**Why We Need the Arts:**

**John Macmurray on Education and the Emotions**

**Abstract**

This article argues that Macmurray’s work on education is deserving of serious consideration, because it offers an account of the person that highlights the significance of the emotions and the arts. In particular, the article examines and teases out the areas of Macmurray’s concept of the person that are pertinent to the philosophy of education, which includes the contention that the emotions can and should be educated. Furthermore, on the basis of Macmurray’s work, this article argues that emotional competency is bound up with an education in the creative arts. Consequently engagement with the arts, which is often considered to be a luxury and a hobby, becomes an essential component in the development of human nature and the ability to live well. Finally, by analysing Macmurray’s description of a work of art and bringing Macmurray into conversation with contemporary views regarding the arts and the education of the emotions, in both a critical and a supportive manner, this article concludes that education in the emotions and the arts are key aspects of human well-being.

**Keywords:** John Macmurray, emotion, emotional competence, art, science, well-being

**Introduction**

John Macmurray (1891-1976) is most well known for his Gifford lectures, which have been repeatedly reprinted as two volumes with the titles *The Self as Agent* and *Persons in Relation*. *The Self as Agent* is grounded in Macmurray’s dissatisfaction with Cartesian mind-body dualism. Macmurray starts with our experience of ourselves as embodied beings, and seeks to define the self in terms of agency – our ability to engage in action - rather than thought, which necessarily requires the uniting of mind and body. Likewise, Macmurray counters the traditional division of reason and emotion arguing that emotions can be rational. (This view is now found in educational studies that show EQ to be more significant than IQ: we will return to this shortly.) Furthermore, Macmurray evades the problem of solipsism, since, in action, the existence of the other – as that which supports and resists my action - is a given. Likewise, he disputes the assertion that the self is a solitary being by insisting that humans, as agents, cannot but exist in relation with other agents. Thus, the book *Persons in Relation* is grounded in Macmurray’s belief that humans are persons by virtue of reciprocal agent-to-agent or person-to-person relations. Hence he states: ‘To be a person is ... to live as a member of a personal reality, in dependence upon it’ (Macmurray, 1935, p. 134); put simply, to be a person is to live as part of a community of persons. Moreover, in as much as our happiness is bound up with our interdependence on one another, our emotional development plays a key role in our ability to form lasting, healthy relationships. Indeed, while not citing Macmurray directly, the currently popular book by David Brooks, *The Social Animal: A Story of How Success Happens* (2011),contains an account of the significance of emotional reasons and relational bonds, which provides neuro-scientific evidence in support of Macmurray’s claims. While Brooks provides the scientific data to suggest that our emotions guide our actions more than pure reason, he is expressing a view of the human psyche that is similar to Hume’s famous claim: ‘Reason is … the slave of the passions’ (*A Treatise of Human Nature*, 2.3.3, p. 415). Thus, whereas Brooks examines the emotional impulses driving decision-making (revealing, for example, that career choices may have more to do with our relationships with partners and bosses than with monetary gain or career status), Macmurray, while arguing that our actions are motivated by our emotions, also argues that we need to educate our emotions so that our actions will be more effective.

**Persons, Emotions and Reason**

So, having set out Macmurray’s theory in brief, I will now explain in more detail the aspects of it that lead into an account of education that includes the emotions.

Macmurray’s emphasis on agency rather than cognitive ability rests on the claim that

I do not always ‘think first and then act’ (Macmurray, 1933, p. 28). In other words, as embodied persons our thoughts are neither separated from nor always in advance of action; rather, mind and body are united, acting and thinking occur simultaneously. In addition, Macmurray argues that our motivation to act is bound up with emotional desires rather than pure thought. That is, while we might deliberate on the most efficient means for producing certain ends, it is our emotions that inform decisions regarding which ends to pursue. Hence, according to Macmurray, if an individual had no emotions they would be unable to determine whether any one object was more attractive or more repulsive than any other, and, consequently, they would have no meaningful capacity for assessing the weight of one thought in relation to another or for choosing one action over another. Brooks gives the neuro-scientific data for such a claim by recounting the experience of an academic who, following brain damage to the emotional part of his brain, can give rational responses to questions, but cannot make decisions; for example, he can list the pros and cons for dressing in jeans or a suit but cannot decide what to wear, because he has no desires.

