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**Equal educational opportunity in Scotland's comprehensive secondary schools:
a Capabilities Approach**

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Abstract

Despite the laudable inclusive policies in Scotland such as *Getting it Right for Every Child* and *Curriculum for Excellence*, it is clear that some young people still do not experience equal access to educational opportunity. With education at its heart, the Capabilities Approach is a theory of social justice that starts with a commitment to the equal dignity of all human beings and focuses on choice or freedom. Offering an alternative means of measuring wellbeing or advantage rather than the traditional measurements such as Gross National Product, the Capabilities Approach, particularly Martha Nussbaum's list of capabilities, is a useful framework to assess how pupils and teachers in Scotland's schools are faring.

Using complementary sociological and philosophical perspectives and a literary thread of fictional characters from texts taught in Scottish schools, this dissertation shows how Scottish educational policies are deeply concerned with social justice and equity. However, there are barriers standing in the way of equal access to educational opportunity for some young people. As well as individual and micro structures addressed by the Capabilities Approach, macro structures in our society also play a role in perpetuating social injustice. A critical sociological perspective enriches the account by considering the economic and political institutions of society: unequal class structures and possession of the various forms of capital; austerity; precarity; the attainment agenda and the deficit ideology. Bourdieu's notion of the various forms of capital is threaded through the dissertation, highlighting how possession of capital is advantageous to upper and middle class families whereas lack of capital can be disadvantageous to young people from working class and disadvantaged backgrounds. Bourdieu's theory of habitus illuminates the inherited reproduction of social conditions and how some young people adapt their choices in accordance with what they think is appropriate for them. Oppressive societal structures and lack of agency can influence and disempower young people but there is scant recognition of this in educational policies.

Teachers can and do make a difference in young people's lives and current educational reforms such as *Curriculum for Excellence* are aimed at achieving better educational outcomes for all children in Scotland. However, teachers too face obstacles in achieving equality of educational opportunity, such as challenges to teacher autonomy, hegemony, crisis discourse and the attainment agenda. I argue that the Capabilities Approach can shed new light on what teachers, school management teams, local authorities and the government need to do in order to work successfully towards educational equality in twenty-first century Scotland.

Contents

Chapter One: Introduction

- 1.1 Career Trajectory 7
- 1.2 Informative Chronology 11
- 1.3 The Capabilities Approach 14
- 1.4 Dissertation Aims and Methodology 18
- 1.5 A Literary Thread 21
- 1.6 The Way Forward 22

Chapter Two: The Capabilities Approach and Education

- 2.1 Chapter Introduction 23
- 2.2 Capabilities and Functionings 25
- 2.3 Fertile Functionings and Corrosive Disadvantages 36
- 2.4 Sources of Variation 40
- 2.5 Clustering and Counterfactuality of Disadvantages 43
- 2.6 Risk and Security 46
- 2.7 Chapter Conclusion 50

Chapter Three: Barriers to Equality of Educational Opportunity

- 3.1 Chapter Introduction 52
- 3.2 Agency 54
- 3.3 Out of School Activities 61
- 3.4 Attitudes and Aspirations 65
- 3.5 Transgenerational Disadvantages and Adaptive Preferences 73
- 3.6 Chapter Conclusion 78

Chapter 4: The Capabilities Approach, Scottish Education and Further Barriers

4.1 Chapter Introduction	81
4.2 Getting it Right for Every Child	83
4.3 Curriculum for Excellence	88
4.4 Criticisms and Concerns	107
4.5 Chapter Conclusion	112

Chapter Five: Teachers and The Capabilities Approach

5.1 Chapter Introduction	115
5.2 Senses, Imagination and Thought (Capability 4)	118
5.3 Emotions (Capability 5)	122
5.4 Practical Reason (Capability 6)	127
5.5 Affiliation (Capability 7)	131
5.6 Control Over One's Environment (Capability 10)	135
5.7 Chapter Conclusion	141

Chapter Six: Towards a Conclusion

6.1 Chapter Introduction	143
6.2 Summing Up	144
6.3 Research Implications	148
6.4 Personal and Professional Impact	155
6.5 Concluding Comments	159

Appendix 1: Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach

References	163
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- In memory of my dear parents, Kate and Gordon Adam.

Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Signature:

Printed name: Janet Adam

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Career Trajectory

I loved teaching from the first day on teacher training placement and continue to do so. On reflection, there were a variety of turning points throughout my career, all of which led me to where I am today, happily carrying out a Faculty Head post in a secondary school in Scotland and completing a Doctorate in Education concerned with social justice. I soon realised that teaching provides the chance to intervene positively and respectfully in other people's lives (Freire, 1994: 65), and to promote the life changing possibilities of education for young people regardless of socio-economic status. Teaching English specifically allows me to share my love of literature and use it to disrupt young people's expectations (Kidd and Castano, 2013: 378), to reveal other ways of being and doing that young people might not have experienced or considered. Literature also encourages young people to 'know pleasure and pain, to feel delight and disgust, to observe human conduct and approve it or deplore it' (Kerfoot, 1916: 119) in a safe, controlled environment. Issues of social justice and inequality seemed to emerge gradually through my professional and academic experiences. I had a growing realisation that the 'one size fits all' education system did not 'fit' all young people and that some were not experiencing equal access to educational opportunity.

Early on in my teaching career, several opportunities arose: an acting Principal Teacher of English role; the Post Graduate Certificate in Guidance; an acting Guidance post. All of these allowed me to further develop a critical consciousness of social injustices and to realise that education can be both the cause of, and the solution to inequality. Since education is 'a potential leveler of opportunity... a national focal point for redistributive social justice' (Watkins, 2012: 2), equal access to education for each and every young person is vital for a just society. I soon gained further insight into the diverse backgrounds and home lives of the pupils I was responsible for. Some of these young people were from very stable homes; others were not. Some were well cared for; others were themselves carers. Some had two very supportive parents; others had a parent with a drug and/or alcohol addiction or a parent in prison. Some of the young people lived with

grandparents; others were 'Looked After Children'¹. It quickly became apparent that 'the playing field is bumpier' (Carpenter, 2009: 5) for some young people than others and a multitude of factors constitute disadvantage - some of which I have listed above. It also became clear that policy can have an impact on social justice (or lack of it) and I embraced opportunities to become more involved in English Department and whole school policy making. I realised that teaching in a comprehensive secondary school in Scotland is about much more than simply teaching a subject (even before *Curriculum for Excellence* highlighted this), and that 'equalizing opportunity to counteract disadvantages associated with exogenous circumstances' (Watkins, 2012: 2), such as socio-economic disadvantage, is a worthy goal. I will unpack these notions in the chapters that follow.

My interest in social justice grew and in my fifth year of teaching another turning point arose. I took on the role of Assistant Principal Teacher of English in another secondary school with a very similar catchment area to my original post. More new horizons appeared when I started a Master of Education degree in an attempt to learn more about the theory of education, with the knowledge that to be an effective teacher I should also be a lifelong learner (to use a now ubiquitous phrase). After a few months, the Assistant Principal Teacher of English role also clarified the type of leader I aspired to be. I became more aware of the hierarchical structure in schools and the often disempowering effects of this and I was keen to increase the autonomy of the teachers with whom I worked. My practice, coupled with the M. Ed. course, also resulted in an increasing awareness of 'issues of power and control' (Brookfield, 1995: 39), and a realisation of the need to develop 'tactical astuteness' (Brookfield, 1995) - both vital in order to challenge day-to-day practices and to establish a positive working environment in which all staff members and young people are treated fairly. As my career trajectory unfolded, my awareness of the impact of hegemony was also heightened. This is the process by which ideas and actions are seen to be working

¹ Under the provisions of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, 'Looked After Children' are defined as those in the care of their local authority. Children and young people are usually taken away from the family home for care and protection reasons.

for the good of the majority when in fact they are constructed and perpetrated by a powerful minority to serve their interests (Palmer, 2012: online source). These are just some of the issues I will explore in the chapters that follow.

In order to provide the best possible education for all the young people we taught, I was eager to be engaged in praxis - ‘action that is morally-committed and oriented’ (Kemmis and Smith, 2008: 3) - and to encourage my colleagues to do so too. I was keen to establish the most positive learning and teaching environment for all concerned and to ensure that staff members were positive role models with high expectations of all pupils - regardless of academic ability or home circumstances. The more I became aware of the diversity of backgrounds from which the young people came, the more I realised the importance of the English Faculty in raising aspirations and expectations through all that we did and said. After carrying out the Assistant Principal Teacher Post for eleven months, I secured the post of Principal Teacher of English at the original school. In this position, I had the opportunity to focus on policies and approaches that attempt to iron out inequalities: establishing high expectations of all pupils and staff; recognising achievement as well as attainment; introducing supported study and raising attainment groups. I saw the potential of English in developing the capabilities of young people, in contributing to enabling them to make choices about who they want to be and what they want to do. Minimising inequality of educational opportunity for all young people became a key focus of my practice and my career trajectory. It remains so, as I will discuss.

