Full Responsible Reason and Good Development

by

Stephanie A. Pyne, B.A.

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ABSTRACT

Especially in this day and age of globalization in the context of pluralism, it is important to adopt a good conception of development that reflects an appropriate framework of rationality. Three approaches to development will be introduced in relation to their underlying rationality frameworks: Bad development, which reflects a rationality of self-interest; better development, which reflects responsible reason; and good development, which reflects full responsible reason. This thesis will build on the work of Amartya Sen, who has broadened the rationality of self-interest framework. Sen has contributed to a better approach to development insofar as he has included an aspect of “caring about” in his expanded view of rationality. However, going further than Sen, a holistic framework of full responsible reason includes attention to “caring about” and “caring for” in order to support a good conception of development that is sustainable and acceptable to a diverse range of cultures.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Our assumptions about rationality affect our thinking about social and economic development. When we talk about development normatively, we are centrally concerned with specifying the conditions that are necessary for good development, which need to be determined within an appropriate framework of rationality. Several approaches to development emerged over the course of the last century, each of which made characteristic assumptions about the nature of rationality.

The development as economic growth approach assumed for the most part that rationality was about the maximization of self-interest and tended to exclude ethical considerations. The human development movement emerged after the sixties and explicitly included ethical considerations in its assumptions about rationality by appealing to concepts such as justice, human well-being, environmental sustainability, participatory democracy, and human rights. The capability approach of Amartya Sen has since provided a unifying methodological framework for interdisciplinary investigations of how development, which strives for freedom consistent with justice, can enhance the quality of people's lives. This approach appeals to a concept of responsible reason that includes ethical considerations. A third, more recent line of development thinking builds on the work of Sen by pointing out how justice and freedom are rooted in care. It goes further than Sen does by specifying that responsible reason requires care in order to contribute fully to good development. When we incorporate care and respect into our

rational thinking about development we can be said to be exercising full responsible reason.

This chapter will introduce these three perspectives of development and describe their respective frameworks of rationality. The main line of my argument is: (1) Good development requires full responsible reason; (2) full responsible reason is best understood from a rationality of care perspective; and, (3) therefore, a rationality of care perspective is conducive to and necessary for good development.

Bad Development—Self-interested Reason

By the forties and fifties “development” had come to mean economic growth and progress through exploration and innovation. The sky was the limit. Vast leaps in scientific knowledge fed technological expansion and influenced people’s lifestyles. Man could fly—well and far. Life was getting easier with electric stoves, refrigerators, and television sets, not to mention such “automatic” conveniences as washing machines. At least this was coming to be the case in North American countries and other societies that were lucky enough to be considered “civilized”. Being “civilized” was coming to mean being modernized and being able to have all of the things that go with it. While the “civilized” societies were extracting the resources necessary to fuel this new electric lifestyle of cars, restaurants, record players, grocery stores and movies, they began to notice that the less-civilized societies did not seem to have as much “stuff” and were consequently less well off than they were. Development aid often arose in this context,

and the term “development” itself tended to refer to resource development, economic growth and the expansion of technology.

According to the utilitarian and positivistic thinking that dominated economics at that time, development was considered primarily in terms of profits, productivity, industrial expansion and resource exploitation. Guided by this perspective, research in development economics in turn shaped the domestic and foreign policies of the “developed” nations. In *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (1971), W.W. Rostow describes the four stages of economic growth—the preconditions for take-off, the take-off, the drive to maturity, and the age of high mass-consumption—characterized by industrial expansion and increased production and consumption. Rostow advised “underdeveloped” countries to undergo the four stages in order to become “developed”, something that would require moves toward resource exploitation and industrial expansion that were similar to what had been occurring in the more developed nations:

Most of the presently underdeveloped nations, in the stage of preconditions or early take-off, must allocate much of their resources to building up and modernizing the three non-industrial sectors required as the matrix for industrial growth: social overhead capital; agriculture; and foreign-exchange-earning sectors, rooted in the improved exploitation of natural resources (1971, 139).

Broad indicators of achievement had become the norm for measuring economic progress or development. It seemed implicit in social and economic policy and planning that general growth would mean an improvement in personal well-being for all people. However, little by little the adverse effects of this type of development began to surface. Unequal distribution of wealth and deficiencies in political freedoms resulting from a lack of attention to human rights issues led to such things as poverty, famine, population

displacement, and destruction of habitat.¹ Although it may have been well-intentioned, the rationality of development as economic growth was simply not sensitive to the inequalities that mattered, an insensitivity that ultimately led to bad development.

At least two distinct (but related) models of rationality underlay and determined people's approach to development as economic growth: scientific rationality and rationality as the maximization of self-interest. Scientific rationality assumes the desirability of prediction and control achieved by means of a neutral and objective approach to thought. Rostow attributes Britain's lead in passing through the four stages of growth to her early adherence to the scientific perspective, referred to by Rostow as the "Newtonian perception":

At the core of [the British take-off] was acceptance of the view that the physical world was understandable in terms of a few stable principles and, therefore, capable of systematic manipulation to man's advantage. This attitude, which I have called the Newtonian perception, provides an element of automaticity to growth because it drives men, in the face of problems, to search for solutions rather than passively to accept the burdens and frustrations the problems impose. It also leads men to perceive and exploit possibilities for profit...

The Newtonian perception was given a special thrust and direction because those who acted on it early gained power (economic, political, and military) relative to those who acted on it late. The strongest force that has operated to induce and diffuse the impulse to growth has been the intrusion of the more advanced nations on the less advanced (1971, 173-174).

The rationality of self-interest model, which separates people's economic concerns from their ethical concerns, comprised the foundation of early development thinking. According to this model, the only good reasons for—especially economic—decisions and actions are those reasons that are based on the standard of the maximization

¹ See "Toward Development Ethics" (Crocker, 1991) for a summary of negative effects associated with development as economic growth.

of self-interest. This approach envisions an autonomous self who exists in relative isolation from other selves, creatures and the world. Factors external to the individual are important only to the extent that they affect her self-interest. According to this model, when individuals reason economically they do not allow their emotions, or the social affiliations that are made possible through them, to affect what matters most to them: their own self-interest. The rational person put forward by this model has little, if any, sense of responsibility toward the other.

The importance of emotions for rational decision-making is illustrated by the cases of two brain-damaged individuals, Gage and Elliot (van Staveren, 2001). Both were able to perform cognitive tasks typically associated with rational behaviour such as reading, talking, remembering and doing arithmetic. However, because their ability to experience emotions had been seriously compromised, they failed horribly in their personal relationships and they had difficulty managing their time and making decisions. They seemed to have little, if any, sense of social or individual responsibility. Elliot, for example, would spend an entire day at work trying to decide on the best filing system to adopt without ever settling on one system or another (van Staveren, 2001). Irene van Staveren provides us with a good profile of the self-interested reasoner:

Rational Economic Man is assumed to follow his self-interest. He sets out to realise his strictly individual and subjective preferences straightforwardly. These preferences are instrumental to only one end: utility maximization, subject to constraints. This cost-benefit based behavioural assumption does not allow for adaptation of the individual's ends shared with others: individual utility is independent of the utilities of other people, and cannot even be compared to them because of the presumed subjectivity of individual utility. The ends which Rational Economic Man pursues are only valued as long as they contribute to his own utility (including the emotional utility of doing good or the utility resulting from preventing shame). This assumption of self-interested utility maximisation rejects ends as valuable in themselves. But how can

Rational Economic Man pursue valuable ends without having any notion of what values mean? Or, in other words, how can he provide for himself and allow others to provide for themselves without understanding the importance of the ends in his life (2001, 12)?

The “rational economic man” of mainstream economics exemplified by Gage and Elliot lacks four essential capabilities: the capability for commitment, the capability for emotional attachment, the capability for deliberation and the capability for human interaction, capabilities that are essential to any meaningful concept of rationality (van Staveren, 2001, 6-24). Without these capabilities, rational economic man cannot hope to be completely rational. He cannot make decisions about things that should matter to him, because he doesn’t care one way or the other about alternative outcomes. Because he is missing the ability to experience emotions, he has no basis for a sense of personal or social responsibility. He has no ability to appreciate the intrinsic value of things and, because of this he lacks the ability to be committed to pursuing the goals and objectives that should be valuable to him and that could enhance his own overall well-being and the well-being of others. Insofar as we might like to think about good development in terms of the enhancement of well-being, rational economic man would not be a good person to involve in thinking about how to approach good development.

Better Development—Responsible Reason

The alternative approach to development that emerged after the sixties began to identify the negative effects that resulted from the application of the traditional model of development as economic growth. Denis Goulet² pointed out that in the absence of

² Goulet is referred to as the father of development ethics in Crocker (1991).

ethical considerations, development as economic growth was having detrimental, even devastating social, environmental and economic effects. In reaction against this, critics of these effects preferred to think about development in the broader and contrasting sense of good social change. This involved more emphasis on people—the social rather than simply the individual dimension—and the qualities of their lives, rather than on profits and economic growth for their own sakes. Goulet realized that good development required more than what dollars and things were contributing to the enhancement of some people's lives. He realized that dollars and things could actually detract from the quality of people's lives, and that it mattered how those dollars and things were distributed in addition to how they were acquired.

Attention to the ethical dimensions of development inspired the human development movement, a group of thinkers who had begun to think about development in terms of human flourishing.³ This movement acknowledged the role of economic progress to human flourishing in addition to other factors such as equity, sustainability and empowerment. The empowerment component of human development deserves special attention, since it entails “development by the people who must participate in the activities, events and processes that shape their lives” (Haq, 1995, 19). According to Haq, “empowerment means that people are in a position to exercise choices of their own free will. It implies a political democracy in which people can influence decisions about their lives. It requires economic liberalism so that people are free from excessive economic controls and regulations...” (1995, 20). People are not viewed simply as the beneficiaries of economic growth but as “real agents of every change in society” (Haq, 1995, 23).

³ See Sabina Alkire's “Dimensions of Human Development” (2002) for a summary of the key contributors to the human development movement.

The human development movement is a widely respected perspective in development ethics that expands the definition of development by replacing the narrow goal of economic growth with the broader aim of human flourishing as the ultimate end of development. “Human development” refers to a comprehensive ideal that incorporates, but is not limited to, economic growth and puts a human face to the perhaps overly broad conception of development as good social change; but what kind of human face?

In the context of his capability approach, Amartya Sen⁴ provides us with a model of the human reasoner that goes beyond rational economic man to the extent that he is capable of sympathy and commitment. In contrast with rational economic man, Sen’s ethically sensitive reasoner is a more responsibly reasonable person. Reasons based on sympathy and commitment are rational to the person who exercises responsible reason, but irrational to rational economic man. The capability approach is “a general approach that concentrates on the capabilities of people to do things—and the freedom to live lives—that they have reason to value” (Sen, 1999, 85). It views the bad outcomes associated with a self-interest-based approach to development in terms of inequalities in our abilities to do and be what we have reason to value.

Martha Nussbaum points out the appropriateness of the capability approach for dealing with issues of inequality in people’s ability to ‘do’ or ‘be’:

Sen’s primary use of the notion of capability is to indicate a space within which comparisons of quality of life (or, as he sometimes says standard of living) are most fruitfully made. Instead of asking about people’s satisfactions, or how much in the way of resources they are able to command, we ask, instead, about what they are actually able to do or be. Sen has also insisted that it is in this space of capabilities that questions about social equality and inequality are best raised (2000, 12).

⁴ Economist-philosopher and Nobel Laureate, Amartya Sen is an emblematic figure in the human development movement who is respected for his conceptual clarity, consistency and comprehensiveness as well as for his humility, compassion and wit.

Sen's capability approach provides us with the evaluative context we need to think about valuable beings and doings by taking us beyond the evaluation of well-being in terms of income generation to the idea that good (development) economic policies should involve the removal of important inequalities, which can be viewed as various forms of unfreedom. It integrates the social and economic spheres and surpasses both utilitarian and Rawlsian approaches to justice in its inclusiveness with respect to information. Both utility and primary goods—as the informational bases of evaluation—limit the scope of evaluation in terms of their ability to account for diversity and inequalities, a situation that in turn misrepresents the quality of people's lives. The freedom-oriented concept of capability allows us instead to look at “the individual's real opportunity to pursue her objectives” (Sen, 1999, 74). To accomplish this task, “...account would have to be taken not only of the primary goods the persons respectively hold, but also of the relevant personal characteristics that govern the *conversion* of primary goods into the person's ability to promote her ends” (Sen, 1999, 74). The capability approach is more sensitive to diversity and inequalities than the other two, more limited approaches, because it considers information that more accurately assesses human well-being, broadly defined. In short, to talk in terms of capabilities provides a more adequate context or “evaluative framework” within which to consider the inequalities that matter.

In order to demonstrate the superiority of his approach over utilitarian and Rawlsian approaches to justice, Sen presents a parable that illustrates the need for an approach that is broad enough to identify basic inequalities in actual qualities of lives. Sen tells us the story of a woman, Annapurna, who must choose to give a gardening job

to one of three people. She knows that they are equally competent to do the job, so she considers other factors in her choice of employee. Annapurna knows that all three individuals are poor, but that Dinu is the poorest. On the other hand, “Bishanno has recently been impoverished and is psychologically more depressed about his predicament” (1999, 55). Finally, there is the chronically ill and debilitated Rogini who is also up for consideration. The situations of each potential employee represent distinct informational bases: “Dinu’s income-egalitarian case focuses on income-poverty; Bishanno’s classical utilitarian case concentrates on the metric of pleasure and happiness; Rogini’s quality-of-life case centres on the kinds of life the three respectively can lead” (1999, 55).

If Annapurna were to choose the least happy of the three, she would choose Bishanno on utilitarian grounds. If she were to choose the financially poorest (or the individual with the least amount of primary goods), she would choose Dinu according to criteria of Rawlsian justice. However, if she were to choose the individual with the most deficient quality of life, she would choose Rogini according to the criteria of capability and functionings represented in the capability approach.