Thus, Macmurray asserts: ‘What we feel and how we feel is far more important than what we think and how we think’ (Macmurray, 1932, p. 142). Nevertheless it is possible for an individual to fail to recognize or to misinterpret their feelings, as the practice of psychology testifies. Yet as Macmurray points out, ‘if we are to be real in our feeling we must *know* what we really feel’ (Macmurray, 1932, p. 146). A real feeling, for Macmurray, is one that corresponds to the nature of the object; such as a book that is read for the enjoyment of the narrative it contains or a person who is loved for him or herself. In this sense, as we shall see in due course, Macmurray’s argument is reminiscent of, although it also goes beyond, the Aristotelian concern with the appropriateness of feelings. Hence, an ‘unreal feeling’, to use Macmurray’s term, is not a feeling that is not real (as Hume and others insists, what we feel is what we feel); rather, an unreal feeling is a feeling that is inappropriate, such as being afraid of something that presents no threat. An unreal feeling, then, is one that mistakenly holds an object to be of value which is not actually valuable in the manner felt, or it regards an action as worthless when it is actually worthwhile. Thus, when a book is considered to be a good read because of the feelings that it stimulates (as is often the case with erotic fiction, for example) or a person is loved for the way they make us feel, this, according to Macmurray, is mere sentimentality (Macmurray, 1932, p. 147). In other words, if we have inappropriate emotions, we fail to reach a reasonable evaluation of the object or situation, and so we act in ways that are not appropriate to the nature of the object or to sustaining healthy relationships. For example, we may have feelings of attachment for a broken material object or we may love the abuser. As Hepburn, whose views on unreal feeling are similar to Macmurray’s, points out, patriotism that ‘blurs all differences of value between the various aspects of one’s country’s way of life … wilfully unheeding … valuable aspects in the life of other nations’ is sentimentality (Hepburn, 1971, p. 487).

It would be helpful if Macmurray distinguished between bodily feelings and their corresponding emotions, such as feeling hot and sweaty and having the corresponding emotion of fear. Nevertheless, the terms can be used interchangeably, so long as the term ‘feeling’ is understood to relate to an emotion and not simply to bodily feelings.

Rather than seeking to have real - that is, to have reasonable - feelings, however, we have a long history of opposing feeling and reason. In Macmurray’s words: ‘In contrasting reason with emotion we are under one of the strongest influences in our Western tradition - the Stoic dualism of Reason and the Passions, with its prejudice against being emotionally involved in the results of our actions’ (Macmurray, 1961a, p. 132). While reason has been regarded as a capacity worthy of a civilized being, the feelings and their corresponding emotions have been portrayed as the brutish aspect of human nature. Thus, Macmurray maintains: ‘We are inclined to think of our feeling as something a little ignominious, something that ought to be subordinated to reason and treated as blind and chaotic’ (Macmurray, 1932, p. 142). However, Macmurray’s rejection of mind and body dualism contends that effective action requires both reason and emotion. Moreover, Macmurray argues that, if the capacity for reason is a characteristic of human beings, then, like thoughts, the emotions are (or can be) expressions of reason (Macmurray, 1935, p. 6; Macmurray, 1957, p. 199). Further, if emotions can have rationality in this way, they can be self-regulating and do not need to be subordinated to thought.

Reason, Macmurray alleges: ‘is the capacity to behave consciously in terms of the nature of what is not ourselves ... reason is the capacity to behave in terms of the nature of the object, that is to say, to behave objectively’ (Macmurray, 1953, p. 7). For example, when a toddler runs out into a busy road, the carer’s own nature compels him or her to shout out; yet, in order to avoid frightening the child and causing the child to freeze in front of the oncoming traffic, the carer keeps quiet and reaches out to seize the child. Thus the carer’s behaviour reflects the child’s nature, and is an illustration of the carer’s ability to exhibit objectivity. Hence, Macmurray states that ‘feelings can be rational or irrational in precisely the same way as thoughts, through the correctness or incorrectness of their reference to reality’ (Macmurray, 1935, p. 11). To be afraid of an object that presents no danger to the self, then, is to have an irrational or subjective emotion, whereas an objective emotion ‘is an immediate appreciation of the value and significance of real things’ (Macmurray, 1935, p. 15).

