is not overstated, may not carry over to the value of narratives which recognize themselves as fictional.[42] We can anyway take this 'ripeness" as a mixed blessing. For the pro-educative and the skeptical perspectives on the moral value of narratives have at least this in common: they each tell us that we need to 'Stop feeding the wrong wolf'; that is, we need to distinguish bad from good eris and accept responsibility for the problems of the world. There is a concept of German origin in recent use, *Gestaltungskompetenz*, which perhaps deserves recognition here in regard to the educative potential of the moral imagination. It is a feminine noun term for the competency to shape the future; this 'shaping skill' is one both of analyzing present problems and applying forward-looking problem-solving'; it a *creative* competence to shape the future.[43] Since shared stories, shared amusements, and share humor often functions as a social lubricant, their ability to support the evolution of social cooperation should be unsurprising. We can, we must, as Nietzsche's self-overcoming Zarathustra says, become people who can laugh and philosophize at the same time.

5. Conclusion

Hesiod's theme running through both *Works and Days* of there being 'two Eris-goddesses on earth' was, for Nietzsche, "one of the most noteworthy Hellenic thoughts and worthy to be

impressed on the newcomer immediately at the entrance-gate of Greek ethics."[44] So too, Nietzsche adds, if "we remove the contest from Greek life, then we look at once into the pre-Homeric abyss of horrible savagery, hatred, and pleasure in destruction." Contests of all sorts allowed the Greeks to channel their aggressive drives into great and works and memorable achievements. This is the good *eris* at work, the kind in which potter competes with potter for excellence, playwright with playwright. But as Nietzsche insists, the line between motivating and "hateful" envy is quite thin; both for individuals and for groups it can be difficult not to cross over into spite and odium, too often with dire consequences.[45]

So how can amusements involving rememberings, forgettings, and imaginings better serve critical thinking and other pedagogical functions through actively engaging the moral imagination? How can they be examples of good and not bad *eris*? These questions I suspect need to be asked with respect to the design of computer games and human-machine relationships of all kinds. Posing them helps further identify what Chris Bateman (2018) terms the cyber virtues/vices which we encounter in relationship with games and online groups/networks.[46] Relational virtuosity, then, does not stop with relations only between human, or between humans and animals, but extends to human-machine relations as well. And Aristophanes was right: humor or comedy can also tell truth; it can, as he has Aeschylus say of *all* the poets, "rouse the citizenry to strive to equal" them, and to emulate the hero-types. We would be better off in the study of amusement had the ability to engage universals of the human condition and to provoke reflective morality never been ceded to only to the 'serious' poetic forms of epic and tragedy. Given also that use of humor and of computers contributes to student-focused learning, is important that the educative potential of laughter and of amusements more generally be brought to the fore. 'Funny is the new deep,' as Steve Almond (2015) puts it, and we have here

endeavored to connect this with the ability of amusements, whether more associated with remembering, forgetting, or imagining, to throw light on our human foibles, and to balance competitive games with the encouragement of cooperative strategies of problem-solving. We end, then, in agreement with Percy Shelley that, "A person to be greatly good must imagine intensely and comprehensively."[47]

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Destreé (eds.) *Laughter and the Ancients*, 2019 forthcoming.

Notes

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[1] Hesiod, *Theogony,* 96-97.

[2] Hesiod, *Theogony* 26-28, 36-37. I here take liberty to slightly combine lines from what are said to be two proems (1-35 and 36-115).

[3] Clara Claiborne Park, "The Mother of the Muses: In Praise of Memory."

[4] The functions of story are recognized to be diverse, some for entertainment, but others aimed at moral or intellectual edification. Still, the Muses can only be speaking in metaphor by describing the functions of music and narrative as allowing us to speak 'plain truth.' Artistic expressions are necessary because truth and meaning are neither ultimately separable nor conceptually coextensive. Another collection which focuses on how information is often filtered, selected and rearranged to support a single narrative is A. Leutzsch (ed.), 2019.

[5] See also the Paola Ceccarelli, Silvia Milanezi, and Lea Grace Canevaro, and Catherine Darbo-Peschanski chapters in the excellent collection edited by Luca Castagnoli and Paola Ceccarelli, *Greek Memories* (2019).