The capability approach involves a variety of distinctions among a series of related concepts, including capability and functionings, well-being and agency, freedom and achievement, in addition to sympathy and commitment (Gasper, 2002). A primary conceptual distinction is made between opportunity and achievement where “freedom” and “capability” are opportunity-oriented concepts and “achievement” and “functioning” are success terms. Together, these concepts interact to constitute a new evaluative language since they are dependent upon one another for meaning and since they interact

with one another to provide a relatively rich and comprehensive foundation for the evaluation of inequalities.

In *Inequality Reexamined*, Sen defines well-being in terms “of the quality...of a person’s being” (1992, 39). This “quality” is further defined in terms of functionings. A person who “achieves” a certain level of well-being is considered to have “a set of interrelated functionings, consisting of beings and doings” (1992, 39). Sen provides examples of functionings that range from “being adequately nourished ... to more complex achievements such as being happy, having self-respect, [and] taking part in the life of a community” (1992, 39). The concept of capability is related to “functioning” since “it represents the various [potential] combinations of functionings (beings and doings) that the person can achieve” (1992, 40). Well-being achievement is viewed in terms of achieved functionings, while well-being freedom is seen in terms of the capability to achieve, or the opportunities that an individual has to acquire the functionings that ultimately constitute her well-being.

Agency is distinguished from well-being with the caveat that the two concepts are highly interrelated. Agency freedom refers to a person’s “freedom to bring about the achievements and values and which [she] attempts to produce” (1992, 57). Agency achievement refers to that person’s successful contribution to the furtherance of agency values, which include values other than those that are related simply to her own individual well-being (1992, 56). Examples of agency goals, which are taken to be distinct from (although related to) well-being, are “the independence of [the person’s] country, or the prosperity of her community” (1992, 56).

Sen distinguishes between the well-being aspect and the agency aspect of individuals in order to overcome the tendency in social and economic planning and policy to view those being helped (in a variety of contexts) as mere beneficiaries who lack the ability to help themselves. Accordingly, Sen defines well-being in terms of the quality of a person's being, while agency refers to the active ability of that person to effect positive change with respect to her concerns for others. In the context of the capability approach, these concerns can be expressed in terms of her commitments to the doings and beings that she has reason to value.

The concept of agency allows for personal responsibility to play a role in human development, but may leave the concept of well-being too narrowly defined. Although Sen has been criticized for separating the well-being and agency aspects of personhood (Cameron and Gasper, 2000; Giri, 2000), he acknowledges the integral relationship between them.⁵ For example, in his discussion of women's agency, Sen mentions the "substantial intersection" between well-being and agency:

The active agency of women cannot, in any serious way, ignore the urgency of rectifying many inequalities that blight the well-being of women and subject them to unequal treatment; thus the agency role must be much concerned with women's well-being also. Similarly, coming from the other end, any practical attempt at enhancing the well-being of women cannot but draw on the agency of women themselves in bringing about such a change (1999, 190).

A conception of responsible reason that includes sympathy and commitment is central to the exercise of agency because, so conceived, reason allows us to make meaningful, significant, good or right choices based on the possibilities that freedom makes available. The responsible reasoner must be capable of assessing beings and

⁵ Sen has also used the term "well-being" in a broad sense (for example, see Sen, 1999, 270), suggesting that there are circumstances in which the narrow definition of well-being is inappropriate.

doings and reflecting about her commitments, which include her responsibilities to others. On Sen's view of development, the rational person who is capable of achieving good development is concerned about her own interest, but has the capacity to be sympathetic with and toward others. In addition, she is capable of being committed to pursuing valuable ends even if they are not conducive to her own interest. This responsible reasoner is capable of reflecting on valuable beings and doings, which she is able to choose in a responsibly reasonable fashion.

Sen's appeal to a broad notion of responsible reason is motivated by his commitment to social justice and his stance against the prescriptivism of certain cultural and religious traditions, which can lead to rigid and narrow belief systems that justify and perpetuate such negative effects as religious and cultural intolerance.⁶ In his web site autobiography, Sen describes his experience of the 1940s communal riots in India between different cultural and religious groups:

People's identities as Indians, as Asians, or as members of the human race, seemed to give way—quite suddenly—to sectarian identification with Hindu, Muslim, or Sikh communities. The broadly Indian of January was rapidly and unquestioningly transformed into the narrowly Hindu or finely Muslim of March. The carnage that followed had much to do with unreasoned herd behaviour by which people, as it were, “discovered” their new divisive and belligerent identities, and failed to take note of the diversity that makes Indian culture so powerfully mixed. The same people were suddenly different (1998, screen one).

Sen's life was personally affected by these riots, a striking example of which is revealed his candid description of a “devastating” childhood experience:

I had to observe, as a young child, some of that mindless violence. One afternoon in Dhaka, a man came through the gate screaming pitifully and bleeding profusely. The wounded person, who had been knifed on the back, was a Muslim daily labourer, called Kader Mia. He had come for

⁶ See “East and West: the Reach of Reason” (2000) for a more detailed account of Sen's attitude toward traditionalism.

some work in a neighbouring house—for a tiny reward—and had been knifed on the street by some communal thugs in our largely Hindu area. As he was being taken to the hospital by my father, he went on saying that his wife had told him not to go into a hostile area during the communal riots. But he had to go out in search of work and earning because his family had nothing to eat. The penalty of that economic unfreedom turned out to be death, which occurred later on in the hospital. The experience was devastating for me, and suddenly made me aware of the dangers of narrowly defined identities, and also of the divisiveness that can lie buried in communitarian politics. It also alerted me to the remarkable fact that economic unfreedom, in the form of extreme poverty, can make a person a helpless prey in the violation of other kinds of freedom: Kader Mia need not have come to a hostile area in search of income in those troubled times if his family could have managed without it (1998, screen one).

We can appreciate Sen's concerns about what he referred to as the "unreasoned herd behavior" of the people involved in the rioting. As Sen said, these people appeared to have changed overnight. I would not disagree with Sen if I heard him say that their emotions had overpowered them; hate, anger, jealousy, fear, mistrust had supplanted their more reasonable peace-abiding abilities, including their capacity for tolerance. That Sen might say something like this is supported by the fact that he offers reason as the only source of hope, as the means to things like universal respect for cultural diversity, the end of poverty, social justice and well-being for all peoples. However, he makes no mention of the positive role that such emotions as care, compassion, love, trust and courage might have to play. When it came to the riots, Sen was not against the differences in beliefs and values of different peoples, except insofar as traditional beliefs were sometimes adopted without reasoned scrutiny. He was against the inability of people to respect difference while at the same time not being threatened by it. Sen saw this inability as an example of unreasonableness, which could only be fixed by the application of reason. This attitude is expressed in "East and West: the Reach of Reason":

The possibility of reasoning is a strong source of hope and confidence in a world darkened by horrible deeds. It is easy to understand why this is so. Even when we find something immediately upsetting, or annoying, we are free to question that response and ask whether it is an appropriate reaction and whether we should really be guided by it. We can reason about the right way of perceiving and treating other people, other cultures, other claims, and examine different grounds for respect and tolerance. We can also reason about our own mistakes and try to learn not to repeat them (2000, screen two).

However, being “free to question” and engage in reasoned reflection is not sufficient for solving problems. As Sen recognizes, we must also acknowledge that it is our responsibility to do so: “As people who live—in a broad sense—together, we cannot escape the thought that the terrible occurrences that we see around us are quintessentially our problems. They are our responsibility—whether or not they are also anyone else’s” (1999, 282).

Julie Nelson agrees with Sen that solving the world’s many problems depends to a great extent on our sense of social responsibility, “because without such an awareness of responsibility on the part of both rich and poor, there is no hope for amelioration of human suffering” (2004, 311). However, Nelson makes an important point when she says “[t]o realize that responsibility is inescapable ... demands freedom, reason, and more” (2004, 311), suggesting that we must go beyond the understandings of freedom and reasoning provided by Sen in order to have an adequate grounding for responsibility.

Nelson is concerned that in calling on our sense of social responsibility and our commitment to solving of the world’s problems, Sen is calling on a dying sense. She laments that if Sen is referring to the people of the so-called developed world—the world of industrialization, science, technology and consumerism—then he may be hanging his hopes for socially responsible development on a weak hanger since

... [m]any, if not most, people seem to act as if they have quite escaped such a realization of responsibility. U.S. citizens (the group I know best) generally appear to prefer tax rebates to supporting impoverished children in our own country, and seem more interested in our sports utility vehicles than any 'terrible occurrences' abroad. Elites in countries of the economic South often behave in a similar manner. To realize that responsibility is inescapable ... demands freedom, reason, and more" (2004, 311-312).

The need for such factors as affiliation and emotion (especially the emotions of care needed for affiliation) draws attention to the significance of character and good relationships for human development. Through the cultivation of relationships, we cultivate ourselves—our abilities to experience and express emotions appropriately and to reason about a variety of things at a variety of levels—so that we may grow within ourselves and among others.

The expansion of "rationality" suggested by Irene van Staveren (2001) involves capabilities that range from the capability to experience and express emotions appropriately to the capability to engage in interpersonal relationships. According to van Staveren, it is imperative to exercise an appropriately "ethical" conception of rationality that incorporates care in the making of social or individual decisions concerning which capabilities are valuable. The ethical capabilities of rationality are values that have intrinsic importance and that must be in place before we can reason meaningfully about further values that we consider essential to our own development and the development of others.

Sen's experiences have led to his view of responsible reason. Why engage in responsible reason? Because we care, or at least, we should. This thesis will provide answers to the question of why: Why be responsible, in our reasoning, or in our attitudes to anything? It will also provide answers to the question of how: How can we be

responsible, in our reasoning about development, and in our approaches to everything else?

Although Sen's version of rationality that includes responsible reason represents an improvement over the model of rationality that dominated the development as economic growth approach, my objective in this thesis will be to show that his version does not go far enough. The central question of this thesis accordingly is this: What kind of reason should we apply in the definition of development as the freedom of people to live the lives they have reason to value? Sen provides us with only part of the picture of what is required for the successful and full exercise of responsible reason. It is up to us now to complete it.

Good Development—Full Responsible Reasoning

Many feminist thinkers have pointed to the value of the care perspective for ethics, which has traditionally been dominated by abstract thinking about justice and rights.⁷ The abstract approach typically strives for neutrality and objectivity, rules and generalizable principles and tends to separate emotional and intellectual processes. While care thinking acknowledges the interdependence of emotional and intellectual processes, includes attention to concrete thinking and focuses on the particular and relationships: "As a practice of moral thinking, care involves a distinctive moral orientation toward another person or persons. This orientation has both affective and cognitive dimensions:

⁷ Robert Solomon (1999) and Irene van Staveren (2001) provide detailed discussions of the contrasts between these two approaches.

the caring individual is simultaneously concerned about the other's welfare and perceives acutely and insightfully how it is with the other" (Jaggar, 1995, 180).

The care perspective focuses attention on characteristic issues. Even if care is not presented as an argument or theory to rival present justice thinking, this shift in emphasis or attention can have beneficial effects:

Even if the new interest in caring did no more than to focus philosophical attention on previously disregarded aspects of moral thinking, it would have considerable significance for moral philosophy...the historical neglect of these aspects has produced a distorted and misleading representation of moral life ... For instance, focusing exclusively on people's humanity and equal membership in the moral community diverts attention from the ways in which people's basic interests and empirical desires may differ depending on their social location. Focusing exclusively on the adult capacity for consistent and universalizable moral reflection diverts attention from the indispensability of moral motivation and education and from the social availability of morally relevant information. Focusing exclusively on the dangers of egoism and partiality to one's own diverts attention from the dangers of self-sacrifice and devalues the moral significance of special relations (Jaggar, 1995, 188).

Care is important because it involves and encourages the "direct perception of particular situations. Direct perception is said to facilitate action that is more context-sensitive than actions guided by moral rules that, because of their generality, are necessarily indeterminate" (Jaggar, 1995, 188). Care thinking can generate morally preferable actions to justice thinking because it promotes healthy, productive, mutually supportive emotional ties between people: "Many examples purport to illustrate how people motivated primarily by justice frequently ignore the pressing needs of real people, often those closest to them, or subordinate individuals to abstract principle, with a 'blind willingness to sacrifice people to truth'" (Jaggar, 1995, 188).

Robert Solomon has shown how our sense of justice is rooted in care as well as how successful caring requires an element of justice: respect. Care is central to a sense of

justice, which includes our commitment to contribute to justice, because it allows us to perceive particular cases of injustice in a way that motivates us to respond, all the while connecting us to other people. Solomon's care perspective makes an insightful contribution to our understanding of the commitment to justice in particular. His emphasis on care and the cultivation of character provides us with a concept of responsibility that is real, meaningful and moving:

...a sense of justice is first of all a matter of emotions, to be cultivated from our natural inclinations of fellow feeling and molded into a durable state of character. Justice is not primarily a matter of abstract principle, not a theoretical construction, not a postulated ideal state against which the real world should be (unfavourably) contrasted...

Our sense of justice begins, most generally, with caring—about ourselves and our place in the world, about those whom we love and feel akin to, about the way of the world and the fate of the sentient creatures in it. Without caring, there can be no justice. Why else would justice matter to us? Justice begins with our emotional engagement in the world, not in philosophical detachment or in any merely hypothetical situation (1990, 199).

The distinction between self-interest and caring about and for oneself is paramount. Ananta Giri extends this thought by emphasizing that in order to fulfil their responsibilities to care for others, individuals must first fulfil their responsibility to care for themselves:

The self becomes a friend to herself when she takes care of herself and attends to the other, being inspired by the vision and practice of embodied universality. One becomes an enemy to oneself when one does things which are self-destructive, which destroy one's functionings and capability and also the functioning and capability of others ... Realization of human well-being requires the subjective preparation for individuals to be friends to themselves and in the first place not to be enemies to themselves. This contributes to the creation of a discursive and social environment where human well-being is a subject of both self- and social-commitment. This in turn provides a more sustainable foundation compared to Sen's presently articulated position where human well-being has a foundation primarily in a desirable social order. Desirable social

order must have its supplement in a desirable self which in turn must be supplemented by ontological striving ... and appropriate self-cultivation (2000, 1009).