For traditionalists the suggestion that emotions are not irrational or even arational, but are capable of possessing rationality, might seem absurd, yet Macmurray is not alone in his approach to this issue. One scholar with whom Macmurray shares assertions on this topic is Ronald de Sousa. De Sousa claims that emotions are objective, in the sense that they can provide information about an object in the world that holds regardless of our emotional reaction to it. In other words, in reference to Plato’s question – does something become loveable because it is loved or do we love it because it is loveable – Macmurray and de Sousa would argue that something is loved on the grounds that it is loveable, not merely held to be loveable because it is loved. This emotional rationality is, de Sousa holds, ‘axiological’ rationality (de Sousa, 1987, p. 171); in other words, it is grounded in worth or value. Although axiology is exhibited when an emotion is appropriate to its object, there is no one emotion that is always axiologically rational in any given situation, nor any single situation that demands just one axiologically rational emotion. Hence, de Sousa recommends applying the principle: ‘Let your emotions be appropriate to the widest possible range of available scenarios’ (de Sousa, 1987, p. 187). In the context of the emotions, therefore, emotions which are regarded as expressing reason are those that are appropriate to the situation or object with which they are concerned, in the same way that thoughts and actions are regarded as rational when they are appropriate to the nature of the object. For example, while it may release tension, it is not rational to shout in anger at the computer or the television, since these inanimate objects will not work differently because of the angry shouting. Nevertheless, there will be a whole range of scenarios in which anger is appropriate, such as those in which acting out of anger will produce justice for an injured party.

**Emotions, Education and Sincerity**

Since we live in a culture in which science is valued over the arts, largely due to the economic benefits that are perceived to be connected with advances in technology as opposed to the more hidden benefits that come from the arts, the occurrence of irrational or unreasonable emotions is commonplace. Yet, for Macmurray, the experience of irrational feelings indicates the potential for enlarging the scope of reason in the emotional life. He states that ‘primitive, uncultivated feeling is chaotic and unruly, but so is primitive, uncultivated thought’ (Macmurray, 1932, p. 143). Thought, however, has had the opportunity to gain in maturity, whereas feeling has not. Greater rationality of feeling could be achieved, then, if we recognized the need to educate the emotions.

A successful education of the emotions would, Macmurray holds, ‘shift the centre of feeling from the self to the world outside’ (Macmurray, 1935, p. 14) through the refinement of sensory-awareness. It is through the senses that we recognize the intrinsic as opposed to the mere instrumental value of an object, ‘appreciating and enjoying it for *itself*’’ (Macmurray, 1935, p. 22). This appreciative perception cannot be achieved through thought, Macmurray claims, because: ‘Intellectual knowledge ... gives us knowledge *about* things, not knowledge *of* them. It does not reveal knowledge of the world as it is. Only emotional knowledge can do that’ (Macmurray, 1935, p. 22). Thus, to increase sensory-awareness is to increase the ability to experience pleasure and recognize beauty; however, this simultaneously increases the capacity to experience suffering and destruction. Paradoxically therefore, Macmurray states:

We must choose between a life that is thin and narrow, uncreative and mechanical, with the assurance that even if it is not very exciting it will not be intolerably painful; and a life in which the increase in its fullness and creativeness brings a vast increase in delight, but also in pain and hurt (Macmurray, 1935, p. 25).

There is a connection here between Macmurray’s promotion of an emotional education and Aristotle’s understanding of proper feeling. In Aristotle’s description of moral education the purpose of reason, as practical wisdom, is not to eradicate the passions; rather it is to moderate them, ascertaining ‘neither too much nor too little’ but an ‘intermediate’ level of feeling (Aristotle, 1980, 2.6, 1106a17-b9). Like Macmurray, Aristotle insists that emotions can be rational, through knowledge and training. Aristotle maintains that ‘in educating the young we steer them by the rudders of pleasure and pain ... to enjoy the things we ought and to hate the things we ought’ (Aristotle, 1980, 10.1, 1172a15-b2).

Nevertheless, Macmurray goes further than Aristotle. Emotional training does not mean telling children what they ought to feel, just as intellectual training does not mean dictating to an individual what they ought to think. Rather, the pursuit of emotional growth involves an empirical struggle to encounter and discriminate the expanse of values in the world, just as the pursuit of thought ‘finds its discipline in the effort to know’ (Macmurray, 1935, p. 38) through engagement with a plurality of intellectual theories. On this basis Macmurray claims: ‘Emotional education should be, therefore, a considered effort to teach children to feel for themselves; in the same sense that their intellectual training should be an effort to teach them to think for themselves’ (Macmurray, 1935, p. 39).