[6] Aristophanes' *The Acharnians,* lines 500-501. From *Aristophanes* (2013), 32.

[7] For more direct connections between imagination and utopian-dystopian hopes and fears, see Darko Suvin, *Defined by a Hollow* (2000).

[8] Aristophanes, *Ecclesiazusae* (*Assemblywomen*), lines 590-591 & 597-598 & 651 (tr. O'Neill 1938, accessed from Perseus).

http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text.jsp?doc=Aristoph.+Eccl.+590

[9] See also Bongrae Seok's *Moral Psychology of Confucian Shame* (2017) for a highly interdisciplinary and comparative interpretation of Confucian shame as a moral disposition valued in Chinese culture for its motivations to moral self-cultivation. Shame in this Confucian sense is not for 'losers' but for reflective and self-critical moral leaders. Guilt is usually seen as an emotion with more ameliorative value in Western cultures, but this tends to be reversed in

collectivist cultures. So comparison of guilt and moral shame as moral emotions is an important topic (and one that readily invites cross-cultural comparison). While we might learn from each, rememberings and forgettings might be made salient by these moral emotions in somewhat different ways.

[10] Greek justice was becoming heir to Themis/Dike, with her balanced scales. As early as Pindar (5th c. BCE) the daughters of "wise-counselled" (*euboulos*) Themis/Justitia are assigned names which fittingly meant "Justice," "Good Order/Laws," and "Peace."

[11] Robert Fowler (2011) points out, "As discourses calling themselves *mythoi* more and more routinely came in for questioning, sooner or later a *mythos* itself became a questionable thing…." He rightly insists, however, that "a simple linear progression from an age of primitive, mythical thinking to a wholly civilized and rational one is more self-serving morality tale than history." (48) But probably first with Plato, *mythos* becomes directly associated with what poets tell. In *Phaedrus* (esp. 229c-d) widespread awareness of rationalization of myth and its methods is apparent. But even here Fowler insists the contrast is not so much between reason and its contraries. "*Logoi* are contrasted with *mythoi* in point of veracity, rather than on the basis of its mode of inquiry or assumptions." Still, Fowler writes, "By the end of Aristotle's life the word 'mythography' existed to denote that branch of prose literature which recorded, precisely, the Greek myths. Historians thereafter routinely use myth-words to denote the period down to either the Trojan War or the return of the *Herakleidai* (the difference is immaterial). No one outright denies the actual existence of figures such as Theseus, but after Thucydides' *mythōdes* historians have to take a stand on these stories, and a question mark hangs over them. Typically they accept the basic historicity, but remove the mythical accretions (for which the poets bear the blame) to render them useful for various purposes" (50).

[12] Black, "Museums, Memory, and History," 421. Black's treatment of museums might also make us think of the inhumanity-for-the-sake of amusement, in the *Black Mirror* episode, "Black Museum"! To be "put in a museum" used to be a saying for being made useless –a relic. But today the museum is returning to some of its interactive functions: To muse upon something should be to reflect or engage in a creative way, opening up new ideas. But re-thinking the moral ideals of the museum, which stays stationary but brings "universal" content to itself, extends to a rethinking of the many forms of entertainment traditionally involving traveling shows. From thespian wagons, imaginariums, 'freak shows,' and circuses, traveling amusements often involved great suffering of humans and animals. Animal-centered amusement parks and zoos have today generally established standards in the treatment of animals, but in the trade-offs for profit incentive they have not always lived up to them. Moreover, animal care and the ethics of captivity for whales, orcas, and other sea or land animals that cannot range has also invited moral debate and policy re-evaluation. Such amusements have invited criticism and a good deal of activism, much as have culturally-sensitive (or perhaps better, insensitive) museum collections.

[13] M. Canevaro 2019, 155. He adds, **"**Historical instruction and poetical education were in fact part of the intellectual baggage of the average Athenian, provided by the city itself on very public occasions, be it the historical narrative of a funeral speech, the paintings in the Stoa Poikile, an honorary inscription in the Agora, a rhapsodic competition during the Panathenaea or the tragic competition at the Dionysia" (139).