Giri sees self-cultivation, which involves the ability to attain state-of-being or peace-of-mind-happiness, as an important dimension of human development since it “provides a bridge between the well-being aspect and the agency aspect of the human person” (2000, 1009).

Giri quotes Adam Smith who made the following observation: “The man who is himself at ease can best attend to the distress of others” (quoted in Giri, 2000, 1009).

Although I do not deny the existence of self-interest, I would suggest that it is better to approach the issue of our interests from a care perspective and to think of satisfying one’s own interest in terms of caring about and caring for oneself.

A rationality of care provides a suitable rationality framework for thinking about development because of its explicit reference to responsibility. A rationality of care provides for a fuller account of responsible reason by explicitly acknowledging the emotional foundation of responsible reason in the context of the mutual interrelationship between emotional and intellectual processes. It provides a framework for interpreting sympathy and commitment as the perceptual and motivational aspects of caring about, which underlies the notion of responsibility. In addition, a rationality of care includes a success dimension, which can take us further than Sen has done in terms of good practical development outcomes.

Care is important for ethics in general, but especially if we are concerned about inequities. Therefore, there is *prima facie* reason to expect care to play a role at two levels: (a) for the sort of reasoners that are presupposed by the idea of development as

freedom—where freedom is the capability to be and do what people have reason to value; and, (b) as a result, inclining ourselves and others to be critical of inequitable development.

The next chapter will take a more detailed look at Sen's position on rationality in the context of the general trend toward a broader, more inclusive conception of rationality that acknowledges the interrelationship between emotional and intellectual processes. Allowing ethical considerations into development thinking means focusing on the qualities of people's lives—their doings and beings. Going in this direction means looking at what people care about and involves acknowledging that care is rational.

Chapter Two

Sympathy and Commitment in a Broader Context

In general, Sen's approach to human development has involved a broadening of the evaluative space for development thinking. His basic rationale has been that if we were to limit the types of information we consider for the purposes of evaluation, then the scope of that evaluation will be limited in terms of its sensitivity to the inequalities that matter: inequalities in our abilities to do and be. The conception of rationality implied in Sen's approach is thus a relatively broad view of reason that allows for a more diverse class of reasons to be considered as acceptable bases for value choices. In particular, Sen broadens the rationality of self-interest framework to include an ethical dimension by adding the notion of responsibility to others, which he specifies in terms of sympathy- and commitment-based or responsible reasons. As we will see in this chapter, the ability to reason in general, and to reason responsibly in particular, depends on the emotions, especially insofar as responsibility is linked to care and the emotions of care.

I will begin by presenting some general reasons for considering rationality in terms of the mutual interdependence of intellectual and emotional processes. Next I will discuss Sen's concepts of sympathy and commitment. Although Sen presents the concept of sympathy as one important departure from a rationality of self-interest, he nevertheless interprets its significance within a rationality of self-interest. In addition, although his concept of commitment does represent a full departure from a rationality of self-interest, it has no significant emotional basis. I will conclude by suggesting that sympathy and

commitment should be understood in terms of their functions within a rationality of care, a type of rationality that explicitly acknowledges the mutual interdependence of intellectual and emotional processes.

Rationality and the Emotions—The Emotions and Rationality

Rationality has often been associated with cognitive or intellectual processes. It is typically used to refer to the standards for good decision-making or well-founded beliefs. Some have even supposed that the ability to form beliefs or make decisions in a rational manner is precisely to form or make them in a state that is unhindered by the “contaminating” effects of emotion. However, a consensus seems to be emerging¹ that the role of emotions must be considered in the question of what counts as rational. Dylan Evans distinguishes the “positive” from the “negative” view of emotion:

According to the negative view, emotions usually affect reasoning for the worse. To the extent that humans can free themselves of emotion ... they become more rational ... The positive view suggests that...human beings will be *less* rational to the extent that they lack emotion (2002, 497-498).

In *The Joy of Philosophy*, Robert Solomon considers rationality to be a certain form of accomplishment or virtue:

Rationality is an honorific, an endorsement, a word of praise. To say that something is rational is to give it high marks indeed ... To say of human beings that they are ‘rational’ is not just a piece of descriptive anthropology. It is also a bit of self-congratulation. To say of a person’s behavior or of an idea that it is rational is to say that there is something

¹ There is growing interest in the nature of the relationship between rationality and the emotions. This issue is important not only for those philosophers concerned with emotions (de Sousa, 2003; Evans, 2002; Solomon, 1999), but also for cognitive scientists (DeLancey, 2002; Wright, Sloman and Beaudoin, 1996), social theorists (Young, 2002; Hoggett and Thompson, 2002) and epistemologists (Zagzebski, 1996). This interest is, in part, related to a commitment to an expanded or “thick” view of rationality (Hoggett and Thompson, 2002; Solomon, 1999).

right about it, something orderly, fit, appropriate, praiseworthy. Nevertheless, 'rationality' remains one of those essentially contested concepts that we can never give up nor ultimately agree on (1999, 67).

Solomon promotes a thick view of rationality in contrast with the thin view, a predominant tendency in contemporary western philosophy to prefer a conception of rationality based on argument and logical analysis with an emphasis on "technique, narrow focus and rigor rather than vision, curiosity, and openness" (1999, 3). In answer to the question, "what is rationality" Solomon gives us a better idea of what he means by a "thick" view of rationality:

What is rationality? The word suggests nothing of thinness. Quite the contrary. It suggests complexity, organization, even elegance. Rationality, at its core, suggests something rich and textured about our experience. Reasoning, accordingly, is not limited to our ability to criticize and argue or even to 'figure things out' but rather includes the perspicacity and vision to see complexity in order, to find meaning in disorder and confusion, to distinguish as well as to simplify (1999, 68).²

Among other things, Solomon's thick view of rationality involves acknowledging the interrelationship between emotions and intellectual processes. In this regard, Solomon notes that the Chinese lack two separate words for reason and emotion. Their word "hsin" refers to the unified complex of heart and mind (1999, 68).

Sen comes closest to acknowledging the significance of the emotions to rationality in his review of Jonathan Glover's *Humanity: A Moral History of the Twentieth Century* (Sen, 2000), in which Glover documents many instances of inhumanity that occurred in the past century. Sen responds to Glover's account with the following appeal: "To prevent catastrophes caused by human negligence or obtuseness or

² It is important to note that Solomon does not exclude the "thin" view of rationality, but seeks to include other views.

callous obduracy, we need practical reason as well as sympathy and commitment ... [w]e have to be able to react spontaneously and resist inhumanity wherever it occurs" (2000).

In response to Glover's criticism that the Enlightenment perspective of reason has unduly separated reason from the moral sentiments, Sen points to Adam Smith, David Hume and Francis Hutcheson as examples of significant Enlightenment thinkers who recognized the need to incorporate the moral sentiments into an account of rationality. Sen admits to the relationship between emotions and intellectual processes but only insofar as reason is necessary to "cultivate" the moral sentiments:

The crucial issue is not whether sentiments and attitudes are seen as important (they were clearly so recognized by most of the writers whom we tend to think of as part of the Enlightenment), but whether—and to what extent—these sentiments and attitudes can be influenced and cultivated through reasoning. Adam Smith argued that our "first perceptions" of right and wrong "cannot be the object of reason, but of immediate sense and feeling." But even these instinctive reactions to particular conduct must, he argued, rely—if only implicitly—on our reasoned understanding of causal connections between conduct and consequences in "a vast variety of instances." Furthermore, our first perceptions may also change in response to critical examination, for example on the basis of empirical investigation that may show that a certain "object is the means of obtaining some other" (2000, 4).

Referring to emotions as "first perceptions" after Adam Smith, Sen acknowledges the perceptual function of emotions. However, he does not give emotions as perceptions much epistemological weight, and seems to imply that first perceptions cannot be relied upon unless they are subjected to the scrutiny of reason. Since reason is referred to as a separate entity from emotion, we can infer that Sen's conception of reason is closer to neutral objective thought than it is to a holistic view of mutually interrelated intellectual and emotional processes.

In light of Sen's limited view of the interrelationship that exists between reason and emotion, we must ask whether Sen's understanding of the rationality of the emotions is adequate and whether he is giving the idea of mutual interdependence its proper due. Sen makes no mention of the fact that emotions are necessary for reason; that is, for the functioning of intellectual processes like decision-making.

According to Ronald de Sousa (2003) and Robert Solomon (1999), emotions provide a certain framework for cognitive processes linked to belief and judgement. This emotional framework not only influences beliefs; it makes belief possible in the first place. According to this view, emotions are seen to "set the agenda for beliefs and desires: One might say that they ask questions that judgement answers with beliefs and [they] evaluate the prospects to which desire may or may not respond" (de Sousa, 2003, Part 6). Solomon agrees with de Sousa that emotions "provide reasons for belief, or at least reasons for looking for evidence of one kind rather than another, or reasons for accepting a conclusion rather than struggling to refute it" (1999, 80).

Emotions "frame" our decisions in two main ways:

First, they define the parameters taken into account in any particular deliberation. Second, in the process of rational deliberation itself, they render salient only a tiny proportion of alternatives and of conceivably relevant facts. Thus they winnow down to manageable size the number of considerations relevant to deliberation, and help to provide, in any particular situation, the indispensable framework without which the question of rationality could not even be considered (de Sousa, 2003, Part 8).

Antonio Damasio (1994) provides neurophysiological support for the notion that emotions frame intellectual processes like decision-making. Damasio studied brain-injured patients with specific damage to emotion-related areas of the brain and found that these patients exhibited "a diminished capacity to experience emotion", in addition to

being “severely hindered in their ability to make intelligent practical decisions” (quoted in de Sousa, 2003, Part 8).

Given the evidence, the notion that emotions “frame” our decision-making capacity by defining our “search space” in relation to particular decisions and by making salient certain “outcomes” (Evans, 2002) seems to have some plausibility. However, in order for emotions to contribute to truly “rational” decisions and beliefs, they must themselves be subject to standards of rationality. It bears noting that we often judge or evaluate others (and ourselves) in terms of their (and our) emotional responses in particular contexts, suggesting that in practice emotions can be subject to certain standards of rationality. This is contrasted with the view that “emotions owe no rational account of themselves or cannot give one” (de Sousa, 2003, Part 8). Of course, it is important to keep in mind that to talk about the rationality of the emotions is not to say that all emotions are rational, just as not all beliefs are rational. Rationality has to do with “cultivating and disciplining the emotions” (Solomon, 1999, 86).

The topic of emotional rationality is complex. For the purposes of this discussion, I will focus on emotional rationality in terms of the appropriateness of emotions. If emotions are taken to frame our decisions, then we need to understand how they can do this in an appropriate fashion that can support the making of good decisions.

Ronald de Sousa’s notion of paradigm scenarios provides us with one account of the rationality of emotions. Paradigm scenarios refer to the cultural and emotional contexts within which emotions are cultivated and through which they are assessed for their rationality:

Some philosophers suggest that the directive power which emotions exert over perception is partly a function of their essentially dramatic or

narrative structure (Rorty, 1988). It seems conceptually incoherent to suppose that one could have an emotion—say, an intense jealousy or a consuming rage—for only a fraction of a second. (Wollheim, 1999) One explanation of this feature of emotions is that a story plays itself out during the course of each emotional episode, and stories take place over stretches of time ... the stories characteristic of different emotions are learned by association with “paradigm scenarios.” These are drawn first from a daily life as small children and later reinforced by the stories, art, and culture to which we are exposed.

Paradigm scenarios involve two aspects. First, a situation type providing the characteristic objects of the specific emotion; and second, a set of characteristic responses to the situation, where normality is first a biological matter and then very quickly becomes a cultural one. Once our emotional repertoire is established, we interpret various situations we are faced with through the lens of different paradigm scenarios. When a particular scenario suggests itself as an interpretation, it arranges or rearranges our perceptual, cognitive, and inferential dispositions (2003, Part 6).

Depending on their appropriateness in the context of particular situations, emotions can play either constructive or destructive roles in relation to intellectual processes such as decision-making. For this reason it is important to pay attention to the conditions of emotional appropriateness. In the context of this discussion, however, we must be content simply to acknowledge this importance and not to be concerned with specific conditions of appropriateness.

A full account of rationality requires that we acknowledge both the role of emotions with respect to rational decision-making and the role of reflection in the rationality of the emotions. Sen has acknowledged the latter, but not the former. However, in Sen’s account of sympathy, which follows, he refers to sympathy as a rational departure from the narrow view of rationality as self-interest, which would suggest that he supports the view that emotions do exhibit rationality. As we will also

see, there are reasons to question the extent to which Sen's notion of sympathy accomplishes this departure.

Sympathy and Commitment—Sen's View of Responsible Reason

Sen introduces the concepts of sympathy and commitment as two “routes of departure” (1999, 270) from a rationality of self-interest, and acknowledges the emotional nature of sympathy, which involves “one person's welfare being affected by the position of others (e.g., feeling depressed at the sight of misery of others)” (2005, 7). However, the rationality of sympathy is not a full departure from self-interest since sympathy is understood in terms of its contribution to self-interest; this results in an incomplete understanding of the moral significance of sympathy. The extent to which sympathy is other-directed is limited by the fact that the central concern for the sympathetic individual seems to be her own emotional state.

Sen draws on Adam Smith's understanding of sympathy to support his view: “‘The most humane actions,’ [Smith] argued, ‘require no self-denial, no self-command, no great exertion or sense of propriety,’ since they follow what our ‘sympathy would of its own accord prompt us to do’”(1999, 271). But was Smith's view of sympathy limited to this observation?