A literal departure occurred when I took leave of absence for two years and spent these in Bangladesh working in a health professionals’ training institute in a centre for people with spinal cord injuries. Working alongside the training institute staff to establish educational policies and procedures, I learned a great deal from this cultural and professional shift. At first I was disorientated but it became increasingly clear to me that before any act of intervention in others’ lives, we must first of all intervene in our own (Lauzon, 1997) - and this is true of working in Scotland just as much as working in Bangladesh. In this changed landscape I had to reflect critically on my actions and motives and to re-examine my Western assumptions about life and education. I realised, for example, that my notion of

common sense was not universal and did not translate neatly into another language, culture or education system. I was also forced to further develop a critical consciousness of the oppressive elements in our world (Lauzon, 1997) - more acutely obvious in this new environment than it was in Scotland. I had read about societal structures in Bangladesh before leaving Scotland but nothing prepared me for the vast chasm between the affluent, educated upper and middle classes and the poverty stricken, uneducated street beggars. Even in the centre in which I worked, there were clear divisions between groups of people. For example, when I questioned why one child waited outside the room in which I was holding English lessons for children of staff and refused to join in, I was told that 'ayahs'² and their children had no need for education. It was implied that the lives of ayahs and their children have already been mapped out for them and opportunities to choose another path are non-existent. I realised that working towards social justice is a far greater battle in 'developing' countries. Culturally, professionally and personally, I was entangled in 'webs of significance' (Geertz, 1973), and I learned to develop a critical awareness of my own identity and to question my preconceptions - in Bangladesh and in Scotland. These were important lessons that I was able to bring home with me - coupled with the realisation that my journey to Bangladesh had changed me. I was more aware of entrenched societal structures that restrict people and had greater understanding that lack of choice (or agency) can seriously harm lives. Promoting equality of educational opportunity for young people continued to be a focus on my return to Scotland - in my middle management role and, later, in an acting Depute Head Teacher post. Participating in the Doctorate in Education course at Glasgow University soon transpired to be a journey of quite a different type, but with just as much impact. From the outset, the course opened up new thinking and rejuvenated me - personally and professionally. It has greatly enhanced my professional practice and transformed my perspectives by, for example, reminding me what it is to be student and the importance of empathy - more of which I will discuss in the final chapter.

² In Bangladesh, domestic helpers are called ayahs. Some ayahs start working at age six and most have no formal education.

From this brief career trajectory I now move to an informative chronology of Scottish education in order to locate the dissertation firmly, geographically and policy wise. Thereafter, I outline the dissertation aims and approach followed by a brief introduction to the Capabilities Approach. In the penultimate section of this chapter I introduce the dissertation's literary thread which sews together the chapters and their sub-sections. Finally, I signal the way forward by providing an insight into each of the dissertation chapters.

1.2 Informative Chronology of Education Policy

Attempting to iron out inequalities is not a new phenomenon. This concept has its roots in the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 which arose due to a growing awareness of the need for reform, poor relief and collective welfare. The Beveridge Report of 1942 identified five 'Giant Evils' in society: squalor, ignorance, want, idleness and disease. It proposed widespread reform to the social welfare system to address these 'evils', advocating a high level of employment and the creation of the welfare state - thus developing the basis for modern social and economic policy. In 1944, the Butler Act reformed schooling and committed to fulltime employment. These reforms served as the basis for the post-war welfare state introduced by the Labour Government in 1945. The welfare state was committed to health, education, employment and social security, providing support 'from the cradle to the grave' - still a basic principle of British government policy today, especially in Scotland as can be seen through the various educational policies I discuss, such as *Getting it Right for Every Child* and *Curriculum for Excellence*. However, in contemporary society there are threats to the welfare state from austerity policies as I discuss in Chapter 3.

Moving forward in time, after years of Conservative governance under Margaret Thatcher³, then John Major⁴, 'the Tories had weakened the power of local authorities, diminished the influence of the teacher unions and forced the Labour

³ Margaret Thatcher was Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1979-1990.