[14] See Canevaro's commentary, 151.

[15] Lombardini, 5.

[16] On what I call the problem of rancorous humor, and on *Zhuangzi*-style smart humor as an antidote for it, see Axtell 2017b.

[17] Nylan 255.

[18] Nylan 254-255 discusses in this context *Zhuangzi,* "Running around accusing others is not as good as laughing, and enjoying good laugh less fine than going along with things. Be content to go along and forget [to dread] change, and then you can enter the mysterious Oneness of Heaven…. Just go along with things and let your faculties for thinking and feeling in the heart move freely. Best of all, resign yourself to what cannot be avoided and nourish whatever is within you."

[19] Lombardini 12-13 quoting Halliwell, 2008, 37. Socrates' accusers make his irony an instance of a sophistical trope: "It is this type of mockery that Strepsiades learns from Socrates and deploys against his creditors, doing so in a way that might be viewed as troubling from a democratic standpoint. In Plato, however, the portrait we find of Socratic humor, and its relationship to Athenian democracy, are radically different" even from what one finds in Xenophon (Lombardini, 49-50). Even though Socrates sometimes describes himself as laughable in the dialogues, it is typically an indication of proper humility (I sting like a torpedo fish, and I look like one, too) and genuine, *shared* philosophic wonderment (*thauma*) rather than rhetorical one-upsmanship. And in the few instances where Socrates actually laughs, it is intentionally highlighted by Plato that he does so 'gently' and 'quietly' (*Phaedo,* 84d; 115e).

[20] Nietzsche, "Homer's Contest," 180. This seems to me to apply to the Skeptics, and to the Hippocratic school also, whose empiricism led to many sharp criticisms of rationalist-dogmatist philosophy. Note also that Plato's Socrates in his dialogues prays to the Muses on numerous occasions: for aid in remembering a conversation (*Euthydemus* 275c-d: "So I must begin my

description as the poets do, by invoking the Muses and Memory herself"); for aid in eloquence for his first speech on love, and again, to be a philosopher (*Phaedrus* 237a-b; 278b); at the start of an inquiry into the nature of justice; and contrasting philosophical inquiry with the poet's 'just so' stories about origins (*Republic* IV 432c; VIII 545d-e). See B. Darrell Jackson, "The Prayers of Socrates" (1971) for discussion.

[21] Paola Ceccarelli, in Castignola and Ceccarelli (eds.) *Greek Memories,* (2019, 103) confirms these Nietzschean insights on the agonistic character of Greek society and its connection with memorializing champions.

[22] Archibald Allen, "Solon's Prayer," 64. Solon interestingly speaks of "the blend of force and justice which is law." Allen continues, "The aspect of the Muses' activity which is most familiar is their relation to poetry and music, but the wider extent of their power is not forgotten. So Plato can speak of a philosophic Muse (Phlb. 67B) and say that his ideal state will be realized when this Muse wins control of a city (Rep. 6.499D)". The rationalist Muse of Plato would be associated with wisdom, but more specifically in the form of the Good. *Republic* 244a-245c speaks of different kinds of beneficial *mania:* inspiration as per through a Muse, and a humane kind that seizes persons about to suffer or die, that they may more easily endure it.

[23] Dan O'Shannon, 2015, 7.

[24] The genealogy of the Muses was not taken as fully established by Homer and Hesiod, but has been a subject of inventive interest among later Greek and Roman poets, and even by philosophers including Plato. Scholars term this etiological play. Playing with Muse etymologies ('etymological play') allowed new blendings and pairings of older deities and their associated functions or provinces; it also allows for recognition of new fields of study which simply were not existent prior to the Greek golden age. So for example Plato finds a Muse of

philosophy, thereby supporting their competition with poets, sophists, or others vying for the crown of the most wise; history comes to have its own Muse, Clio, but this could occur only upon history's distinction from mythology-bound epic poetry, the domain of Calliope who the epic poets unsurprising described as 'chief' of the Muses; and somewhat counterpoint to these logo-centric upstarts, Livius later created a distinctive literary goddess, Moneta, not quite identical with Mnemosyne, yet connected like her with divinized memory.

[25] Aristophanes, *Frogs*.