Robert Solomon claims that Adam Smith uses “sympathy” in the sense of ‘feeling with’ or compassion: “[T]he sharing of feeling, or, as a disposition, the ability to share the feelings of others [provide Smith with] a way of defending the thesis that people are

not essentially selfish but are essentially social creatures with emotional bonds between them” (1990, 205).

Adam Smith wrote about sympathy in the context of emotionally dynamic relationships between people. According to Smith’s understanding of sympathy, the spectator feels sympathy with the agent who is undergoing a firsthand emotional reaction, let’s say grief at the loss of a loved one. Since the spectator did not experience the same loss, she cannot feel the same grief. However, through her capacity for sympathy, she can try to imagine what the agent is feeling, and make a conscious effort to augment her own emotion, all the while understanding that even the strongest effort will fail to produce that same grief. The agent, recognizing the efforts of the spectator, makes an effort—through sympathetic awareness of the spectator’s efforts to sympathize—to bring the intensity of his grief down closer to that of the spectator. The result is an interesting relational dynamic where each individual is aware of the other’s attempts to connect. Smith uses musical metaphors to describe the harmony that develops in the sympathetic relationship such that two different experiences are in tune with one another (Smith, 1966, 22-23).

Sen’s conception of sympathy does not seem to reflect the dynamic and interactive nature of sympathy referred to by Smith, but instead focuses on the desire to remove the unhappiness in oneself that is caused by the knowledge of misery in others. Sen’s example of helping a destitute person illustrates this: “If you help a destitute person because his destitution makes you very unhappy, that would be a sympathy-based action” (1999, 270). The fact that a person’s sympathetic choices are primarily motivated by a concern for her own well-being limits the extent to which she can be connected to others by virtue of her sympathetic attitude, choices and actions. In addition to its self-centered

focus, this characterization of sympathy fails to explain **why** the misery of another invokes unhappiness in the person who chooses and acts out of sympathy. Irene van Staveren (2001) has identified care as being central to interpersonal relationships. It is easy to see how Smith's emotionally interactive account of sympathetic relationships could incorporate care for others. However, Sen's view of sympathy entirely bypasses care. I would suggest that it is because the sympathetic person cares about the other that his misery provokes her unhappiness.

After presenting his broader, sympathy-rich view of a rationality of self-interest, Sen acknowledges that even the broadest rationality of self-interest theory cannot explain committed choices and actions. In choosing and acting out of a sense of commitment, it is possible for a person to entirely displace her own concerns and goals. Sen's view of "commitment" takes us beyond a view of rationality of self-interest (construed most broadly as the advancement of a person's own objectives or goals) in an effort to account for the ethical dimension of rational choice:

... going beyond our broadly defined well-being or self-interest, we may be willing to make sacrifices in pursuit of other values, such as social justice or nationalism or communal welfare (even at some personal cost). This kind of departure, involving *commitment* (rather than just sympathy), invokes values other than personal well-being or self-interest (including the self-interest involved in promoting the interests of those with whom we sympathize)" (1999, 270).

Sen agrees with Adam Smith that our sympathies with the emotions of others—whether grief, anger, happiness or any other emotion—are simply not strong enough to consistently motivate ethical behavior. However, while Smith attributes this lack of strength to the fact that we can never truly experience the lives and emotions of others directly, Sen attributes it to the fact that sympathy is an aspect of self-interest. Because

we benefit emotionally from responding sympathetically, sympathy is not completely other-directed and therefore cannot sustain commitments that may require us to go beyond our self-interest.

Although commitment-based actions may involve emotional responses, according to Sen, emotions play no significant role:

If ... the presence of the destitute does not make you particularly unhappy, but does fill you with the determination to change a system that you think is unjust (or more generally, your determination is not fully explainable by the unhappiness that the presence of the destitute creates), then this would be a commitment-based action (1999, 270).

For Sen, we are committed to others because we **think** injustice has been done, not necessarily because we feel it. There is, therefore, no positive emotional gain from choosing and acting on committed reasons. Commitment represents a full departure from self-interest, but has no significant emotional component. In addition, a person's choices are rational to the extent that they reflect her commitments to other-regarding values, and although they may happen to satisfy her self-interest, they are not motivated by the need to do so.

To summarize the significance of commitment in the context of the capability approach, commitment is essential to our ability to make rational development decisions that will lead to the removal of basic unfreedoms in a responsible fashion. Sen has acknowledged the importance of incorporating the dimension of responsibility into the concept of reason that is necessary for development thinking. The question remains, however, concerning how this responsibility is to be understood and achieved. To speak of commitment meaningfully, we need to consider it within a particular type of framework of rationality. We need an interpretative framework that will allow us to

appreciate the significance of commitments and at the same time provide a way to distinguish between good and bad, right and wrong, appropriate and inappropriate commitments, in addition to allowing us to balance and prioritize commitments. As Sen has reminded us, committed reasons represent full departures from a rationality of self-interest, which leaves us wondering: Just what sort of rationality framework should we apply to committed reasons?

The rationality of care perspective, which will be presented in the next chapter, provides us with a way to understand the ethical significance of both sympathy and commitment. From a care perspective, sympathy can be seen primarily as a matter of emotional perception that allows us to perceive how it is with the other; while commitment can be understood in terms of emotional motivation. Linda Zagzebski's holistic concept of virtue will help us to understand commitment as a care-related motivation in the broader context of care as a virtue.

Briefly, Zagzebski's virtue theory of epistemology acknowledges the mutual interdependence of moral and intellectual virtues and the corresponding mutual interdependence of emotional and intellectual processes. Virtues are seen to have two components: a motivational component that "inspires" the agent to desire some end, and a success component that is defined in terms of the agent's reliability in achieving the end aimed at by the motivational component. The motivational component of both intellectual and moral virtues is understood in terms of emotion: "A 'motive' in the sense relevant to

an inquiry into virtue is an emotion or feeling that initiates and directs action towards an end” (1996, 131).³

The mutual interrelationship that exists between moral and intellectual virtues is based on their causal and logical connections. Thus, we cannot exhibit a given intellectual virtue unless we also exhibit the corresponding moral virtue, and vice versa.

Consider the following illustration of the causal connection between the moral and intellectual virtues, which highlights the influence of the ‘moral’ on the ‘intellectual’ realm:

The causal connections among intellectual and moral virtues are numerous ... A person without sufficient self-respect and an inordinate need to be liked by others may tend to intellectual conformity. An egoist person will want to get his way, and this includes wanting to be right. He will therefore resist any demonstration of a mistake in his beliefs. If his belief is about a topic of contemporary debate, his egoism may lead him to read only those articles that support his own position and to discuss politics only with like-minded individuals. Or if he is a philosopher, he may invite debate but will not fairly evaluate criticisms of his position and will invest most of his intellectual energy in winning the argument. He has, then, intellectual failings resulting from a moral vice (Zagzebski, 1996, 158-159).

Zagzebski provides the example of the moral virtue of honesty to illustrate the logical connection between intellectual virtues and moral virtues and, in this case, the influence of the ‘intellectual’ on the ‘moral’:

For example, honesty is on all accounts a moral virtue. It is a virtue that requires that one tell the truth [and by extension, know what the truth is]. But it is not sufficient for honesty that a person tell whatever she happens to believe is the truth. An honest person is *careful* with the truth. She respects it and does her best to find it out, to preserve it, and to communicate it in a way that permits the hearer to believe the truth justifiably and with understanding. But this in turn requires that she have intellectual virtues that give her a high degree of justification and

³ Zagzebski seems to pass over the perceptual role of emotions like sympathy. However, the idea that we must first perceive a need in order to be motivated to respond to it is consistent with her view.

understanding as possible. She must be attentive, take the trouble to be thorough and careful in weighing the evidence, to be intellectually and perceptually acute, especially in important matters, and so on, for all the intellectual virtues. The moral virtue of honesty, then logically entails having intellectual virtues (1996, 158).

The 'right' approach to rationality requires that we acknowledge both the role of emotions with respect to rational decision-making and the role of reflection in the rationality of the emotions. Sen has done this to some extent by introducing the ethical, other-regarding dimension of rationality as a departure from the predominant view of rationality as self-interest. However, Sen does not adequately explore the extent to which this departure must acknowledge the mutual interrelationship between emotional and intellectual processes, nor does he explicitly acknowledge the significance of care with respect to rationality.

As we will see in Chapter Three, a rationality of care that reflects the notion of care as a virtue provides the appropriate lens through which sympathy and commitment—and hence responsibility—should be viewed. A rationality of care perspective gives rise to a fuller notion of responsible reason, one that includes caring about (as the motivational component of care) and caring for (as the success component of care). In addition to providing a rationality framework for the interpretation of commitment, a rationality of care allows us to understand sympathy independently of an appeal to a rationality of self-interest.

Chapter Three

Rationality of Care and Full Responsible Reason

The care perspective presented in this chapter allows us to get a picture of full responsible reason, a picture that provides for the successful implementation of actions based on responsible reasons by distinguishing between caring about and caring for. In the process of caring about things, we feel responsible for them, or committed to them; however, we must still be able to care for them. Caring for things successfully involves a range of reasonable approaches, thought processes, feelings, attitudes, actions, habits, and virtues, that is, a “distinctive discipline” of rationality (Ruddick, 1989).

First, I will present a general description of the care perspective. Then, following Zagzebski’s model of virtue presented in Chapter Two, I will discuss the motivational aspect of care, which involves sympathy and commitment. Finally, I will discuss the success component of care or caring for. Together caring about and caring for combine to create a holistic concept of caring rationality, which I refer to as full responsible reason.

Care in Perspective

I was recently told the story about a Canadian researcher who was commissioned to identify common features of “successful” development projects aimed at helping the disadvantaged. At the end of his research, he reported just one common feature. The development planners in charge of successful projects cared about the projects’ outcomes (Stephen Valentine, personal communication). Although there is greater awareness of the

need for care in the context of economics and development—even of care as a rational discipline—we are nevertheless in a care crisis. Chapter Three of the Human Development Report for 1999 admits to the lack of adequate care-related policies, which has resulted in insufficient monetary support and time for the practice of care. The tendency to take care for granted could be related to the attitude toward care throughout the past centuries (at least in the western-European world). A variety of politically determined assumptions about care have led to the underestimation of the rational significance of care and to the relative neglect of explanations of caring activities related to economics and development.

Care is often associated with feelings and emotional involvement (UNDP, 1999, Chapter Three) as if care were a natural, unthinking, irrational (or arational) sort of thing. Natural as caring may be to human beings, it is neither unthinking nor lacking in rationality. In contrast with self-interest, care—which can include care for oneself—is concerned significantly with relationships. It is important, first, that we are able to care. Second, it matters what we care about; and finally, how we deliver, express, or provide care is especially significant, not to mention the manner in which we receive care.

Irene van Staveren refers to care as “a broad category of interpersonal values” (2001, 38), which interestingly includes care for the environment, care for animals, and care for oneself as being emphatically distinct from self-interest. Reasoning from a care perspective is contrasted with Kantian moral reasoning, which considers ethical behaviour to be based on moral axioms:

Rather than universal principles prescribing rules of moral duty and obligation, values of care are developed and sustained in contextually dependent relationships between persons. Care is not an individual and subjective value, as in liberalism, nor public and universal, as in the social

contract. Rather, care expresses contextual values developing between concrete persons on the basis of contingent needs arising from human vulnerability. Care involves people's careful responses to those urgent needs, contributing to a closely interwoven network of social relationships (2001, 38-39).

Care refers not only to a feeling or an emotion, but also to a discipline—a cognitive, emotional, perceptual and motivational, interactive discipline in which a person can be relatively successful or unsuccessful and in which she has the opportunity to develop her skills, abilities and sensibilities. In order to understand care as a rational enterprise that can be described in terms of feeling, thinking, choosing and acting, we need to appreciate the holistic relationship that exists between intellectual and emotional processes:

Although traditional accounts of moral reason often neglected or disparaged the moral significance of emotion, recent accounts increasingly acknowledge that even justice involves characteristic emotions such as respect and indignation. Similarly, theorists of care resist reducing it to a simple feeling, insisting that its cognitive elements be recognized. They consider care not simply as a motivation to right action, itself conceived as a process of rational calculation, but also as a distinct moral capacity with cognitive dimensions, necessary to determining what actions are morally appropriate (Jaggar, 1995, 181).

Whether we conceive of care as a virtue, a process, a practice or a discipline, care appears to involve several stages or components that can be understood and assessed in terms of their rationality. Irene van Staveren refers to four stages of the process of care. Sara Ruddick's maternal thinking describes a particular form of a rationality of care as an interactive process with particular well-being directed goals. According to Linda Zagzebski's virtue ethical approach, each virtue has a motivational and a success component. Her account is useful for our purposes because the motivational and success components of a virtue correspond to caring about and caring for respectively.

Caring About

A Hank Williams Sr. song entitled “I Don’t Care if Tomorrow Never Comes” refers to an extreme case of not caring about life. People who say that they don’t seem to care about anything any more usually fail to exhibit motivation and are considered to be depressed. Irene van Staveren’s description of the two brain-damaged men referred to in Chapter One illustrated how their inability to experience emotions resulted in their inability to care about anything and hence to function adequately in human life. It is obvious to everyone, but bears explicit noting that the ability to experience emotions provides us with the basis for caring about people and things, and our ability to care about things is essential for us to be “healthy” functioning human beings. Being committed to living presupposes that we care about ourselves.

Caring about being rational is a necessary precondition for any kind of rationality. In other words, people need to care about reason and being rational in order to engage in reasoning and strive to be rational. Before Sen even begins to talk about the necessity of applying reasoned thought in the solution of social problems, he needs to admit the very basic fact that reason comes from care. It comes from the fact that we care about making right, good or appropriate decisions when we are making choices. If we did not care about being rational, why would we bother being rational or at least trying to be rational in our thinking and believing, feeling, choosing and acting? “Do we care? Do we really want answers to questions? And are we sufficiently committed to this goal to be willing to take risks for the sake of its achievement—risks of potential error, of certain disagreement, and of possible philistine incomprehension?” (Rescher, 2001, 9) Being

rational, striving to be rational, and being committed to being rational often involve caring about rationality.

