Ethics and Education

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Who needs empathy? A response to Goldie's arguments against empathy and suggestions for an account of mutual perspective-shifting in contexts of help and care[1]

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According to an influential view, empathy has, and should have, a role in ethics, but it is by no means clear what is meant by 'empathy', and why exactly it is supposed to be morally good. Recently, Peter Goldie has challenged that view. He shows how problematic empathy is, and argues that taking an external perspective is morally superior: we should focus on the other, rather than ourselves. But this argument is misguided in several ways. If we consider conversation, there is no need to see an opposition between a focus on the other and on ourselves. I propose to shift the perspective of the discussion towards the needs of those who are supposed to benefit from empathy, and to study how people communicate their imaginative processes towards their receivers. I end with an exploration of theoretical resources for an account of mutual perspective-shifting.

Keywords: *Empathy; Perspective-shifting; Care; Goldie; Nussbaum; Habermas*

Introduction

According to an influential view, empathy has, and should have, a role in ethics, and often literature is recommended as a means to stimulate our capacity for empathy (see the work of Martha Nussbaum). However, it is by no means clear what is meant by 'empathy', and why exactly it is supposed to be morally good. Recently, Peter Goldie has challenged the idea that it is a good thing to empathise with other people (Goldie, 2005, 2006a, b). Defining empathy in terms of what he calls

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'perspective-shifting', he claims that empathy is not the best route to ethics. Drawing on Richard Wollheim's work on emotions (Wollheim, 1984, 1999; Goldie, 2006c), he shows how problematic empathy is, and argues that taking an external perspective is morally superior to empathy understood in this way. Furthermore, like others (e.g. Gilligan, 2004) he warns against so-called 'egoistic drift' (Hoffman, 2000): perspective-shifting may become egoistic if we mainly put ourselves in the place of another or if we start an endless story of our own misery in response to someone else's appeal to us. Finally, Goldie recommends us to focus on the other and on the differences between ourselves and the other.

I argue in this paper that this response to discussions about empathy is misguided in several ways. After outlining Goldie's view, supplemented with Gilligan's point about egoistic drift, I discuss my objections and put forward my own (alternative) claims about empathy. While doing that, I will also use and respond to some of Nussbaum's arguments. I end with a programmatic remark about philosophical discussions of empathy.

Goldie's problem with empathy as perspective-shifting

Goldie's argument against empathy is concerned with empathy as perspective-shifting, typically described as 'putting yourself in the other's shoes'. It involves what Goldie calls 'imagining from the inside' the thoughts, feelings, and emotional experiences of the other by shifting the perspective to the other (Goldie, 2006a). For Goldie, empathy as perspective-shifting involves taking on the mental states and mental dispositions of the other. With Wollheim, he defines mental dispositions as a 'more or less persisting modification of the mind', including beliefs, emotions, memories, traits of personality, abilities, habits, etc. Dispositions are to be distinguished from mere mental states, a term that refers to the perceptions, thoughts, sensations, images, etc. that make up the stream of consciousness. Using Wollheim's work on the mind and the emotions, Goldie thinks of the connection between the two in terms of metaphors of depth and surface: dispositions manifest themselves in the surface stream of conscious emotional experience. Dispositions 'constrain and shape conscious experience' (Goldie, 2006c). He argues that perspective-shifting involves taking on the mental disposition of the other.[2] This is problematic if there are relevant differences in mental disposition or character. Goldie gives the example of Salieri's envy of Mozart (Goldie, 2006a, c). How *can* we empathise with Salieri, if his dispositions in relation to Mozart are not ours (2006a)? How are we to empathise with others if our relevant emotional dispositions are not similar to those of the other? Goldie admits that we know what it is to feel envy, and that shared emotional experience is what makes empathy possible, but he argues that this strategy fails since it does not take seriously the intentionality of emotional dispositions: Salieri's disposition is envy-of-Mozart rather than just envy. To get this right, we would have to try to make our mental life as much like Salieri's as we can.

But this is a very complex task. And in cases where we do not share the same emotional disposition of the other person, it is extremely hard (Goldie, 2006c).