Macmurray’s perception of the emotions and the ability to educate them is shared some years later by Hepburn, who, maintaining that emotions have a cognitive element that can be educated, states: ‘We can argue about the correctness, reasonableness, of seeing one’s situation in this way or that way, and thus of having this or that emotion. Emotions can have adequate or inadequate grounds, be justified or absurd’ (Hepburn, 1972, pp. 484-5).

Recently, views similar to Macmurray’s (and Hepburn’s) have gained currency. There has been a philosophical shift from the idea that the emotions are irrational to a recapturing of the Aristotelian or Neo-Stoic view that the emotions are part of intelligence or right reasoning. Peter Goldie, for example, while distinguishing between bodily feelings and feelings more closely connected with emotions, argues that the latter are related to objects and direct our actions (Goldie, 2000). Furthermore, Martha Nussbaum argues that inadequate emotions will have a detrimental effect on our perception of the world and thus will render our action less effective (Nussbaum, 2001). In addition, while the field of psychology has (since Freud) testified to the hold that misunderstood emotions have on a person and hence on his or her behaviour, the growing instances of crime and violence on school property have forced a reassessment of traditional educational principles. Daniel Goleman, while not without his critics, holds that incidents of violence at school and wider social problems - such as the increases in crime, depression, eating disorders, drug addiction and marital breakdown - can be attributed, at least in part, to a lack of structured emotional education and a profound emphasis on intellectual ability.

From his neurological and physiological studies Goleman concludes that, in a sense, human beings have both an intellectual brain and an emotional brain, and the latter at times overrides the former (Goleman, 1995, pp. 1-29). Further he claims that childhood IQ (intelligence quotient) scores are unable to predict who, as adults, will demonstrate the greatest aptitude for life or who will struggle to be content and to integrate into society. On these grounds Goleman alleges that a child’s development is affected by EI: ‘emotional intelligence’ (Goleman, 1995, p. xii), often referred to as EQ (emotion quotient), at least as much as it is by their intellectual brilliance.

Thus, within the context of a reassuring environment, Goleman suggests, properly trained teachers can enhance the self-awareness and interpersonal skills of their pupils thereby reshaping emotional deficiencies (Goleman, 1995, pp. 187-228). Hence emotional education can function as prevention rather than cure for what are sometimes referred to as society’s ills. In its most effective form, Goleman maintains, EQ is not a new subject on the curriculum complete with examinations and grades; rather it is blended into the daily routine of school life, thereby pervading all other subjects and addressing issues as and when they arise (Goleman, 1995, pp. 261-288). The central components of EQ contributing to an individual’s happiness and social adjustment throughout life, include, according to Goleman: ‘being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one’s moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathize and to hope’ (Goleman, 1995, p. 34).

As a concrete example of the effect of emotional maturity on personal growth Goleman cites ‘The Marshmallow Test’, which was carried out in the 1960s by the psychologist Walter Mischel (Goleman, 1995, pp. 80-83). In the experiment children who were four years old were placed in front of a marshmallow and told that they could eat it immediately, but if they waited for ten minutes they would be given two marshmallows. Over the next fifteen years the progress of the children was intermittently reassessed. The results showed repeatedly that those who had received the second marshmallow were more socially adept and achieved higher academic grades than those who had eaten the single marshmallow; however this difference could not be mapped onto the graph of their IQ scores. Mischel concluded, therefore, that the ability to deal with setbacks in later life is developed in childhood.

Although many factors could have influenced Mischel’s findings, according to Goleman the schools that advocate training in emotional competency – identifying emotions and considering appropriate reactions to them - are making comparable claims. In large inner-city schools as well as in small private educational institutions, Goleman reports that aggression, depression, eating disorders, drug abuse and the breakdown of relationships have decreased since they began to teach emotional competence (Goleman, 1995, pp. 229-287). Overall the results of emotional competency, he alleges, are an increased sense of community in schools and improved IQ scores. Nevertheless Goleman does not suggest that the development of EQ is a panacea (Goleman, 1995, pp. 256-260). However, he does assert that an education in emotional intelligence will have a much greater effect on children’s personal well-being and social integration than the mere provision of information about potential dangers; such as drugs, pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and bullying. I suspect that the ability to control impulse and delay gratification might be useful in reducing financial debt too.