⁴ John Major was Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1990-1997.

Party to rethink its education policies' (Gillard, 2007: 115). Consequently, the Labour government elected in 1997 saw reform of the welfare state as one of its major tasks and aimed to achieve this through 'The Third Way', 'a new and distinct approach that differs from the old left and the new right' (Powell, 2000: 40). Tony Blair's Labour policy innovations⁵ aimed to reduce social exclusion and to address the problem of worsening inequality. Blair talked of 'a new Britain' that would combine 'an open, competitive and successful economy with a just, decent and humane society' (1997: 6). The term social exclusion permeated policy (education and other) during the Blair years and was widely used in discourse. Nowadays policy more commonly speaks of wellbeing, improving outcomes and raising attainment as a means to reduce inequality. The discourse has now shifted to educational inequalities and Conservatives speak of a 'broken society'. Along with that shift, however, social and educational policies seem to have merged into economic policies and schools have become more like businesses with a focus on efficiency and improved performance (Ball, 2008). New levels of accountability and performance monitoring in education have resulted, even while the purported aim of all educational policy in Scotland is wellbeing and social justice, as exemplified by *Curriculum for Excellence*. This juxtaposition of accountability and performance with wellbeing seems paradoxical.

Scotland has a different education system from the rest of the United Kingdom and a history of public education. Most children and young people in Scotland still attend their local schools, which contrasts to England where there is a great deal more competition to secure places in what are perceived to be the better schools. The Education (Scotland) Act (1980) is the main legislation governing education in Scotland and the Scotland Act (1998) gives the Scottish Parliament legislative control over all education matters. Scotland's state schools are controlled by local authorities and the delivery of teaching and learning is supported by Education Scotland⁶. The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) is the sole national awarding and accrediting body, providing qualifications at secondary and further education

⁵ Tony Blair was Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1997-2007.

⁶ Education Scotland is the national body supporting quality and improvement in Scottish education.

(post-secondary) level in secondary schools, colleges and other centres. The Scottish Parliament and the Learning Directorate take political responsibility for education at all levels, and inspections of educational standards in secondary schools are carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) within Scotland. The curriculum in Scotland is broader and less prescriptive than in England, and there is less emphasis on high stakes testing. Pupils attend primary school for seven years before moving to secondary school (commonly known as high school). The school leaving age is sixteen after which young people can stay on for an optional one or two years. Scotland's teachers are part of an 'all-graduate' profession with the General Teaching Council for Scotland⁷ regulating professional standards.

The Scottish Social Inclusion Network (SSIN) was established in 1998 to improve coordination between relevant agencies and to help the government to promote social inclusion. The following year, the Scottish Executive published a strategy paper entitled *Social Inclusion: Opening the Door to a Better Scotland* (1999) highlighting three main areas for priority attention: excluded young people not in education, employment or training; inclusive communities; and the impact of local anti-poverty action. In the same year, *Social Justice ... a Scotland Where Everyone Matters* (1999) suggested a long-term strategy for tackling poverty and social injustice in Scotland. Three years later, *Count us in - Achieving Inclusion in Scottish Schools* (2002), reflected the development of social policy and the concept of social justice originating from the United Kingdom government social inclusion strategy of 1998. In England this strategy has been replaced to a large extent, arguably, by addressing educational inequality. In Scotland, policy and educational discourse tends to focus on social justice rather than equality.

The National Debate on Education (2002) recognised the need to offer a more engaging, relevant experience in Scottish schools to ensure that young people (3-18) are equipped for life and work in a globalised economy and this resulted in *Curriculum for Excellence* which was introduced in 2009. In 2005, the Scottish

⁷ The General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) is an independent, self-regulating body for teaching set up in 1965.

Executive identified a group of young people between the ages of sixteen and nineteen who were not in education, employment or training (NEET). It recognised that this group's problems have a major impact on society, preventing individuals and society from achieving economic productivity and social inclusion.

Consequently, the *More Choices, More Chances* policy was published in 2006. Like the others, this report recognises that disadvantage is complex and multi-dimensional, and that it often restricts what people are able to do and to be (their 'capabilities' to use the language of the Capabilities Approach). Another highly relevant Scottish education policy is *Getting it Right for Every Child* (2008 and 2012) (hereafter *GIRFEC*), which discusses the unacceptability of families' economic circumstances still determining children's futures. *GIRFEC* aims to improve wellbeing and outcomes for children and young people and provides a consistent framework for all those who work with them. I discuss some of these policies in the chapters that follow, most notably in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. Throughout, I use the Capabilities Approach, which I introduce in the following section, to illuminate how well we are doing in Scottish education.