Given this and other problems with empathy as perspective-shifting, Goldie proposes an alternative way of engaging with the thoughts and feelings of other people (Goldie, 2005, 2006a): taking an external perspective. By this term he means imagining the person as *another* (Goldie, 2006a). We think of the person's thoughts and feelings (she thinks that *p*, she feels *f*), but this does not require taking on the other's mental dispositions. One imagines the other 'as another person with a possibly significantly different perspective to one's own' (Goldie, 2005). The other may have different thoughts and feelings (mental states, stream of consciousness) and different mental dispositions. This alternative solution does not only avoid the problems discussed above; according to Goldie, it is a better way to engage with others ethically, since we deal with them as *others*. By adopting an external perspective we can 'appreciate these diverging perspectives' and 'evaluate them in comparison to our own' (Goldie, 2005). Goldie uses the term 'dramatic irony' to refer to this split between the two perspectives. In drama, the audience knows things the character in the drama does not always know. Similarly, in the real world divergences can occur between perspectives. Ethics, then, requires us to appreciate diverging perspectives. By reading novels, we can develop this skill. And we need to maintain an external perspective in order to do this. Putting yourself in another's shoes will often not yield up a deeper understanding of the other, but rather sheer incomprehension: 'I couldn't imagine doing such a thing' (Goldie, 2005). Consider the problem of giving advice to another person. For Goldie, if we put ourselves in the other's shoes, we are not in a position to take into account what we know and the other does not, nor are we able to take account of the divergences between our perspectives (Goldie, 2005). The right model for advice, Goldie suggests, is 'based on the right way to buy a present for someone': it is to ask what the *other* person wants (Goldie, 2005).

Against the objection that we could first shift perspective and then return to our own external perspective, Goldie replies that such an approach can easily end up in self-indulgence. If you say 'I know just how you feel' and start talking about what happened to you, your mind is on your own experience rather than that of the other. In *Empathy and moral development* Martin Hoffman has called this 'egoistic drift' (Hoffman, 2000). Goldie argues that our focus should rather be on the other's experience (Goldie, 2005).

In a similar vein, Tara Gilligan has argued that 'imagining what it's like to be x' is typically used to describe an egocentric act of imagining (Gilligan, 2003), and she has proposed a distinction between egocentric imaginings and other-directed or non-egocentric imaginings (2004). For her the problem of empathizing with others is that we may merely shape our ideas about the other into something that mirrors our own beliefs and values. Therefore, Gilligan rejects empathy as a model for ethical engagement with others. She stresses that 'one can imagine what it is like to be x without needing to place oneself anywhere'. Rather than imagining oneself as occupying x's situation, we can and should adopt a close-up perspective on

x's situation. She calls for an other-directed, non-egocentric form of imagining that avoids blurring the boundary line between oneself and the other, and allows us to 'respond to another *qua* unique individual and not as an extension of oneself' (Gilligan, 2004). Thus, Gilligan rejects 'egocentric imagining' for roughly the same reason as Goldie opposes internal perspective-shifting, and both wish to remedy this by calling for different imaginative (Gilligan) or other (Goldie) forms of engagement that give more attention to the needs, beliefs, and values of the other.

A response

In response to these arguments, I will discuss some questions. Let me start by asking, what kind of empathy do we need ethically?

What kind of empathy is needed ethically? Empathy between identification and puppeteering

Goldie assumes that empathy as perspective-shifting involves taking on the mental dispositions of others. But is this an adequate way of understanding empathy? In *Upheavals of thought* (2001), Martha Nussbaum defines empathy as the 'imaginative reconstruction of the experience of the sufferer' (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 327), which implies a two-fold attention: while imagining the experience of the other, we remain aware of the difference between ourselves and the sufferer. 'Here I know that I'm not the one who suffers' (p. 327).

> What is wanted, it seems, is a kind of 'two-fold attention,' in which one both imagines what it is like to be in the sufferer's place and, at the same time, retains securely the awareness that one is not in that place. (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 328)

Here there is no identification and it remains in all senses an exercise of the *imagination*. In his arguments against empathy as perspective-shifting, Goldie mistakenly assumes that it involves identification and fails to take seriously the imaginative aspect of empathy. We do not need to *really* take on the mental dispositions of the person, we do not need to really *become* the person – if such things were possible at all. Goldie appears to argue against a view of empathy the requirements of which are both unnecessary and impossible. For an ethical response toward others, it is enough that we shift our perspective for a short time and to such an extent as is morally necessary. This will probably involve a temporary change in our mental state (emotions), but there is no need for us change *ourselves*. A long-term exercise built on the model of (method) acting is not required. If suffices that we, for the purposes of ethical judgment, decision, and action here and now, imagine how it would be to be in the position of the other. A moral minimum of empathy is often enough to deliver up the level of understanding ethics requires.