It seems that Goleman’s more contemporary study provides support for Macmurray’s earlier contention that the emotions can be expressive of reason, and, when they are so, they will contribute to human flourishing by reflecting the nature of the object or person to which they refer and thus producing more ‘successful’ action and relationships. Yet emotional education, despite its growth, is having a mixed reception. On the one hand, Goleman is criticized both for using the term ‘intelligence’ (Eysenck, 2000, pp. 109-110) when referring to the emotions and for popularizing the more scientific account of emotional intelligence put forward by Mayer and Salovey (1990; 1993; with Caruso 2004). On the other hand, focus on the social and emotional aspects of learning is promoted in only some educational institutions, on the grounds that these skills are essential for all aspects of school and community life. Understandably, then, Maxwell and Reichenbach argue that ‘the idea of educating the emotions . . . remains something of a taboo subject’ (Maxwell and Reichenbach, 2005, p. 292). They explain that, while the practice of emotional education is widespread, it lacks open acknowledgement. For as long as the education of the emotions is regarded as illegitimate, however, its success will be limited.

In addition, an important corollary of emotional education, found in Macmurray’s work but missing from the contemporary discussions, is the notion of ‘emotional sincerity’ (Macmurray, 1935, p. 75). Emotional insincerity, he claims, is similar to intellectual insincerity; that is, while the latter implies the dishonest expression of thoughts, the former refers to the dishonest expression of feelings. There are, therefore, two possibilities of insincerity in each case. Negative insincerity is when an individual claims to think something that they do not think or pretends to feel something that they do not really feel (which D.H. Lawrence calls counterfeit feeling). Positive insincerity is when an individual fails to state a belief that they do hold, which would be ‘to someone else’s advantage’ to know, or conceals a feeling that they do feel ‘from someone to whom it makes a real difference’ (Macmurray, 1935, p. 76). Emotional sincerity, then, is the non-expression of feelings that are absent and also the expression of feelings that are present.

Given the context in which he is writing, Macmurray acknowledges that the effort to pursue emotional sincerity is at odds with the historical Christian instruction to be intellectually sincere in the relaying of truths, but emotionally insincere in the feigning of warmth and understanding. He declares that ‘though we think it wrong to tell lies - that is, to express a thought which we don’t really think, we often think it right and virtuous to express a feeling that we don’t feel. It is not right; it is completely demoralizing’ (Macmurray, 1932, p. 150). Indeed, for Macmurray, emotional insincerity is destructive on the grounds that its persistence leads to irreparable self-deception and the disruption of personal integrity. In his opinion: ‘Emotional pretence leads to emotional insensibility’ (Macmurray, 1935, p. 77). That is, while an individual can be persuaded that falsehoods are truths, they can be convinced equally that they feel something that they do not feel.

Thus, to increase emotional sincerity, Macmurray alleges, is moral progress. He states that emotional sincerity ‘will not guarantee us security or pleasure or happiness or comfort: but it will give us what is more worth having, a slow gradual realization of the goodness of the world and of living in it’ (Macmurray, 1932, p. 49). If we are unreal in our thoughts and feelings, we are inward looking and ‘egocentric’ (Macmurray, 1932, p. 55), concerned with how we feel and with what others think, whereas, according to Macmurray: ‘To be real is to live by the reality that is in you, and from within outwards. It is to be yourself. And we can only be ourselves for other people’ (Macmurray, 1932, p. 162).

In my opinion, if we are to take the emotional education of our children seriously, we must be open to the promotion of emotional sincerity. While various school initiatives, such as circle time, encourage children to listen to others and to talk about their feelings in an open and supportive environment, this positive work is often undermined by playground politics. That is, when children are told they must ‘all play together’, they are being encouraged to express positive feelings towards children that they dislike. While children should not be encouraged to be mean towards other children and have to learn to work with all types of people, they should also have the freedom to choose who to be friends with. If we do not allow children to express feelings of love and concern honestly, we are not encouraging them to develop healthy relationships as adults. In addition, a child’s own sense of well-being will flourish in caring relationships, but will be limited in relationships of feigned care and concern. As has been well documented by child abuse studies, children who are taught to kiss and hug adults, such as elderly relatives, when they feel uncomfortable doing so, are more vulnerable in the face of abuse than children who have been given the freedom to only kiss, hug or say “I love you” when they feel comfortable doing so. On the contrary, positive and healthy relationships require empathy; we need to educate children to read both their own and others feelings.