People are capable of caring about things that are significant to them for one reason or another—their families, friends, past and future generations, people from other cultures, animals, the environment, their work, art, music ... the list is virtually endless. Caring about things implies being able to perceive and evaluate their significance and being committed to promoting and sustaining them. Insofar as caring about is emotional, it involves all of the dimensions of the emotions (including perceptual, cognitive, motivational, visceral and narrative). For the purposes of this analysis, we will focus on the perceptual and motivational aspects of caring about. Before we can successfully care for someone or something, we must perceive them in a caring manner, in a way that is sympathetic to the particular manner in which that person or thing is in need of care.

However, it is not sufficient merely to exercise sympathetic perception in our effort to care about. We must also be motivated or committed to care for that toward which and with which we are sympathetic. Linda Zagzebski's (1996) account of the virtue of benevolence is related to the concept of care referred to in this thesis and is described as the virtue according to which a person is characteristically motivated to bring about the well-being of others and is reliably successful in doing so. Motivation characteristic of benevolence consists of the emotions associated with caring about, which include love and various degrees of affection, compassion and even sympathy.¹ Caring about is subject to standards of rational assessment insofar as its perceptual and

¹ Sympathy has a dual role on the view presented in this thesis. It functions perceptually and motivationally. Insofar as it functions as a motivation it is referred to in terms of commitment.

motivational aspects are subject to rational standards of appropriateness. It is possible for the caregiver's perception of the care receiver's need to be either accurate or inaccurate, which can affect how she identifies the goals of care that she will be committed to, and which in turn can be assessed in terms of their appropriateness.

"Caring about" is important to Sen's thinking for two primary reasons: First, "caring about" is essential to the concept of sympathy and presupposes it. We cannot be sympathetic to others unless we care about them. We could go so far as to say that sympathy fulfils the perceptual role in caring about. Second, in order to be able to be committed to things, we must first care about them to some extent. On this view, commitment presupposes (and incorporates) sympathetic perception. Caring about involves sympathetic perception and committed motivation.

Sen has contributed to the conception of responsible reason by introducing sympathy and commitment as two "departures" from the rationality of self-interest model. The analysis presented so far has demonstrated the significance of sympathy and commitment as the perceptual and motivational aspects of caring about. However, the view of responsible reason that we need must go further than this. Sympathetic perception and committed motivation provide us with only half of the picture. There is more to care as a rational practice than caring about. There is also the success component of care, caring for. Caring for presupposes and involves caring about, and insofar as caring about involves sympathy and commitment, they too can be understood in relation to caring for. Sara Ruddick's illustration of the aspects of caring for provides us with what we need for a fuller picture of responsible reason in thought, in feeling and in practice.

Caring For

It is one thing to care about yourself, your children, your family, and your friends. It is another to endeavour to care for those objects, to know how to care in order to bring about the end of caring about, the well-being (broadly interpreted) of the object of care. Caring for something is motivated by caring about it, and strives to achieve the ends identified by caring about that thing. Caring for involves more than just doing caring things and making caring choices. It involves acknowledging and acting on our responsibility to respond to needs that cannot be otherwise responded to (van Staveren, 2001, 39). According to Irene van Staveren, these needs are our responsibility if they “arise from the unintended consequences of our behaviour” (2001, 39) or if they arise from human vulnerability in general. Throughout our lives, each of us has and will be both in the position to provide care and in the position to receive care.

Examples of failing to care for are fairly familiar: the overprotected child; the under-protected child; the sick person who is so “well”-cared for that she becomes over-dependent on the caregiver; the caregiver who neglects to care for her own self and consequently becomes less able to successfully care for others; the Native people of Canada who have been socially and economically abused in part as the result of paternalistic approaches to caring for, which have included—but are definitely not limited to—the notorious residential school system.

“Caring for” is the success component of the virtue of care according to Zagzebski’s understanding of care as a virtue, which incorporates, builds on and depends on other virtues in order to be carried out successfully. Being successful in caring for

entails contributing to and bringing about the well-being (broadly interpreted) of what a person cares about, and it involves having appropriate emotions, engaging in reflective thinking, cultivating virtues and skills that are conducive to care, making good caring choices and acting appropriately. Although caring about has been identified as a distinct aspect of care from caring for, it nevertheless runs through caring for. We cannot be motivated to care for something we do not care about. Appropriate perceptual and motivational support is required to sustain the caring for process, which characteristically runs for extensive periods of time. This suggests a vital role for sympathy and commitment as they have been reinterpreted within a rationality of care. One significant and perhaps paradigmatic example of caring for with respect to development thinking is caring for children, which in most cultures has traditionally been included within the responsibilities of women.

Sara Ruddick's comprehensive account of maternal thinking provides a good example of the cognitive and affective aspects of caring for children, an activity she claims can and should be engaged in by both men and women. The maternal thinking involved in caring for is in an important respect an intellectual discipline that is based on and incorporates caring about. Through sympathetic perception of her child, a mother appreciates her child's need for protection, appropriate nurturance of growth, and training with respect to values in order to become a conscientious and an accepted member of society without sacrificing significant aspects of his individuality. At the same time, the mother who cares about her child is committed or motivated to protecting, nurturing and training her child to the best of her ability in order to ensure these needs are addressed.²

² Of course, all this is not to say that mothers are entirely successful 100% of the time in acting upon their caring commitments. The rationality of care involved in maternal thinking is a

Although Ruddick acknowledges the existence of a wide variety of caring activities and relationships, she insists that mothering is a “symbol of care” that can contribute—among other things—to thinking about development (1989, 46). Maternal thinking involves thinking, strategy, calculation, reflection, communication and “reflective feeling”:

In maternal thinking, feelings are at best complex but sturdy instruments of work quite unlike the simple and separate hates, fears and loves that are usually put aside and put down in philosophy ... Rather than separating reason from feeling, mothering makes reflective feeling one of the most difficult attainments of reason. In protective work, feeling, thinking, and action are conceptually linked; feelings demand reflection, which is in turn tested by action, which is in turn tested by the feelings it provokes (1989, 70).

Ruddick’s appeal to reflective feeling differs from Sen’s belief (reviewed in Chapter Two) that reason is necessary in order to correct for mistaken or inaccurate first perceptions. Instead, a mother thinks about and reflects upon her feelings in order to interpret how they structure her world and the world of her child:

In protecting her child, a mother is besieged by feeling, her own and her children’s. She is dependent on these feelings to interpret the world. The world that mothers and children see and name, separately and together, is constructed by feeling. Objects, events, people, and feelings themselves are selected and given meaning in terms of emotional stories: watch out for this, “this” is what or who I hate; “this” is the fearful place/person; “this” can be approached, should be hugged close. A mother’s angry, fearful, or solicitous responses to her children are often her best clue to the meaning of the actions that evoked the emotions. Even more clearly, a child’s emotional expressions, however difficult they may be for the mother to witness, are essential to the understanding that makes protection possible (1989, 69).

A mother who engages in the discipline of caring for her children mobilizes all that she knows and feels is relevant to the three goals of protection, growth, and social acceptance. Through the practice of her discipline, she learns more and transcends the

normative framework of rationality.

previous scope of her knowledge and understanding. Successfully promoting these goals requires characteristic cognitive and emotional skills and attitudes. A brief examination of some of the skills and attitudes involved in caring for children will provide a glimpse of the rational nature of caring for.

Effective protection of children requires humility. Although mothers may wish to protect their children from all harms (which they have to think about and identify in relation to their children), they require humility in order to realize that they cannot control every aspect of their children's lives. As children grow and develop, they acquire a sense of independence that can be compromised by overprotection in the caring they receive from their mothers. In order to guard against overprotection, a mother must develop the "mental habit or cognitive style, which [Ruddick refers to as] scrutinizing" when it comes to watching over her child: "A mother never stops looking, but she must not look too much. Attentiveness to a creature who perseveres in its own being and at the same time is perpetually at risk is peculiarly demanding"(1989, 71).

Humility prevents scrutinizing from becoming control: "Mothers identify humility as a virtue when they recognize in themselves the delusive, compulsive efforts to see everywhere and control everything so that a child will be safe. With 'humility', a mother respects the limits of her will and the independent, uncontrollable and increasingly separate existences she seeks to preserve" (1989, 72).

Ruddick describes the cognitive capacity of holding, which is a "fundamental attitude" toward the vulnerable:

To hold means to minimize risk and to reconcile differences rather than to sharply accentuate them. Holding is a way of seeing with an eye toward maintaining the minimal harmony, material resources and skills necessary for sustaining a child in safety. It is an attitude elicited by the work of

“world-protection”, world-preservation, world-repair ... the invisible weaving of a frayed and threadbare family life (1989, 78-79).

As time goes on, children grow and develop their abilities to do and to be. From day to day they change physically, emotionally, cognitively and spiritually. A welcoming attitude to change is one of “the most exigent intellectual demands on those who foster growth (1989, 89). It is also, moreover, an attitude that could be relevant to thinking about development in general: “Maternal experience with change and the kind of learning it provokes will help us to understand the changing natures of all peoples and communities. It is not only children who change, grow, and need help in growing. We all might grow—as opposed to simply getting older—if we could learn how” (1989, 90).

Concrete thinking is “called forth by and enables the work of fostering growth” (1989, 93). In contrast with abstract thinking, which seeks to “simplify, generalize, and sharply define”, concrete thinking involves relishing complexity, tolerating ambiguity and multiplying options (1989, 93). Ruddick does not discount the appropriateness of abstract thinking for “any disciplined thinking”, including scientific, mathematical, philosophical and even maternal thinking (1989, 97). However, concrete thinking is taken to be especially useful in making sense of open (changing and developing) structures:

It seems a plausible working hypothesis that children’s minds would call forth an open-ended, reflective cognitive style in those who try to understand them. A child’s acts are irregular, unpredictable, often mysterious. A child herself might be thought of as an “open structure,” changing, growing, reinterpreting what has come before (1989, 96).

Concrete thinking is the most appropriate style of thought with respect to establishing and maintaining the personal connection of care in the mother-child—and in any other, for that matter—relationship. Ruddick refers to the fact that concrete thinking is sometimes considered to be “defective thought or thoughtlessness”. However, this

denigration of concrete thinking is inappropriate, as Ruddick illustrates with her description of maternal storytelling as the primary mode of expression and communication with respect to concrete thinking:

Actually, the reflectiveness of concreteness must be developed through disciplined attentiveness and then expanded and tested through critical conversational challenge. In gossip and focused conversations, mothers refine their capacity for concrete ways of knowing, practising together attentive noticing and disciplined reflectiveness about what they notice. Maternal conversations are important instruments of self-confidence. In their storytelling, mothers share and elaborate their observations, making a coherent, often amusing, dramatic, or poignant story of their children's particularities. Individually and collectively, they rehearse their judgements and establish continuities in their ongoing nurturing activities. Ideally, a mother's stories are as beneficial to her children as they are to her. As she pieces her children's days together, a mother creates for herself and her children the confidence that the children have a life, very much their own and inextricably connected to others.

Children love to hear stories that tell of their astonishing changes and remind them of reassuring continuities. Well into their twenties they ask about who they were, before they can remember, before they could write or play basketball or fell in love. Through good stories, mothers and children connect their understandings of a shared experience. They come to know and, to a degree, accept each other through stories of the fear, love, anxiety, pride, and shame they shared or provoked. Children are shaped by—some would say imprisoned in—the stories they are first told. But it is also true that storytelling at its best enables children to adapt, edit, and invent life stories of their own (1989, 98).

Good maternal stories are characterized by the virtues of realism, compassion and delight. Realism is important for establishing trust in the mother-child relationship, although a mother's attempt to be truthful in her stories should be tempered by her ability to edit out details that are beyond her child's emotional and intellectual capacity:

Children themselves insist that adults stop prettying it up: they heard the fight, saw the embrace, watched the whiskey disappear. It would in any case be unwise of a mother to deny or seriously distort the less flattering episodes of a child's life or of adult personalities. When falsely cheerful, overedited stories, are taken to heart, they make for false selves. Moreover, a child can make use of maternal narratives only if she believes

her mother is a trustworthy narrator ... Yet many of the details of adults' lives emotional lives—sexual liaisons, economic reverses, serious illnesses—may be beyond a child's emotional or intellectual grasp. It requires judgement to know what and how much to tell (1989, 98-99).

By telling stories from a compassionate perspective, a mother teaches her child in a concrete manner about the nature of compassion and instils in that child the ability to be compassionate both toward others and toward himself:

The compassionate narrator sympathizes with her characters' difficulties, including moral ones. While she sees imperfection or bad luck as human, rather than a peculiarity of her child, she is not a fatalistic bystander. Compassion implies the willingness to act—to search for ways to come to a person's aid, devising strategies for reversing failures while forgiving or including those who fail. Compassionate narrators need not conceal their own or their subjects' anger ... But whatever anger a compassionate narrator includes in the plot or the telling, she also reveals that she is on her child's side—even when he seems his own enemy—and that she judges generously and would, if she could, make his world happier. Children who learn about themselves through compassionate stories may develop a maternal generosity toward their lives, learning from their mothers the capacity to appreciate the complex humanness of their plight, to forgive themselves as they have been forgiven (1989, 99-100).

Ruddick counts delight as the “primary mood and virtue of a maternal narrator”, a mood that does not always come as naturally as one would think and that often involves a disciplined effort in order to achieve:

When children are very young, it often takes patient curiosity even to identify the accomplishment of which they are proud. Later it requires imaginative generosity—not to mention “time out” in the midst of other duties and pleasures—to appreciate what children present: one-act plays, rock collections, magic tricks, surprise parties. With older children, aesthetic incomprehension of “strange” tastes and appearances may perversely inhibit delight. Moral difference can paralyze a mother's efforts to delight in her late adolescent children's sexual, political, social, or intellectual life (1989, 100).