What do I mean by 'moral minimum'? Exactly how much empathy is required for moral understanding? I guess that this cannot be defined *a priori* – on the basis

of my argument above I can only say that anything approaching identification far exceeds the minimum requirement. But the target is clear and is shared by all positions in this discussion: understanding of the other. This is the condition that must be met by the sort of imaginative exercise that the moral agent undertakes.

Furthermore, the kind of empathy we want to talk about in the case of ethics is not egocentric, since the emphasis is not on *me* who puts myself in the other's shoes, but on the experiences of the *other*. Gilligan (2003) interprets Nussbaum's view as involving 'first-person absorption', but this is quite unnecessary. While it may be true that Nussbaum could do more to rule out such an interpretation, in her view the aim of empathy is certainly a better comprehension of the *other* rather than self-absorption. Moreover, although self-absorption is always possible, the capacity of empathy itself is not to blame for it. In a sense, there is no such thing as egocentric empathy, but only the egocentric *use* of empathy. As Nussbaum's example of the empathetic torturer shows (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 329), empathy itself is morally neutral. (Therefore, I infer, it is plausible that empathy is not enough for ethical action and evaluation.[3] I will return to this point below.)

Moreover, while we do not want 'too much', that is, total identification, neither do we want 'too little'. We do not want a form of so-called 'empathy' that is a form of re-dressing oneself. Let me clarify this point by referring to video games and the film *Being John Malkovich*. In video games, the gamer conducts an avatar. In that case, there is no empathy, since what we feel are *our own* experiences of conducting this avatar in the virtual environment and acting with it. It is me who acts and feels what is going on. Although there may be some narrative related to the game figure and the game figure may even have a virtual character or 'identity', I do not respond empathically to *another*. I respond to the virtual world. I experience being myself, not being someone else. The same holds for what goes on in the film *Being John Malkovich*. The main character of the film discovers a portal in his office which allows him to look though the eyes of John Malkovich, and at a later stage he even enters his body. But at all times the main character remains himself, 'merely' using the body of Malkovich. There is no empathic process through which to think or feel what the *other* thinks or feels. What happens to Malkovich is similar to the process of visitation by a daemon. The self or mind of someone is replaced by that of the daemon. The (mind or self of the) other (temporarily) disappears, and his or her body becomes a puppet (the profession of the main character in the film is puppeteer). Whatever remarks we can make about the problem of dualism in this interpretation, we can agree that this transformation of the other into a puppet or the manipulation of an avatar is not what we mean by the kind of empathy that is supposed to be ethically useful. It fails to satisfy the condition or aim of moral understanding of the other.

To conclude this argument, I propose to distinguish between three kinds of shifts or changes: an identity shift, a perspective shift, and a body shift. The identity shift, *being* the other, does not qualify as the kind of empathy we want for ethics, since it is no longer imaginative and may even prevent a person from aiding another. This is a view neither Goldie nor anyone else may want to be committed to. The body

shift, *putting yourself in the other's shoes*, is a re-dressing, taking on the body of the virtual person, and is also not very helpful ethically. What remains, then, is perspective-shifting properly speaking, that is, *imagining* being someone else. I try to look at the world from your perspective, but not in the way that you are an avatar in a computer game, or a body-for-use. And it is still me who imagines and I am aware of myself as imagining, so there is no identity shift. Furthermore, I try to look at the world from your perspective, not from my perspective while using your body. Finally, the version of perspective shifting we want is one with the focus being non-egocentrically on *you*, not on me. (Note that in contrast to Gilligan, I suggest that it does not matter so much whether people understand what they are doing as 'imagining X in X's position' or 'myself in X's position', as long as the focus of the imaginative act is on the other rather than on myself.) So within perspective-shifting, there are egocentric and non-egocentric forms, and it is the latter that is to play a role in ethics.

Do we need empathy or something else? Internal and external perspectives

If we adopt Nussbaum's conception of empathy as involving a two-fold attention, and if we focus on a non-egocentric form of perspective-shifting, Goldie's opposition between the internal perspective (empathy, putting yourself in someone else's shoes) and the external perspective (sympathy, trying to understand someone from an external point of view) is too strong, as is his claim that we should prefer, ethically, the external perspective. Let me explore four alternative claims.