**Training in the Arts**

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of Macmurray’s work on the education of the emotions, however, is that it connects emotional education with ‘training in artistry’ (Macmurray, 1935, p. 42). In this respect, what Macmurray advocates goes way beyond school initiatives that discuss feelings and corresponding behaviours. Macmurray insists that we need to engage with the arts to achieve maturity of feeling and the appreciation of the nature of objects and persons. Yet, in the global west we live in societies where politics and education focus on the growth and development of science, because we are more focussed on material gain than on human flourishing. In short, the pertinence of science is more widely acknowledged than the relevance of art, since the outcomes of the former are more easily measured than the latter, given a particular view of what constitutes a benefit to society.

Admittedly, the activity of art makes use of science; thus, emotional development cannot be carried out in isolation from scientific knowledge. However, Macmurray also argues that the application of science needs art, because ‘the artistic consciousness of the object, is *knowledge proper*, as distinct from the understanding of or information about the object, which is all science can give us’ (Macmurray, 1935, p. 92). That is, while science is ultimately concerned with the utility value of an object – with how we can make use of or control it – the primary focus of the artist is to know an object in its individuality; specifically the object that is being painted or sculpted for example, but not necessarily the paintbrushes or tools being used. In other words, there is a sense in which, while science is concerned with the usefulness of an object, art is concerned with the object in itself (a definition of the aesthetic that Macmurray shares with Kant). Hence the essential characteristic of the aesthetic attitude, Macmurray alleges, is contemplation (Macmurray, 1961b, p. 33); that is, sustained critical appraisal of an object through which the perception of the nature of the object is successively refined, and, therefore, the emotions corresponding to the object gradually rendered more adequate. Moreover, while this is clearly the case for the visual arts, such as painting and sculpture, it is also true of the other creative arts, such as music, theatre and dance, where the object is less obviously an object, but aesthetic attention and the refinement of emotional responses and expression still applies. With an education in the arts, therefore, any human being can cultivate this aesthetic attitude; for the artist it culminates in the creation of a work of art (Macmurray, 1925).

An art-work begins, then, with meditation on an actual things in the world; this may be objects, relationships, musical composition and so on. Its completion is not a merely factual portrayal of those things; rather it is a symbolic representation of the sensual experience which those things gives rise to, regardless of whether this is sadness or happiness, repulsion or attraction. Thus, in Macmurray’s opinion, the artist does not create because they have observed, instead, the artist attempts to present their vision of the inner worth of something (Macmurray, 1935, p. 99). Subsequent to its creation, then, the work of art is surrendered to an audience who submit it to a further stage of critical appreciation and aesthetic attention.

Thus, contrary to Roland Barthes assertion that ‘the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author’ (Barthes, 1977, p. 148), Macmurray relinquishes the importance of neither artist nor spectator. On the contrary, while Macmurray does not argue that the author has the authoritative statement on interpretation, he argues that the art-work is an expression of the artist as an individual (Macmurray, 1961b, p. 40). Nevertheless, it is the audience’s interpretation of a work of art that determines whether it is valued as an art-work that successfully portrays the uniqueness of something. If the emotions are rational (appropriate to the nature of things); that is, if the capacity for sensibility (sensory awareness) has been cultivated, then the valuation of a work of art by its audience will correspond to the extent that the artist has actually achieved objectivity, initially in contemplation and subsequently in creation (Janet Wolff, 1981, pp. 117-43). However an emotionally and, therefore, artistically uneducated audience would respond irrationally to pieces that did not capture the intrinsic worth of something, valuing the pieces for the emotions they stimulate. Consequently the valuation of the piece would be relying upon its effect rather than its statement. In this respect, Macmurray shares R. G. Collingwood’s understanding of art; they both maintain that a piece which is praised for the feelings it gives rise to instead of for its own sake has failed to adequately apprehend and express the nature of that which it focuses upon (*RE*, p. 14; Collingwood, 1958). In this assessment we should take care, as William James points out, to distinguish between primary ‘pure and simple’ aesthetic emotions and secondary emotions; primary emotions arise from the artwork whereas secondary emotions arise from the primary ones (James, 1890, p. 468). Clearly, Macmurray and Collingwood are referring to James’ primary emotions when they assess the success or otherwise of a work of art. In fact, Macmurray and Collingwood claim that ‘unsuccessful’ works of art – those that have not portrayed the nature of the things on which they are focused and are praised for the emotions they elicit - are not properly referred to as works of art; however, as we shall see, this description of a work of art contains internal circularity.