With respect to training, Ruddick acknowledges that there are many views about what constitutes good training of children. Her account sees training as a potential “work

of conscience” (1989, 103). Being engaged in training often leads a mother to “reflect on her own moral principles” (1989, 105) in the face of pressures to train her children in socially acceptable ways. I will repeat the example of a young mother’s lamentation that is cited by Ruddick in order to illustrate the nature of the conflict that many mothers face when it comes to training:

Suddenly, for example, I was to pass on values to a malleable young soul. “Pass on” was, in my case, quite a euphemism. My own ethical stance and value system were still in the process of being reconstructed after the blitz of the late sixties. I felt absolutely inadequate to the task of building a strong structure for a preschool child. I struggled painfully with every situation that called for a decision about values: Should I encourage him to question my commands or respect my need to have things done in certain ways? Should I demand that he maintain order in his room or allow him a measure of chaos? Every decision seemed to matter immensely—and to present unresolvable difficulties (1989, 104).

A mother’s engagement in training her child is simultaneously a discipline involving the reflective questioning of her own values. Through this process, her child gradually develops his own sense of conscientiousness or “ability to identify, reflect on, and respect the demands of conscience” (1989, 105):

The making of her child’s conscientiousness is an exercise and discipline of her own. As a conscientious person, a mother is capable of judging against, as well as in accord with, dominant values. She does not relinquish authority to elders or urge unquestioning obedience even in good causes. Her training is not aimed only or primarily at producing pleasing behavior, important as this is for family and community life. If her children are to become conscientious people, she must help them learn that they cannot count on her own or any person’s authority. Or rather, since adults and children seek and trust the authority of others, conscientiousness requires taking responsibility for judgements of trust while maintaining a respectful independence from the authority judged trustworthy. To be sure, conscientiousness is a slowly acquired capacity. For young children, simple directions matched by willing obedience have their place. But even then, the aim of training and the authority of the trainer distinguishes the work of conscience. A mother’s conscientiousness becomes a model for the child’s own (1989, 116-117).

Proper trust is the virtue associated with the training of conscience and is described as “one of the most difficult maternal virtues” (1989, 119):

It requires of a mother clear judgement that does not give way to obedience or denial. It depends on her being reliably goodwilled and independent yet able to express and to accept from her children righteous indignation at trust betrayed. Ideally, proper trust is prepared by maternal protectiveness and nurturance. It survives a mother’s inauthentic moments, domineering tendencies, and evident failures to be reliable. In proper trust the separable strands of attitudes toward nature and authority come together. To see children’s natures as hospitable to goodness is an act of trust; to see them or dominant persons as only good is excessive trust, blind obedience or denial. Clearly, to identify proper trust as a virtue is not to identify an achievement but an ongoing and difficult struggle (1989, 119).

Attentive love is a discipline that combines the cognitive capacity of attention with the virtue of love, “which knits together maternal thinking” (1989, 119):

The ... mother ... learns to ask “What are you going through?” and to wait to hear the answer rather than giving it. She learns to ask again and keep listening if she cannot make sense of what she hears or can barely tolerate the child she has understood. Attention is akin to the capacity for empathy, the ability to suffer or celebrate with another as if in the other’s experience you know and find yourself. However, the idea of empathy, as it is popularly understood, underestimates the importance of knowing the other *without* finding yourself in her. A mother really looks at her child, tries to see him accurately rather than herself in him. “The difficulty is to keep attention fixed on the real situation”—or on the real children (1989, 121).

The rationality of care embodied in the maternal thinking described by Sara Ruddick is an example of caring for that is based on and incorporates caring about. It is an example of full responsible reason that should apply in our making of reasoned choices with respect to valuable doings and beings and that includes the following assumptions:

1. Understanding and wisdom—not only knowledge—are epistemic goals in reasoning about values.

2. In relation to care, emotions can function as perceptions (sympathy) or motivations (commitment), and are necessary components in reasoning about values.
3. Emotions are necessary components in our ability to make decisions.
4. Because we can have appropriate and inappropriate emotions, as well as good and bad (right and wrong) beliefs and actions, emotions are subject to standards of rationality.
5. The class of emotions that are specifically relevant to reasoning about values are the emotions of care. We must care about ourselves as opposed to being self-interested and we must care about others, which includes caring about our world and future generations.
6. Being successful at caring involves not just caring “about”, but knowing how to care “for”.
7. Concrete reasoning rooted in experience is essential in choosing valuable beings and doings (although there is still room for abstract reasoning).

The importance of care to an infant or child’s development goes without saying. Raff Carmen (2000) makes the point well that what is missing in approaches to development is the **how**, which involves knowing how to care for, which in turn presupposes caring about. A comprehensive account of care that identifies its rational aspects and recognizes the distinction between caring about and caring for would contribute greatly to the implementation of development initiatives. Not knowing how (and conversely knowing how) to care for has crucial significance for the success of development efforts.

Sen's approach presupposes that people can reason about what functionings to value in their lives. His concepts of well-being and well-being freedom depend on this. The kind of reasoning that is required involves the rationality of care. Insofar as the concepts of sympathy and commitment referred to by Sen represent the caring about dimension of care, his broader view of rationality is not inconsistent with the rationality of care described in this chapter. The view of full responsible reason presented in this chapter is particularly appropriate to considerations that involve development. In the next chapter we will consider an example of how full responsible reason can be applied to questions concerning development.

Chapter Four

Applying Responsible Reason to Sustainable Development

In “Why is Commitment Important for Rationality?” (2005), Sen contends that we can (and should) exercise our reasoned agency by applying committed rationality (responsible reason) to the question of environmental priorities, an important question since “[w]e all recognise, these days, that our environment is easily ravaged. We routinely damage the ozone layer, heat up the globe, foul up the air and the rivers, destroy the forests, deplete mineral resources, drive many species to extinction, and impose other devastations” (Sen, 2004).

Sen illustrates how his version of responsible reason can be applied to thinking about sustainable development. Our sense of responsibility involves sympathetic perception of the needs and freedoms of our own and future generations, and the commitment to promote them. Awareness of this responsibility was first expressed in the definition of sustainable development contained in the Brundtland Report¹ as “meeting ‘the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’” (quoted in Sen, 2005, 11). The Brundtland definition expresses a commitment to future generations and goes beyond our concerns for our own well-being. Sen suggests that the commitment to sustainable development is “here to stay” and “it is, therefore, particularly important to make the concept do justice to the reach of reasoning involving commitment as well as sympathy” (2005, 12).

¹ World Commission on Environment and Development. 1987. *Our Common Future*. Oxford University Press.

Although Sen applauds the commitments expressed in the Brundtland definition, he prefers Robert Solow's (1993) refinement and extension of the concept of needs: "Solow's formulation sees sustainability as the requirement that the next generation must be left with 'whatever it takes to achieve a standard of living at least as good as our own and to look after their generation similarly'" (2005, 11-12).

Solow's definition is taken to be more specific than the Brundtland definition in its focus on living standards instead of fulfilment of needs, in addition to being more comprehensive in its "generational coverage" because of its "recursive formulation". It is therefore considered by Sen to be more conducive to successful implementation than the Brundtland formulation of sustainable development. However, Sen rightly questions whether or not the concept of living standards is based on "an adequately broad view of humanity" (2005, 12): "In particular, sustaining living standards is not the same thing as sustaining people's freedom to have—or safeguard—what they value and to which they have reason to attach importance. Our reason for valuing particular opportunities need not always lie in their contribution to living standards" (2005, 12).

Sen gives the example of our commitment to the preservation of other species, in this case the spotted owl, not because the continuation of spotted owls will contribute to our individual standards of living, but "for reasons that have nothing much to do with human living standards..." (2005, 11). Solow's definition simply refines Brundtland's concept of needs, but does not go beyond it: "Certainly, people have 'needs', but they also have values, and, in particular, they cherish their ability to reason, appraise, act and participate. Seeing people in terms only of their needs may give us a rather meagre view of humanity" (Sen, 2004). The Brundtland focus on needs and the Solow refinement of

needs in terms of living standards sees people as beneficiaries, but we must also focus on agency aspect of people:

To use a medieval distinction, we are not only patients, whose needs demand attention, but also agents, whose freedom to decide what to value and how to pursue it can extend far beyond the fulfilment of our needs. The question can thus be asked whether environmental priorities should be seen in terms also of sustaining our freedoms. Should we not be concerned with preserving—and when possible expanding—the substantive freedoms of people today ‘without compromising the ability of future generations’ to have similar, or more, freedoms? Focusing on ‘sustainable freedoms’ may not only be conceptually important (as a part of a general approach of ‘development as freedom’), it can also have tangible implications of immediate relevance (Sen, 2004).

An important expression of our freedom as agents is our sense of social responsibility, which involves our ability to reason responsibly by including reference to commitments that go beyond a concern for our own well-being. According to Sen, this sense of responsibility is based on our acknowledgement of the power we have to affect others. Sen draws on the following analogy to illustrate this:

Gautama Buddha ... argued in *Sutta Nipata* that since we are enormously more powerful than the other species, we have some responsibility toward other species that links with this asymmetry of power. Buddha went on to illustrate the point by an analogy with the responsibility of the mother toward her child, not because she has given birth to the child (that connection is not invoked in this particular argument—there is room for it elsewhere), but because she can do things to influence the child’s life, positively or negatively, that the child itself cannot do. The reason for looking after the children, in this line of reasoning, is not our own standard of living (even though that too will almost certainly be affected), but the responsibility we should acknowledge precisely because of our power. We can have many reasons for our conservational efforts—not all of which are parasitic on our own living standards and some of which turn precisely on our sense of values and of fiduciary responsibility (2005, 12-13).

Sen’s emphasis on the responsible exercise of reasoned agency is consistent with what he has referred to as the growing interest “in exploring the role of citizenship in achieving sustainable development. Just as institutions are needed to establish

enforceable regulations and provide financial incentives, a stronger commitment to the responsibilities of citizenship may help to enhance environmental care” (2004). Sen agrees with the view of Andrew Dobson presented in *Citizenship and the Environment* (2003) that “environmental considerations” should be included among the responsibilities of citizenship:

Dobson is surely right to emphasise the reach of civic responsibilities in dealing with environmental challenges. He is especially concerned with investigating and highlighting what citizens can do when they are moved by social understanding and reasoned reflection, rather than only by financial incentives (acting merely as ‘self-interested rational actors’): ‘One by one, then, the signposts to sustainability are being erected; and I regard ecological citizenship as a key addition to the collection’ (Sen, 2004).

In general, Sen has demonstrated how his view of committed rationality, or responsible reason, contributes to the sustainable development debate. The fact that we can be committed to values other than our narrowly defined well-being points beyond the definitions of sustainable development presented by Brundtland and Solow. It is not merely needs in general or standard of living specifically that we must be concerned with in our thinking about sustainable development, but the freedom of people to exercise their responsibly reasoned agency. Approaching sustainable development with freedom and agency in mind provides a role for all people to express their sense of responsibility through their exercise of responsible reason in the identification of other-regarding values that are necessary for specifying the ends of sustainable development. Of course, enhancing people’s reasoned agency includes providing people with opportunities to participate in the identification of the doings and beings they have reason to value that are relevant to sustainable development.

Sen emphasizes the need to provide people with opportunities to participate in democratic deliberations. By drawing on and enhancing our abilities to engage in committed or responsible reason, it is hoped that we will together be able to identify the valuable doings and beings that we and future generations might have reason to value in a way that is consistent with a conception of development that involves “environmental care”. The fact that we must exercise our responsible reason on the behalf of young children and the unborn introduces a special kind of responsibility that is based on our power to affect others. However, if we are going to fulfil our responsibility to future generations—not to mention to ourselves—we must go further than specifying the appropriate ends of sustainable development, which are expressed on Sen’s view as valuable doings and beings. The exercise of responsible reason may allow us to identify the ends of sustainable development through sympathetic perception and it may motivate us to pursue these goals through our committed motivation. But we still need to identify what is needed to achieve those ends. We need to engage in **full** responsible reason, which combines in a holistic fashion knowing what to care about with knowing how to care for it.

Toward the Application of Full Responsible Reason

Democratic deliberations have already started. Worldwide there are examples of conferences, fora, seminars, community meetings, government round tables, conversations between “ordinary” people from all cultures, academic debates and other “gatherings” that are looking at the connections between the qualities of lives,

environmental integrity and sustainable development. Often they are concerned not only with identifying the goals of sustainable development, but also with how these goals can be achieved.

We will examine one instance of a democratic “gathering” that responds to Sen’s call for responsibly reasoned public participation in the identification of the ends of sustainable development and that goes further by exploring how a variety of full responsible reason can contribute to our achievement of those ends.

Workshops held in 1996 and 1997 that included a wide variety of researchers and indigenous people form the basis of a United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) volume entitled *Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity* (1999). The contributors to this volume engage in responsible reasoning to the extent that they share a commitment to the values of biological and cultural diversity, which they see as essential means and ends of sustainable development. In short, they exhibit that they care about conserving “the cultural and natural bounty on earth” (1999, 12). However, they go further than this by emphasizing the need to learn from and “weave the life-sustaining customs of all diverse groups on earth into a resilient fabric that will protect the sanctity of all life”(1999, xii). In particular, this means paying attention to traditional indigenous worldviews, which provide an example of full responsible reasoning (a rationality of care) that tells us not only how to care about, but also how to care for (preserve and promote) the values of (and the values related to) biological and cultural diversity.

The opening words of *Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity* (1999) describe how concerns about sustainable development are linked to both biological and cultural diversity:

There is strong evidence that the life support systems on which our economies depend are being overloaded, and unless a shift is made towards sustainable development we might face severe or irreversible damage to our environment. Besides the profound ethical and aesthetic implications, it is clear that the loss of biodiversity has serious economic and social costs. The genes, species, ecosystems and human knowledge that are being lost represent a living library of options available for preventing and/or adapting to local and global change. Biodiversity is a part of our daily lives and livelihoods, and constitutes the resources on which families, communities, nations and future generations depend...