[26] Hardie, 571-572.

[27] For recent philosophical and psychological research on these topics see Michael Brady and other chapters in Laurie Candiotti (ed.) 2019 collection *The Value of Emotions for Knowledge*.

[28] For more on humor, laughter, amusement and pleasure in Chinese tradition, see especially Michael Nylan's rich work, *The Chinese Pleasure Book* (2018). On smart humor in Zhuangzi in particular, see Axtell (2017b), Carl Dull (Helsing) (2012 and this volume), Moeller (2017), and Sellmann (1998). On connections with the concept of relational virtuosity discussed below, see the works of Peter Hershock and Roger Ames.

[29] T.D. Ritchie (et. al.), (2015), 278.

[30] For discussion of the "narrative alternative to theory of mind," see Shaun Gallagher (2006), esp. 224, and Hutto's response. See also Goldie, 2012.

[31] Larry Hill quoted at http://www.indians.org/welker/stories1.htm. Relatedly, *Psychology Today* recently highlighted humans as storytelling animals. "We thrill to an astonishing multitude of fictions on pages, on stages, and on screens: murder stories, sex stories, war stories, conspiracy stories, true stories and false. We are, as a species, addicted to story. But the addiction runs deeper than we think. We can walk away from our books and our screens, but we can never walk away from story."

https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-storytelling-animal/201205/creatures-story

[32] Martha Nussbaum, *The New Religious Intolerance,* 143-144. Nussbaum's focus is not unconnected with our previous discussion of good and bad eris. J.S. Mill for example discusses in *On Liberty* (Chapter One) "the *odium theologicum,* in a sincere bigot" as being "one of the most unequivocal cases of moral feeling."

[33] In a tradition going back at least to Francis Bacon, contemporary authors such as Herman (2017) and Boyd (2009) emphasize how fiction "increases the range of our vicarious experience and behavioral options. "Fiction can design events and characters to provoke us to reflect on, say, generosity or threat, or deception and counter-deception. And it efficiently evokes our intense emotional engagement without requiring our belief. Discussed in Herman (2017), 5. See also Breyer, 2019.

[34] Nussbaum, 146.

[35] Whole cultures can value or devalue imagination, as Voltaire's short story "Memory's Adventure" makes clear through its satirical treatment of the rationalist tendencies of Descartes' and Voltaire's own French culture. Empirical research on *aphantasia*, the lack of voluntary mental imagery in some people, is interesting for moral psychologists because this

deficit in tools of imagery is found to have negative impact of social and emotional intelligence.

[36] Dewey, 1944, p. 148, my italics. Dewey wrote that "'only gradually and with a widening of the area of vision through a growth of social sympathies does thinking develop to include what lies beyond our direct interest: a fact of great significance for education."

[37] Fesmire 2010, 189 quoting Dewey, *Art as Experience*, LW 10:348. On imagination, knowledge, and emotion see Any Kind and Peter Kung (eds.) *Knowledge through Imagination* (2016). On narrative see Harrellson 2012. Building on his earlier *Dewey and Moral Imagination* (2003), Fesmire (2012) explains how relational thinking not just in American pragmatism but also in much Eastern thought helps us better perceive the relational networks in which finite lives are embedded. Ecological thinking, as it enters into our deliberations about private choices and public policies, is a function of this sort of imagination. It aids moral awareness and serves as a tool of responsibility-through-action. "Ecological imagination is here understood as relational imagination shaped by key metaphors used in (though not necessarily originating in) the ecologies. That is, imagination is specifically 'ecological' when key metaphors and the like used in the ecologies organize mental simulations and projections. Our deliberations enlist ecological imagination when these imaginative structures (some of recent origin and some millennia old) shape what Dewey calls our dramatic rehearsals" (2012, 213). On William James' distinction of the 'crude' and 'subtle' emotions, and the higher moral relevance of the latter, see Axtell 2017b. James I think was right to notice in *Principles of Psychology* "how unexpectedly great are the differences between individuals in respect of imagination." Dewey's developments of moral imagination seems to reflect this as well as James view that "No matter how emotional the

temperament may be, if imagination be poor, the occasions for touching off the emotional trains will fail to be realized, and the life will be *pro-tonto* cold and dry" (1981, 704; 1088).