According to Macmurray, a work of art deliberately represents the artist’s aesthetic appreciation. The term ‘represents’ implies that the work of art gives rise to a similar aesthetic appreciation in its audience, but it is not clear who decides that a piece of potential art has succeeded in recreating this experience and thus does qualify as a work of art. When a human creation, intended to reveal the intrinsic worth of something, is aesthetically appreciated by a group of individuals, they may classify the piece as a work of art; this is indeed how works of art come to be regarded as such by the established art world. However, such recognition is relative, since it is dependent upon the appreciation of the art world, and, yet, the failure to achieve aesthetic appreciation could be the fault of an emotionally closed audience and not the fault of the artist (but it is not clear who would have the authority to judge whether this was the case). Thus, the art world, in reception of works of art, relies on the expertise and judgement of artists and art critics, but their judgements may change over time; indeed, it is not uncommon for works of art to receive widespread recognition after rather than before the death of the artist who created them.

A training in artistry – thinking about art, developing creative ideas, making art and performing art - is substantially different from an education in science. Although scientific education has developed from the learning of facts into a more constructive understanding of concepts and methods, it is still focused on factual knowledge for understanding how things work, albeit for the purpose of applying this knowledge (in creative ways) to further collective scientific progress. While an education in the arts also involves intellectual engagement with facts and the skills of production, it is not focused as much on technological progression as on personal appreciation and expression. For the purpose of schooling, therefore, Macmurray contends that art is not a subject to be taught in the same way that science is taught; rather aesthetic appreciation is an attitude with which an individual becomes infected by meeting with artistic people (Macmurray, undated a). Education in art history, then, is a requirement for understanding the aesthetic attention that inherited works of art command; yet, it is spontaneity and imagination that will expand the previous perception of what constitutes art. For today’s audience, therefore, it is originality as opposed to reproduction that will render a work of art precious. Macmurray states that:

it is the modern artists we must look to ... the old masters are useless. They have no knowledge of the actual world in which we live, out of which a new world might be created ... The cult of the antique may develop taste, but it tends to destroy artistic receptivity. For the old has done its work of social transformation (Macmurray, 1935, p. 100).

The twentieth century was testimony to rapid growth in the field of art. As Ernst Gombrich reveals, twentieth century art appears to have broken with traditional structures in all areas; for example, visual art has combined with science to invent the mobile, while the ability of surrealism to use one shape to represent many things is unprecedented (Gombrich, 1978). Moreover, in the twenty-first century the massive developments in technology have led to art galleries facing the increasing complexities of displaying digital art. Such developments are consistent with Macmurray’s account, since, as Michael Gill maintains, Macmurray escapes any tendency to construct a static definition of art through his insistence on active progression, which demands that aesthetic notions of value are always in flux (Gill, 1989, p. 20). Whatever the form that art takes, it is its connection with the emotions that is Macmurray’s primary concern.

Furthermore, while suggesting that educated emotions appropriately evaluate situations and objects, Hepburn also contends that the most ‘unhackneyed and richly variegated emotions’ are to be found in works of art (Hepburn, 1972, p. 485). By comparing ‘greeting-card emotion stereotypes’ with passages from Tolstoy and Shakespeare, Hepburn show how works of art - specifically literature in his examples but his argument applies to other creative arts also - provide us with an education in the emotions by offering detailed rather than clichéd descriptions of a character’s emotions, and thereby broadening our emotional experience (Hepburn, 1972, p. 486). When we engage with works of art and the detail and precision of the emotions they expose, we have a standard with which to compare our own emotional responses to objects, situations and persons, and, thus, a means by which to acknowledge and eradicate unreasonable and insincere emotions. For Hepburn ‘an aesthetic education is an introduction to countless *alternative* possibilities for feeling’ (Hepburn, 1972, p. 488), such that, we gain freedom of (not from) the emotions and are no longer confined to feeling that is dictated by culture and cliché.

**Critiquing Macmurray**

If Macmurray’s description of the arts and their relation to the world is credible, then the partial introduction of emotional education in contemporary schooling is an indication that humanity is moving forward in a positive direction. Primarily, as we have seen, Macmurray’s emphasis on the need for the arts as well as the sciences rests on the assumption that the scientific knowledge that is primarily focused on matters of fact cannot be substituted for an artistic attitude that also focuses on matters of value. Similarly, Anthony O’Hear insists that the purpose of scientific enquiry is to present others with a value-free representation of the world (O’Hear, 1991, pp. 223-9); however, once the application of scientific knowledge becomes an issue, value-judgements cannot be avoided.