Respect for biological diversity implies respect for human diversity. Indeed, both elements are fundamental to stability and durable peace on earth. The key to creating forms of development that are sustainable and in harmony with the needs and aspirations of each culture implies breaking out of patterns that render invisible the lives and perspectives of those cultures. It is the concern of many people that biodiversity must be appreciated in terms of human diversity, because different cultures and people from different walks of life perceive and apprehend biodiversity in different ways as a consequence of their distinct heritages and experiences (1999, xi).

The UNEP report explicitly links traditional indigenous culture—including importantly, language—with biological diversity by noting not only how the survival of thousands of traditional indigenous cultures depends on the preservation of biological diversity, but also how the traditional indigenous perspective is conducive to the preservation and promotion of biodiversity, and to sustainable development itself. The report calls for the active participation of traditional indigenous peoples in working toward sustainable development solutions and expresses appreciation for the value of their knowledge:

Most indigenous and/or traditional populations inhabit areas of mega-biodiversity. This illustrates the inextricable link between cultural and biological diversity. The very origins of environmental conservation lie buried in ancient cultures found throughout the world. Modern environmental movements express various ideologies of these original belief systems, yet do not always realize their debt to their forebears, nor towards those who still embody these ideals. Learning and respecting the ways of today's indigenous and traditional peoples, and integrating them

into environmental and developmental considerations, will prove indispensable for the survival of diversity (1999, 6).

The following excerpt from Joji Cariño's 1997 address to the UN General Assembly on behalf of the Indigenous-Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forests gives us a general idea of the relationship between indigenous peoples, development and the environment. Cariño emphasizes the need to respect indigenous models of rationality that involve knowledge of how to care for the environment, which is based on a love or caring about "our territories and the environment":

Members of the Assembly, and all peoples of the world: I speak today for the indigenous and tribal peoples of the tropical forests, who have come together in response to the global destruction of our forests. Our network includes the Batwa of Rwanda, the hill tribes of Thailand, the peoples of the Amazon, the Adivasis of India, and many more peoples from 30 tropical forest countries. I am an Ibaloi Igorot from the Cordillera region of the Philippines.

In 1992 ... the International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forests...movement arose in response to the destruction of our forests to feed the unsustainable consumption and production patterns of the rest of the world.

Our goal is to secure respect for indigenous rights, territories, institutions and processes, and to promote our indigenous models of development and conservation in tropical forest regions that are more just and more sustainable.

We are part of a powerfully resurgent movement of indigenous peoples world-wide, who today find ourselves at the chalk face of the global crisis of development and environment. Our greatest strength is in the local activities of indigenous peoples who love and care for our territories and environment.

For indigenous peoples, development too often means mining, oil pipelines, logging, dams and biopiracy which devastate our environment, consisting of our lands, territories and spiritual bonds with creation and the earth.

Sixty percent of the Western world's alluvial gold is extracted from tribal lands and waters. The largest single supply of diamonds is mined

from a sacred site of aboriginal Australians, while most of the world's remaining tropical forests are on indigenous lands. All over the globe, parks and protected areas overlap with our homelands, encroaching on our rights, while many rivers flowing from our mountains are polluted and dammed.

The earth's biodiversity is intimately linked with indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge. However, our knowledge receives little respect, unless it provides the means to make profits for outsiders. All over the world indigenous peoples are suffering the negative effects of development on the environment (1999, 66-67).

The workshops provide a good example of what Sen is calling for: the opportunity for people to gather in order to express their responsibly reasoned agency by specifying their moral commitments and the doings and beings they have reason to value, which development should enhance and not destroy.

The participants in the example of democratic deliberation provided by the UNEP workshops all agree that biological and cultural diversity are both important considerations—even goals—of sustainable development. In addition, they go further by sharing their views about how these values are to be promoted and achieved. By preserving cultural diversity, which includes thousands of traditional indigenous worldviews, we preserve a certain perspective, a valuable doing **and** being, which seems to be quite common to these worldviews. Despite the diversity among indigenous cultures, they all seem to share a perspective that involves a common respect for and desire to preserve biological diversity. This perspective represents a valuable doing and being that should be protected, preserved and enhanced both because of its intrinsic significance in terms of cultural identity and because it is consistent with the notion of sustainable development that reflects environmental care.

We will proceed to examine some of the ways in which the traditional indigenous

perspective, which is often referred to as traditional indigenous knowledge, exhibits characteristics of full responsible reasoning. Traditional indigenous peoples exhibit caring about biological diversity in their perception of the need to preserve and promote the balance between members of a common family. In addition, they are motivated to do what they can to address this need. Their ability to act on and be successful in achieving the preservation and promotion of biological diversity is directly linked to their worldview.

Traditional Indigenous Knowledge—An Integrated Perspective

Although there are many cultural differences between indigenous peoples worldwide, most—if not all—traditional indigenous worldviews express a broad view of community that involves reciprocal relationships of care between family members:² “It is the story of all life that is holy and is good to tell, and of us two-leggeds sharing in it with the four-leggeds and the wings of the air and all green things; for these are children of one mother and their father is one spirit” (Black Elk, quoted in UNEP, 1999, 73).

Oren Lyons illustrates the significance of the phrase “all my relations” to the Lakota Indians of the North American plains:

The Lakota end all of their prayers with, ‘all my relations’. This means more than their families or extended families. It includes *all* life upon this earth. It is the recognition, respect and love for the interconnected ‘web of life’ that Chief Seattle spoke of. It is instruction to the human community of our relationship to the earth. We call the earth ‘mother’ to emphasize this relationship. It is the recognition that this mysterious power of the

² This is not to say that all indigenous people ascribe to their traditional perspectives, but that there is a certain extent to which various indigenous cultures can be identified with—and identify themselves with—particular traditional worldviews, which are often enshrined in their traditional languages.

life-force springs from the seed. This is the great regenerative law of life upon this earth. That is why water is the first law of life; all life needs water to nurture and grow. The laws of the natural world dictate these immutable realities. This is what indigenous peoples understand...

We understand the long-term rhythms of the earth. We have intimate contact with the life that surrounds us because we are dependent upon that life. We personify the natural forces of nature to remind us how we relate and to teach our children respect for these forces. This underscores our connection and our responsibilities as part of these forces to maintain balance and harmony (UNEP, 1999, 450-452).

Traditional indigenous peoples interpret the world from a holistic and integrated perspective of knowledge that combines an epistemological perspective with a moral perspective. The epistemological perspective sees all of creation—humans (past, present, and future), animals, fish, birds, insects, plants, the water, the land, the air, the trees, the sky, the clouds, the rain, the mountains and the rocks—as **belonging** to the same **family** in relationships with one another. The moral perspective sees all family relationships in terms of responsibility and reciprocity: giving and taking. In order to maintain good family relationships between all members it is necessary for all interactions to reflect reciprocity. Taking too much or giving too much destroys the balance that must exist in the family. From the moral perspective, care-related emotions and attitudes such as love and compassion, humility and respect, and generosity and gratitude motivate and guide humans in their relations with each other and all members of this family of creation.

A central bond that ties the family members together in the family relationship, including ancestors, living humans, future generations, animals, fish, birds and insects is spirit. This fundamental belief contributes to both the moral and the epistemological perspectives. The belief that life exists in various dimensions and forms—not only the

physical, but the mental, emotional and spiritual as well—allows Native people to appreciate the connections between all family members.

This integrated epistemological and moral perspective guides the practice of gathering knowledge and understanding, which Linda Zagzebski likes to view in terms of coming into cognitive contact with reality (1989, 45). Traditional indigenous peoples who are guided by this perspective view all things they come into cognitive contact with in terms of their roles and responsibilities as members of the same family. They understand that good relationships between family members are characterized by reciprocal care. This view of care differs from Ruddick's description of maternal thinking, which focuses on the mother as caregiver and the child as care receiver, in that it is concerned with reciprocal relationships of care between all members of the family.³ However, it nevertheless reflects many of the same cognitive attitudes, emotions and virtues, for example humility.

As we saw in Chapter Three, in order to protect her children adequately, a mother requires the virtue of humility in order to prevent her care from turning into control. Humility involves the realization that what we care for exists on its own terms and should be respected. Raymond Pierotti and Daniel Wildcat contrast the western conception of conservation with the Native view, precisely because “conservation”—although well intentioned—often retains an aspect of control. This contrast underscores the importance of both caring about and caring for to a full conception of care. While the conservationist may care about the environment and desire to protect it, she must also know how to care for it, which entails a sense of humility:

³ Although, looking at the mother-child relationship over the course of time, we know that as a mother enters her “senior” years, her child may well become the caregiver.

Living with nature is very different from ‘conservation’ of nature. Those who wish to ‘conserve’ nature still feel that they are in control of nature, and that nature should be conserved only insofar as it benefits humans, either economically or spiritually. It is crucial to realize that nature exists on its own terms, and that non-humans have their own reasons for existence, independent of human interpretation ... Those who desire to dance with wolves must first learn to live with wolves (1999, 7).

Stories that come from traditional indigenous cultures worldwide tell about the family relationships of reciprocal care that exist among people and between people and animals, plants, trees, the sky, the earth, the water and the rocks. It is through this lens on reality, this perspective, that knowledge is “gathered”. This is quite unlike the Eurocentric vision embodied in the “Newtonian perception” described by Rostow in Chapter One, a view that sees man as being separate from nature, which is viewed as something for man to control and exploit for his own gain. There is no reciprocity envisioned on this view, no sense of giving back what we take. It is no wonder this perception has contributed to—perhaps even given rise to—a rationality of self-interest.

To reiterate: The traditional indigenous integrated perspective combines the moral perspective of reciprocity with the epistemological perspective that understanding consists in knowing about family relationships, which involves knowing about the characteristic ways that each member contributes to the family. In this context, careful perception and attention to the personal characteristics of other family members is a required cognitive skill. The following description allows us to appreciate the extent to which the traditional indigenous integrated perspective assumes deep connections between human and nonhuman members in a “shared community”. In addition, it leads to a relatively humble view of human status:

To be Wildcat, Bear, Deer or even Wasp clan means that you are kin to these other persons—they are your relations, your relatives. Ecological

connectedness is culturally and ceremonially acknowledged through clan names, totems and ceremony. In nearly all native creation stories, animal-persons and plant-persons existed before human persons. These kin exist as our elders and, much as human elders, function as our teachers and as respected members of our community. Acknowledging non-humans as teachers and elders requires that we pay careful attention to their lives, and recognize that these lives have meaning on their own terms (*cf.* also Taylor 1992).

Perhaps the best way to think of this traditional knowledge borne of experience is that native people lived their lives as though the lives of other organisms mattered. Natives experienced other creatures in their role as parents, as offspring, and ultimately as persons within a shared community. They realized their own lives were intimately intertwined with those of these other organisms. Most importantly they recognized that the human being, 'man', is not the measure of all things, but exists as but one small part of a very complex ecosystem, unlike the Western view that places human beings above the rest of nature.

Recognizing connectedness and the meaningfulness of other lives did not mean, however, that animals or plants should not be taken or used for food or clothing. Native people were dependent upon them for these very reasons. Instead, each taking was accompanied by recognition of the fact that the take represented loss of life to a fellow being whose life had meaning on its own terms. Such a perspective leads inescapably to these conclusions: 1) lives of other organisms should not be taken frivolously, and 2) other life-forms exist on their own terms and were not put here solely to be used and exploited by humans (UNEP, 1999, 195).

According to this integrated perspective, it is understood that certain animals participate in the family relationship by giving themselves for the sustenance of human family members. The human family members respond by accepting these gifts, as we would expect anyone to accept a gift from her kin: with gratitude and respect. Both of these attitudes are evident in careful harvesting practices, which require knowledge of animal characteristics and patterns, and of how much and when to harvest so as not to take too much or at the wrong time.

Thus, in the case where buffalo were seen to give themselves away to human family members (when they existed in great abundance on the plains before European

settlement), the golden rule of reciprocity taught that in order to give back, Native peoples should express their gratitude through such practices of respect as sharing with others and not wasting (Eulailia Running Rabbit, personal communication). The example below describes the ways in which animal family members “care” for human family members:

Niitsitapi [Native people] have always had a relationship with animals. At one level this interconnecting and interdependent relationship reflects the people’s need to consume the animals for food. On a different level, *Niitsitapi* are also dependent upon animals for guidance and protection. The animals are helpers because they possess a powerful source of knowledge and wisdom. Their behaviour, if observed carefully, will reveal many secrets of balance and harmony. The natural world knows how to live in harmony. Among the Plains cultures, animals not only possess consciousness, but will and soul. Subsequently, they are often the medium for the transfer of sacred power between *Ihtsipaitapiiyo’pa* [Source of Life] and the people (Bastien, 2003, 25).

Pierotti and Wildcat recall how Native people “understood themselves as predators, part of the world of prey, and connected to prey in a profound experiential sense” (UNEP, 1999, 195). At the same time, Native people recognized that the “lives of human beings...often depended on taking the life of the animal, and [that] the act of giving up its life so that humans could survive was ... a profound sacrifice for the animal” (UNEP, 1999, 195).

Andrew Chapeskie tells us about the traditional Ojibway practice of “wild” rice planting, which reflects a careful respect for ecological balance:

In the summer of 1986, I was asked by a young man from the Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation to work with him on a ‘wild rice’ (*manomin*) project. His name was Joe Pitchenese. I agreed, and later that summer, Joe Pitchenese took me on a boat trip to inspect wild rice stands near his community. ‘...When I was taken to a place called Tobacco Creek on Dinorwic Lake, certain features of the landscape prompted me to ask... how it was that *manomin* in Tobacco Creek was growing in water amongst the trunks of dead trees that were still standing?’ ‘It was planted there’,

came the reply, 'All of the 'wild' rice 'natural' resource that I saw on that trip in July of 1986 was in fact the core of an anthropogenic landscape' (Chapeskie 1995, 10-11).