[38] Andreas Leutzsch 2019, 152 and 116.

[39] Leutzsch, 3. He continues that "Almost-forgotten or sleeping history can be revived to legitimize an imagined future in a political discourse today." Analyzing historical analogies as they appear in narratives, iconography, movies, journalism, etc. "enables us to understand how history and collective memory are managed and used for political purposes and to provide social orientation in time and space."

[40] According to Maria Papova's assessment, when the story writer and playwright James Baldwin said, "*We made the world we're living in and we have to make it over,*" he was exploring the paradoxical ways in which we imprison ourselves even as we pursue our liberty. One the one hand, "we can only make a broken world over if we first closely examine its parts — that is, its pasts — and take responsibility for the conditions as well as the consequences of its brokenness. And yet, too often, we flee and burrow in the comforting certitude of our history, which is not the same as our past, no matter how false and hubristic such certitude may be."

[41] Rosenberg 2018, Chapter 1.

[42] We can take the many theories of humor traditionally on offer, as O'Shannon does, as best seen as 'parts in search of an elephant': "when we gather these basic theories together, it begins to look as though people have been approaching comity from different directions. Some theories concerning the, these content, others are based on the feelings that arise from the comedic experience, and others are process-related" (2015, 10). These theories are not best seen as competitors for the roots of all humor. They address different questions and to this

extent invite interdisciplinary perspectives and not theoretical reduction. Yet they could still be components of some "larger, more comprehensive model" which took these different questions all into account.

[43] One sees this new 'heroic' virtue exemplified, for example, in the *Tomorrowland* movie characters Casey Newton, an optimistic teen who refuses to accept technological determinism and the easy moral rationalizations for inaction it supplies, and Athena, the more-human-than-most-of-us android who recruits just such dreamers and innovative can-doers as Casey and the young (pre-jaded adult and 'realist') Frank Walker.

[44] Nietzsche reminds us that while envy, jealousy, or strife might translate Eris for both goddesses, Hesiod's point is that they have quite *different* moral dispositions. "For the one, the cruel one, furthers the evil war and feud! This bad eris, as the elder, gave birth to black Night." Many of the miseries sent to humans through Pandora's 'jar' are of this kind. Zeus however is said to have placed the other Eris upon the roots of the earth and among men as a much better one.

[45] Hateful Eris as Hesiod presents it is the mother of "Battles and Fights, Murders and Manslaughters, Quarrels, Lying Words and Words Disputatious." When these spawn of bad eris have their way, such forces are "unleashed from the where the house of Night stands, just beyond where Poseidon set doors as the edge of Tartarus to contain or 'conceal' them." When they do, they unsettle that new order that arose in social contrast, with the birth of "Virgin Justice [Themis], Zeus' own daughter, Honored and revered among the Olympian gods."

[46] Bateman finds it scarcely surprising that 'fake news,' infotainment, and still more overt propaganda "thrives in systems that discourage fidelity and thus minimize productive community" (109). Fidelity, which is what binds us to other humans and their shared practices, is

a prime virtue that we need today: "fidelity is founded on the promise (literal or figurative) to be part of something and thus to foster knowledge within that community (whether we are talking sports, research, art, crafts, or anything else). Cyber-fidelity would therefore apply whenever our robots aided our commitment and our communities without simultaneously engendering our dependency.... What I'm calling cyber-fidelity is another name for what Ivan Illich calls *convivial tools*: technology that empowers individuals within their communities, rather than creating dependence and dividing or destroying community" (110; 137).

[47] Another Romantic thinker of the 19th century, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, held that the human condition is constituted more by our limitations than by our purposes, "by a person's station contrasted with all other stations, and by this sad fact that his particular purposes must be chosen from amongst all other possible ones." Thus for Goethe, a person's "understanding may render him universal; his life never can …. The saddest truth is that to be at all you must be something in particular." The true romantic's emotions and imagination allow them to compensate by living vicariously not one but many lives. The romantic is thus the kind of Nietzschean sufferer: one who suffers from an overabundance of life, rather than from a paucity of it.