First, on the basis of my arguments we could at least propose to combine both 'methodologies' or 'technologies' of imagination, taking a dual perspective (internal and external), with the balance between the two depending on what is ethically required in a specific context and (personal) situation. I will argue below that what the person, as the target of our empathy, needs, should be the primary focus to decide the methodological question. Taking this dual perspective, or switching between these perspectives, appears to be what we do in practice.

Secondly, we could try a stronger claim. If we understand empathy required for ethics in a Nussbaumian and non-egocentric fashion, the internal perspective must be *preferred* to an external perspective. But this is to assume Goldie's sharp dichotomy, suggesting that we must choose between the two perspectives.

Thirdly, therefore, I argue that if empathy as I understand it (a so-called internal perspective in Goldie's terms) can do the work of both perspectives, we can do without a strong distinction between the external and the internal. Since the externality and the dramatic irony is guaranteed by the understanding of perspective-shifting as a two-fold attention, we only need one conception of empathy for ethics. To draw attention to the two-fold character we may still want to attach the labels 'internal' and 'external' to them, but my point is that it is an integrated conception of empathy we go for then. We do not have to—and cannot—*choose* between two

different kinds of empathy; rather, empathy as perspective-shifting itself has a dual (internal and external) aspect.

Fourthly, and this is the strongest claim I wish to consider, the idea of taking an external perspective alone, that is, without an internal perspective, is implausible. Consider the utilitarian registration and calculation of suffering. This is supposed to be an external perspective. But to explain in detail how and to what extent people (or animals, for that matter) suffer, utilitarians too must appeal to empathy[4] as perspective-shifting. They ask us 'Imagine you were experiencing that pain', or, to put it in a way that avoids the charge of egocentrism, 'imagine how that person experiences her pain'.

Let me conclude this argument. I am not sure about this last strongest claim; I am not sure about how *necessary* perspective-shifting, the 'internal' perspective, really is. (Other ways of imagining, or even other, non-imaginative ways of reaching the goal of moral understanding of the other, may be sufficient. If this is the point Goldie and Gilligan[5] and others want to make, it is an entirely plausible one—my own argument that supports this claim relies on the observation that empathy is morally neutral (see above). Empathy may not always be needed. But this point is unconnected to their arguments against 'internal' perspective-shifting, which they do not need to make the former point.) However, I *can* conclude that a combination of internal and external is not only possible but also desirable as a way of thinking about what empathy can do for ethics, and that such a combined or mixed view is realised in a conception of empathy as perspective-shifting that involves two-fold attention and non-egocentric imagining.

How to stimulate empathy? Literature and the limits of empathy

If empathy as perspective-shifting is desirable in ethics, the question arises how to stimulate it. Nussbaum has rightly argued that literature can help us to better understand others. In *Poetic justice* (1995) she claims that literature forces us to consider others, people different to ourselves. We come to understand that others are both different and similar, and we get the insight that we are all vulnerable. She says that the literary imagination is 'an essential ingredient of an ethical stance that asks us to concern ourselves with the good of other people whose lives are distant from our own' (Nussbaum, 1995, p. xvi). And in *Cultivating humanity* (1997) she says that literature 'can transport us, while remaining ourselves, into the life of another, revealing similarities but also profound differences between the life and thought of that other and myself and making them comprehensible, or at least more nearly comprehensible' (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 111). So empathy can close the distance between me and the other. It can make others less strange.

Now if we agree with Nussbaum's arguments, we must also consider the limits of this approach. We must acknowledge that perspective-shifting in reading literature or watching a film can be very egocentric, but there is no ethical problem with that, as long as the agent's decisions and actions are ethically right. Given the moral

neutrality of empathy it is important to see that whether or not our empathy is egocentric or non-egocentric, whether or not we indulge our perspective-shifting for the sake of our pleasure, the perspective-shifting within the framework of the book or the film does not necessarily result in good ethical decisions, judgments and actions in the real world. In this way, the ethical role of empathy as perspective-shifting is limited.

Note that in the long term, regularly responding empathetically to people may change our character. It aids our moral development, as Nussbaum claims. But this kind of character change is different from taking on the character of the other. It refers to general long-term improvement in our character as a result of many exercises in empathy, not to the adoption of character traits from the other within one empathic process. By placing changes in mental *dispositions* within the (short) empathic process, Goldie appears to confuse the two processes.