The diversity co-existing with the *manomin* in the river upon which I travelled in 1986 had the look and feel of 'wilderness'—but it was not. When I travelled the *manomin* fields of the Wabigoon River with Joe Pitchenese in 1986 we passed: a moose in the river grazing on plants in the ripening *manomin* fields, scores of moulting ducks of several species racing away from our boat to hide in the 'crop', several bald eagles which feed on the fish growing in the *manomin* fields, muskrat and beaver lodges, red-wing blackbirds, the old fallen-in trapping cabin of Joe's great grandmother (this part of the area is now his trapline), *manomin* harvest landings and campsites, and an 'archaeological' site (1999, 76).

Given the broad scope of members that can be included in the "family" of caring relationships, the traditional indigenous perspective provides a good example of an appropriate perspective from which to approach the question of sustainable development. Aspects of full responsible reason, which reflect caring about and caring for, are evident in the traditional laws and understandings. Consider the following description of how aborigine identity is bound up with caring about and for the land:

Aboriginal people have inhabited Australia for at least 60,000 years. In that time the approximately 250 language groups developed intimate relationships with their particular bioregions or segments of the landscape. Australian Aboriginal peoples 'consequently had an affection for, and a feeling of oneness with, nature that few of the present-day generation of white Australians can even comprehend, let alone feel in their own hearts' (Strehlow, 1950, 17). The conservation of nature and the landscape is for them not an issue separate from their own survival as individuals, as societies, or as cultures (Bennett, UNEP, 1999, 102) ...

Their very identity is bound up with their land. Without attachment to their land, they are not merely dispossessed, they are without identity. With land comes meaning. With land comes land management. Land management for Aboriginal people is a complex of traditional ideas and attachment to land, an understanding of contemporary environmental problems, a desire for self-management and an awareness that all of these are factors are interrelated. The result of these activities for Aborigines is 'country; land cared for, known, named and managed on a sustainable basis by its owners' (Head, 1992, 52) (Bennett, UNEP, 1999, 104)).

The three goals of care, which were identified in Chapter Three as the ends identified by a mother's commitment to care for her child, are evident in the rationality of care inherent in indigenous knowledge. The idea that people are guardians or stewards of the land is an expression of goal of protection. The goal of nurturance in order to foster growth is revealed in careful harvesting and cultivation practices developed traditionally by many indigenous peoples. These practices have been shown to preserve ecological balance and shape the landscape in a caring and respectful way. The analogy between maternal thinking and indigenous knowledge of the environment may appear to break down when it comes to training as a goal of caring for. From a western perspective, it seems odd to think of people educating the environment in values, or of training the environment to be an independent individual who is capable of making good value choices in a way that is completely analogous to the account of training presented by Ruddick. However, from the traditional indigenous integrated perspective, where all members of creation exist as family members in reciprocal relationships of care, education in values can occur between any members. Traditional indigenous epistemology often involves stories about humans learning important lessons from animals, the wind, the water or the mountains. Knowledge as a gift can be given or received by any member of the family.

Ruddick cited a welcoming attitude to change as a necessary attitude that the maternal caregiver must have as she strives to foster growth in her child. It is important to note that the reference to "traditional" in traditional indigenous knowledge does not refer to "old" and unchanging. As Lawrence Barsh reminds us, "what is 'traditional' about

traditional knowledge is not its antiquity, but the way in which it is acquired and used”

(cited below):

Indigenous peoples are not indifferent to the importance of innovation. Indigenous cosmologies portray a universe in continuous flux, driven by known forces as well as a diversity of powerful random elements (‘tricksters’). Everything is bound eventually to change in ways that cannot be forecast accurately, hence the need for humans to remain vigilant and adaptive.

The use of the term ‘traditional’ implies the repetition, from generation to generation, of a fixed body of data, or the gradual, unsystematic accumulation of new data. On the contrary, each generation of indigenous people makes observations, compares their personal experiences with what they have been told by their teachers, conducts experiments to test the reliability of their knowledge, and exchanges their findings. All ‘tradition’, in actuality, is continually undergoing revision...

Thus, what is ‘traditional’ about traditional knowledge is not its antiquity, but the way in which it is acquired and used, which in turn is unique to each indigenous culture. Much of this knowledge is actually quite new, but it has a social meaning and legal character, entirely unlike the knowledge indigenous peoples acquire from settlers and industrialized societies. This is why indigenous leaders believe that protecting indigenous knowledge effectively requires the recognition of each people’s own laws, including their own local processes of discovery and teaching (UNEP 1999, 74-75).

The “traditional” indigenous participants contributed to the workshops by telling about their particular traditional worldviews and ways of life. They told about how their traditional ways were directed toward maintaining a balance among all family members. They told about how development as it has come to be known represents a threat to that balance and consequently to their traditional ways. They suggested that in order for development to be carried out in a full responsibly reasonable fashion, it must respect the ecological balance that is necessary for both biological diversity and cultural diversity. The UNEP workshops on biological and cultural diversity represent an example of what Sen has been calling for: the freedom of people to exercise their committed (responsible)

reason in order to specify the valuable doings and beings that should be sustained through development.

In this case “valuable doings and beings” include reason itself, the traditional indigenous integrated perspective that exemplifies fully responsible reason. In addition, the broader view of community implied by the traditional indigenous perspective implies that when it comes sustainable development, we should be concerned with the preserving, promoting and enhancing the doings and beings of all community members, including the birds, the bees, the flowers and the trees. Knowing how to do this will require adopting a perspective that is closer to the traditional indigenous perspective, one that combines caring about with knowing how to care for.

As we have seen from the opening statement of the UNEP report, there is considerable support for the idea of applying traditional indigenous knowledge in our approaches to sustainable development. Doing so will contribute not only to the achievement of sustainable development, but it will do so in a way that respects the autonomy and the agency of indigenous peoples to determine their own futures.

This chapter has described traditional indigenous knowledge as an example of full responsible reason in order to illustrate how full responsible reason can be useful not only in identifying the ends of good development, but also in working toward achieving them. It has done this by expanding on Sen’s application of committed reason to the sustainable development debate. It is important to exercise care in our reasoned choices of values, care not just for our own selves, but for others as well. Caring about things implies a certain responsibility toward them. The notion of full responsible reason understood

within the care perspective involves more than merely caring about; it requires knowing how to care for.

Chapter Five

Conclusion—Final Thoughts on the Rationality of Care

Full responsible reason as presented in this thesis consists in caring about and caring for, and acknowledges sympathy and commitment as the perceptual and motivational components of caring about. It goes further than Sen has done in broadening the rationality of self-interest model by specifying that we must pay attention to what is involved in the successful rational practice of care.

Solomon has suggested several things that would be ‘good’ to care about in the context of a caring rationality:

...we would not go so wrong in thinking of rationality in terms of having the right emotions, caring about the right sorts of things. The “right sorts of things” would be other people (and animals) to start with, truth, freedom and justice, by extension. Too much of history and too many conceptions of rationality have cut off caring from the more cold-blooded concepts, rules, reasons, norms, principles, symbols and arguments that make up the basic vocabulary of philosophical rationality. But what if we started thinking about rationality not as the philosopher’s or the social scientist’s special subject matter, but as a matter of cultivated, engaged sensitivity? What would our philosophy look like as the study, but more important as the practice, of rationality in that sense? (1999, 79)

Despite the intuitive appeal of care, it is possible that we could care about the wrong things. For example, the Nazis cared about the flourishing of their “Aryan race”, but this is not a commitment we would accept as legitimate. A less extreme example that occurs more frequently is the fact that people often care about those they are close to or share the same beliefs and values with, and too often fail to care about those whom they do not know or disagree with.

Robert Solomon has characterized care as the “most general of all emotions”:

In a broad sense, to have any emotion already presupposes that one cares, that one is engaged, that one has interests, that one “takes something personally.” Care thus embraces the hostile vindictive emotions as well as the considerate and kindly sentiments. We should not forget...that...it is because we care about someone or something that we become possessive, defensive, vengeful as well as nurturing and supportive. Caring is not an unmixed benefit, and to think of care as only a kindly, nurturing affection is to get less than half the story. Most of the violence as well as the kindness in the world begins with care (1990, 225).

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to present a full response to the concerns related to the potential negative effects of care. Part of the answer lies in understanding how to care for, for example not killing someone with kindness. Another part of the answer lies in identifying appropriate criteria for caring about.

Solomon has identified sympathy and compassion as central emotions involved in the identification of the proper ends of care. As we saw, in our examination of Adam Smith’s notion of sympathy, sympathy is an inherently reciprocal concept. It involves our making an effort to experience what another person is feeling and—often—her grateful acknowledgement of our effort. Cultivation of emotions such as sympathy and compassion reinforces our ability to care about the right things as we become better able to internalize the attitude embodied in the following question: “How would I feel if that happened to me?”

The appeal to the rationality of care presented by Sara Ruddick can provide us with some initial insights as well. As we saw in Chapter Three, in order to care for her children successfully, a mother requires certain virtues. She must be—or at least try to be—compassionate, humble, cheerful, honest, trustworthy, attentive, conscientious, fair and able to engage in continual reflection with respect to the values that she holds in the

context of the values of the culture in which she finds herself. Her ability to engage in reflective feeling provides her with a valuable tool with which she can assess not only how it 'is' with her child, but also how it 'is' with herself. If she discriminates against another child, in preference for her own—thereby exercising care in a parochial manner—and her capacity for reflective feeling has been sufficiently cultivated, she should experience feelings of guilt and a cognitive need to address those feelings.

As a mother herself grows as a person, she develops the virtues that are relevant to caring for her children. Because a rationality of care is a holistic discipline, the virtues of maternal thinking are mutually reinforcing, making it difficult to justify caring about one's own to the exclusion of others. To the extent that she is successful in the discipline of care, a mother's own character will provide a good example of virtue for her children. Of course, as Ruddick points out, the rationality of care embodied in maternal thinking is an ideal concept, which mothers everywhere fail to live up to completely in their day-to-day lives. However, it nevertheless provides a basis for judging the appropriateness of care in particular situations.¹

Another possible solution to the problem of the potential for care to degenerate into parochialism is relevant to the example of sustainable development discussed in Chapter Four. We might expand the notion of community (as suggested by Nigel Dower, 2000) so that it reflects the concept of humans in their environment, which involves the entire world and all of the creatures in it. Of course, this too is a normative suggestion, but it addresses the possibility of the potential to care about the 'wrong' things. Basically, it would be considered irrational for me to care about the flourishing of the Aryan race on

¹ Of course, it is intended, as a model of care, to be extended to anyone including fathers, brothers, uncles and sons.

the Nazi view because doing so would entail hatred for others, something that would be inconsistent with caring about my community as the whole world and all of the creatures in it. The traditional indigenous perspective discussed in Chapter Four provided a good example of an expanded view of community, which is adhered to by thousands of traditional cultures worldwide.

The problems associated with identifying the proper objects of caring about reinforce the fact that care is a rational discipline, virtue and emotion. Being subject to standards of rationality does not mean that care is always right or good, beneficial or appropriate, or that we always care about the right or appropriate things in a right or good manner. Care is subject to rational assessment in the same way that all emotions—and for that matter, beliefs—are. Acknowledging this fact means attending to it, and engaging in the rational discipline of care.

An important point with respect to the rationality of care has been made in this thesis. It is not only possible to make moral mistakes in terms of what we care about. It is also possible to fail morally in how we care for those things we care about. To reiterate: Some examples of failing to care for include the overprotected child; the under-protected child; the sick person who is so “well”-cared for that she becomes over-dependent on the caregiver; the caregiver who neglects to care for her own self and consequently becomes less able to successfully care for others; the Native people of Canada who have been socially and economically abused in part as the result of paternalistic approaches to caring for, which have included—but are definitely not limited to—the notorious residential school system.

The fact that care is subject to standards of rationality or moral appropriateness and can sometimes fail is no reason not to pay attention to the role care can play in our rational deliberations and in our relationships with one another. Solomon reminds us of an 'evil' that is on par with vengeance or hatred rooted in care in the following rather dated but still relevant description of complacency or lack of care:

For twenty-five cents you can call the weather bureau to satisfy your curiosity about the temperature today, or you can save an Ethiopian child from starving to death tomorrow. (For the price of a call to Dial-a-Joke, you can save two.) We are told that, for a dollar, less than a price of that Big Mac snack that you don't need or really even want, you can feed an African family for a week. For the price of a late-night pizza, you can save an Indian from blindness. These are not thoughts that explode in our complacent minds—we cannot wait to get rid of them.

One recollects the magazine photo of a two-year-old child—could he really be seven?—arms and legs as thin as the limbs of a spider, but the stomach bloated in the now too-familiar paradox of starvation. But the sinister fact is that even if we are moved—and how could we not be?—we have the obscene ability to rationalize. A million starving children is a statistic that the mind cannot grasp. (It was Stalin, remember who pronounced that one death is a tragedy but a million is a statistic.) And statistics are worse than lies, especially when true. They numb us to the facts by informing us. They reduce that benign natural impulse, "we have to do something!" to a mere gasp of horror, or worse, an argument about the validity of the methodology of the statistician...Our natural compassion for that single child [in poverty] and others like him is dulled by a meticulous network of figures and theories, and we do nothing (1990, xiii).

I agree with Sen that the mobilization of our collective sense of responsibility is necessary if we are going to address issues related to development, from poverty to the promotion of environmental integrity. However, I stress that such a sense of responsibility depends on our ability to cultivate the rational capacity to care in a compassionate and responsive fashion. This means learning about what to care about and how to care for it.

It's time to stop thinking about ourselves in terms of "what's in it for me", as if we were rational economic men and women looking out primarily for our own "interests". There is plenty of room for our own interests in the notion of rationally caring about and for ourselves, which involves caring about and for others.

In the New Year of 2005, I heard William Commanda, a respected Algonquin elder, being asked the question: What can each of us do individually to contribute to saving our environment? His answer, essentially: We should each **forgive** ourselves personally for any way we may have contributed to her destruction. When we have begun to care about and for ourselves, we will be able to engage in this forgiveness.

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