In fact, the contemporary arguments for and against the use of stem cell research, gender reassignment, abortion, euthanasia, Trident and fracking are just some of the areas in which science has achieved the knowledge and the means to carry out procedures where their value and moral application is hotly debated. On the one hand, it could be argued that value-judgements have already been made before a scientific project is given funding, and so scientists ought to consider the ends to which the financiers will put their scientific discoveries. On the other hand, scientific realists may argue that the scientific quest in itself is a search for facts about the world; consequently it is concerned with what is the case and not with what ought to be done.

Nevertheless, even if we accepted such a definition of science, it is not necessarily the case that exempting the scientific world from making value-judgements would, as Macmurray suggests, leave the art world with the responsibility of providing an education in emotions and value-judgements. Yet, Margolis and Blocker do accept that artistic creation does bear some correlation to the emotional perception of matters of value (Margolis, 1980, p. 191; Blocker, 1979, p. 221). This does not mean, however, either that the audience’s feelings towards a work of art are inherently representative of the artist’s, or that the artist has expressed the final and the most adequate understanding of the world. If we guard against these two erroneous assumptions, then, it does seem plausible to present the artistic temperament as that which will enhance emotional appropriateness and the apprehension of the intrinsic worth of objects and persons.

Due to the overemphasis on the intellectual life, however, the prevailing attitude in contemporary society is the scientific one; hence humans engage with objects in the world in order to assess the potential utility of them. It is, therefore, Macmurray’s emphasis on aesthetic appreciation, as that which counteracts an overly instrumental view of the world, that is highly significant. Moreover, his concern with educating the emotions, through visual and creative arts, is so that we can value objects, experiences and persons for their own sake, in order to be more successful in action and in sustaining relationships; in short, to live well (Macmurray, undated b). In spite of difficulties in detail then, such as the flexibility in defining a work of art that leaves rather vague terms for distinguishing between art and non-art, Macmurray suggests that the arts, which are often considered to be mere luxuries and/or hobbies, be elevated to the current status of intellectual and scientific pursuits. Notwithstanding the need to clarify the concepts ‘feeling’ and ‘emotion’, based on the argument above, I agree with Macmurray that educating the emotions and engaging with the arts are essential components for human well-being.

Furthermore, in Macmurray’s defence, although his papers on education remained unpublished, he sought to put his theory into practice through a number of educational ventures. In particular, during the 1940s Macmurray, together with Kenneth Barnes, founded the Wennington School in Lancashire (which, later moved to Wetherby, Yorkshire). The school operated on the principle that emotional training and play assist in the development of the intellect: it survived on limited finances for over thirty years and was commended for its results (Costello, 2002, pp. 196 and 374).

**Conclusion**

Thus, while a more consistent approach to emotional education is needed, it seems clear that well-educated emotions are more likely than ignored, suppressed or uneducated ones to assist children in developing the ability to be self-motivated and to sustain long term relationships. Admittedly, we will be limited in attempts to be reasonable in our emotions and we may fail at times, but if we do not even seek to educate our emotions, the failures will be much greater. At present, emotional education in schools focuses on discussions of emotional experiences and relationship problems, whereas, as I have highlighted above, Macmurray also stresses the significance of the artistic temperament in the cultivation of adequate emotions and value-judgements, and hence the need for training in the arts. If we are to free our feeling from clichés and enlarge the scope of appropriate emotions, we need to engage with a wide range of art forms from a variety of historical and contemporary periods and cultures; thus, guarding against a confined and static definition of art that reinforces emotional stereotypes. Consequently, there is scope for this insistence on the importance of visual and creative arts still to be realized in education and in the wider society, where politicians find it easier to justify the value of scientific disciplines over the value of the arts. As studies on happiness and well-being are growing, I contend that we need to re-focus our educational attention so that we are not only concerned with measurable outcomes; we need to broaden our conception of what constitutes a benefit to society. That is, we need an education in the arts as much as the sciences, because we grasp the significance of educated emotions and the intrinsic value of objects and relationships. Contemporary author Neil Gaiman, in his recent lecture for the Reading Agency, sets out the claim that reading fiction develops thought, motivation and empathy:

Fiction can show you a different world. It can take you somewhere you've never been. Once you've visited other worlds, like those who ate fairy fruit, you can never be entirely content with the world that you grew up in. Discontent is a good thing: discontented people can modify and improve their worlds, leave them better, leave them different (‘Neil Gaiman’, 2013).

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