Who needs empathy? Distance and conversation

My discussion so far shows that the relational aspect of the ethical use of empathy is very important: self-absorption and self-enjoyment are possible aims and uses of empathy, but they are not ethical ones. The focus should be on the other. As Nussbaum argued, the goal is to make that other less strange. The distinction between the other and me remains, but the distance decreases. In the same way as the time gap gets closed by the temporal use of imagination (e.g. future scenarios and consequences), here the space gap gets closed by way of imagination. Imagination is limited, since the other always remains a stranger to some extent. But for ethics, 'some extent' may be enough.

We can make a distinction between empathic process where there is no direct contact between me and the other person (e.g. the contact is via the mass media), on the one hand, and where there is direct contact (e.g. in a professional care relationship or personal relationships) on the other hand.

This last point opens up interesting perspectives for looking at empathy. Consider the ethical need for strong focus on the other. Goldie rightly claims that we should focus on the other in our imaginative act, rather than on ourselves, but again the contrast is too strong. It is not morally wrong, as Goldie suggests, but potentially morally *good* if two people engage in a process of mutual sharing of experiences, in which both parties empathise with each other (and empathy seems to always have this potential: whether it is understood as 'internal', as 'external', or in a dual sense). Egoistic drift may still occur (in the 'internal' version) but to the extent that there is a mutual exchange of stories and empathetic responses there is nothing intrinsically morally wrong about this process, since, to use again Goldie's term, the 'external' aspect of the exercise is guaranteed. Moreover, it is not merely 'not morally wrong' but also morally good if the condition of enhanced moral understanding is met.

Note that in this imaginative conversational exercise individual and circumstantial variety plays a role in the way we will express our empathic stance. It is one thing

to use empathy to understand the other, it is another how to communicate (the results of) this to the other.

What is it that the other needs and wants from me?

Finally, I argue that philosophical discussions about empathy could gain a lot if they were less focussed on what goes on in the mind of the one who exercises empathy, and more on the mind of the one who is on the receiving end of the relationship. Goldie rightly proposes to model advice on the practice of present-giving, and I suggest this points to the need to shift our general approach to the role of empathy in ethics. When thinking about empathy and when being engaged in an advice or help relationship, we should ask the question: what is it that this person wants, and needs? Does she need empathy, and if so, what kind of empathy? What kind of empathic response can help that person? And what kind of actions can be taken on the basis of my (or our mutual) exercise of the imagination? For example, what does a patient expect from her doctor? What do partners expect from each other? One of the things a suffering person needs may be an appreciation of the uniqueness of her experience, her pain, her suffering. So on the one hand, Goldie and others are right to call for more attention to the other as a (different) other, something that can be achieved by taking an external perspective, but also by taking an internal perspective if this is helpful. On the other hand, however, there is no good reason to favour the external perspective over and against the internal perspective, or to make a sharp distinction between the two. Ethical thinking and acting towards others may require both. People who suffer and appeal to our imaginative powers may also want us to recognise ways in which they are the same as us, ways in which we share vulnerability and suffering as humans. By exercising empathy, including empathy of the internal kind, we may be able to show that we understand them in this way: as fellow humans. This need not be interpreted as a demand for a Kantian kind of respect for the person as a rational being, if this is to mean a sterile, unemotional response. Rather, I suggest that this kind of Kantian respect requires, or has to be supplemented with, an imaginative effort on the part of the helper to imagine what it is like to be the other person by taking the internal perspective (imagine what it would be like to be the sufferer) and by the communication of this imaginative effort.

The ways in which people do communicate, and should communicate, (the result of) their imaginative processes towards their receivers in a way that genuinely helps them, is another question. Furthermore, if I am right about the moral neutrality of empathy, empathy is not enough, and the ways in which empathic moves are, or should be, linked to actions (e.g. helping, therapeutic actions) is a matter for further study. For example, we may want to consider the problem of passivity: empathic, non-egocentric imaginings are not necessarily followed by ethical action. But whatever the results of such a study, it can be helpful for moral agents to shift perspective in the way argued for in this paper, and it is certainly helpful to shift the perspective of the discussion of empathy towards the needs of those who are supposed to benefit from it.

Suggestions for an account of mutual perspective-shifting

What theoretical resources can we use for working out an account of the kind of empathic process dealt with in this paper? Since to my knowledge mutual perspective shifting has not received much attention in the empathy literature, let me consider some starting points.

First, Goldie's metaphor of a gift is helpful since it tells us something about the normative conditions of mutual perspective-shifting in a helping or caring relationship. In contrast to ordinary (superficial) understanding of a gift as being something that is 'interest-free', the anthropological meaning of 'gift' always refers to an exchange process with a social context of interest, power, values, etc. A helping relationship need not be asymmetrical. The helper or carer also benefits from the perspective-shift.

Secondly, if we want to stress the communicative aspect of mutual perspective-shifting, an obvious point of source of inspiration may be the work of Habermas. His thinking on discourse ethics and communicative action (Habermas, 1990, 1993, 1996) could feed further reflection on the philosophical underpinnings of (the role of perspective-shifting in) the sort of helping and caring relationships I have been referring to. However, some serious problems emerge then, problems related to the Kantian side of this theory. On the one hand, perspective-shifting does play an important role in Habermas's work, since he takes his inspiration from Mead: people engaged in discourse adopt the attitude of the generalised other by projecting themselves into the position of all others. Habermas's view is also an improvement compared to that of Kant (1991) or Rawls (1971), since in contrast to proposing a procedure that can in principle be carried out monologically, he insists upon the *necessary* dialogical and public character of discourse and perspective-shifting. On the other hand, Habermas's and Mead's perspective-shifting is quite different from perspective-shifting directed to one, *particular* other. Moreover, the parties engaged in a relationship of help and care are not disinterested parties. For example, the carer has an interest in helping the patient, the patient has an interest in being helped. This need not imply that the parties in Habermasian discourse are all rational egoists, but there are little resources within his theory that could account for warm, mutual feelings of care. Mead's ideal role-taking, and Habermas's version of it, are meant to provide tools for impartial role-taking.

Thirdly, therefore, we could turn to the ethics of care, which seems particularly suitable for the points I want to make about the *personal* and particular character of the process of mutual perspective-shifting in the context of a care relationship. And the attention of the writers I have discussed writers[6] to the *other* is well in tune with the desirability of other-directed imagining I have stressed in my discussion (a focus I share with Goldie and Gilligan). Furthermore, feminist theories pay attention to power relations and asymmetrical relations. But an ethics of care is less suitable if it defends an extreme particularist position (a position not defended in this paper and unconnected to the points I have made), since in practices of help and care the lack of *any* criterion for impartiality or justice—by its very nature transcending

the particular situation and the particular individual—may be dangerous. Perhaps *some* distance, or some means to create this distance when needed, is required. If the helper identifies rather than shifts perspectives, this may result in less effective or potentially harmful consequences for the care or therapy. Sometimes distance may be morally required. One response to this problem may be to say that the helper has to use her 'intuition' to strike the right balance between engagement and distance, and control her activities of perspective-shifting accordingly. But from an ethical point of view we may inquire into the basis for such an intuition, or search for universal criteria or principles rather than leaving it to 'intuition'—whatever that may be. Finally, if the stress is too much on the 'otherness' of the other, the kind of imaginative exercises discussed here may well become impossible, since they draw on some *similarities* as well as differences between people. If this were not so, we could not shift perspective in the first place. The imaginative bridge to the other seems to require at least some points of connection: there must be *some* similarities between the parties (for example those similarities derived from the fact that we are both human beings), and if the 'otherness' of the other was extreme, the goal of understanding could not be reached.

To conclude, working out an account of mutual perspective-shifting requires further engagement with some of the hardest problems in moral theory, such as the universalism versus particularism debate. But I hope this paper, apart from having engaged with Goldie's and Gilligan's arguments about perspective-shifting, has at least provided some good reasons for considering the dialogical, communicative, and relational aspect of perspective-shifting and personal story-telling in help and care contexts.

Notes

1. A first version of this paper was presented at the Dutch Society for Analytical Philosophy (VAF) conference, Free University Amsterdam, 31 March 2006.
2. Gilligan also seems to assume that empathy involves adopting someone else's beliefs and dispositions, and thus adjusting your own beliefs and values (2004). The danger of what she calls 'egocentric' imagining, then, is that we can think that we have adjusted our beliefs and values to reflect those of someone else, whereas in reality we mirror our own values (egocentric) or even fail to reflect anyone else's views.

3. It seems to me that moral norms and principles are needed as well, but I will not further develop this point here.
4. See also Nussbaum's argument in *Frontiers of justice* (2006).
5. For example, Gilligan asks if it is really the case that we can only feel compassion if we can imagine ourselves suffering as another does (Gilligan, 2003).
6. See also, for instance, Sara Ruddick's claim in *Maternal thinking* that we must let attention dwell upon the other (Ruddick, 1989, p. 122).

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