1.3 The Capabilities Approach

The Capabilities Approach is a human development approach, a theory of social justice focused on choice or freedom, which asks what people are able 'to do and to be'. With education at its heart, the Capabilities Approach is a useful framework to assess how pupils and teachers in Scotland's schools are faring. Amartya Sen, Martha Nussbaum, Jonathan Wolff and Avner de-Shalit all offer alternative and/or additional means of measuring wellbeing or advantage rather than the traditional measurements such as the Gross National Product (GNP) and Gross Domestic Product (GDP). For various reasons, which I will clarify later, the traditional approaches are not necessarily the best proxies by which to measure inequality because income or wealth are simply the means to an end, the end being the freedom to choose the type of life we wish to lead. Traditional measures also mask inequality since GDP and GNP are measures of a country's total national productivity.

With its roots traceable to Aristotle, Marx and, more recently, Rawls' *Theory of Justice* (1971)⁸, Sen presents a normative framework for human existence and flourishing. Sen goes against his economist training in which human values, aspirations and activities are metricised and reduced to a series of commensurable values as he judges this too narrow an understanding of human wellbeing (Sen, 2007). Instead, Sen paves the path towards measuring quality of life through sources other than Gross National Product (GNP) and Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The identification of poverty with low income is well established and lack of finances can undoubtedly lead to 'impoverished lives' (Sen, 2000: 3) - or what I call disadvantaged lives and I use this term throughout. (The term disadvantage represents a change in how inequality is discussed and is used generally by Sen.) However, there is now a substantial literature on the inadequacies of equating poverty with low income (Sen, 2000: 254). This is because a concept of poverty cannot be satisfactory if it fails to acknowledge 'the disadvantages that arise from being excluded from shared opportunities enjoyed by others' (Sen, 2000: 44) - hence the reason why the concept of social exclusion became more prominent. Disadvantages are not always financial and they might well involve unequal access to educational opportunity, as I will discuss. By Sen's account, using economic growth as a measure of quality of life 'does not help us to understand barriers in our societies against equity for all' (Walker, 2004: 2). Moving beyond poverty and deprivation analysis, Sen focuses on wellbeing, an idea now permeating educational research, and asks what makes a just society. He suggests that we use the notion of 'capabilities' which can be explained as 'direct indicators of the quality of life and of the well-being and freedoms that human lives can bring' (Sen, 2009: 225), such as access to healthcare and education. He presents justice as a multi-dimensional, pluralist notion - for each and every person in each and every country of the world. Alarming, Sen (2000) notes that the deprivation of socially disadvantaged groups in wealthier nations is comparable to that in developing countries (although the deprivation I witnessed in Bangladesh seemed incomparable to any in Scotland). Sen believes that all human beings are entitled to the freedom to choose how they want to live and who they want to be and I

⁸ Rawls' theory of justice as fairness envisions a society of free citizens who each have the same basic human rights.

wholeheartedly agree that education is a crucial factor in allowing people to do this because education (and health) are central to alleviating injustice. In Rawlsian terms, health and education are primary goods that 'every rational man is presumed to want' (Rawls, 1971: 62). These primary goods, along with others such as basic rights and liberties, permit citizens to pursue a conception of 'the good life'.

Sen urges us to open our minds to the 'diverse origins and many disparate forms' (2000: 3) of deprivation and to 'look at impoverished lives, and not just at depleted wallets' (2000: 3). This is of great interest to me because of the range of disadvantages experienced by the young people I meet - and these are much more complicated than low income alone. Sen (2000) reminds us of the Aristotelian account of the richness of human life which involves ascertaining the function of man, then exploring what a person is able to do and to be. An Aristotelian perspective of an impoverished or disadvantaged life is one in which there is no freedom to participate in activities that a person values. Sen views poverty/disadvantage as a capability failure. The selection of capabilities should be the task of the democratic process according to Sen, but he does not advise how this should be done (Sen, 2004). Neither does Sen make assessments of minimal social justice. Instead, he chooses to focus on quality of life issues and capabilities in a general sense, not on a list of central capabilities as specified by Nussbaum (2011: 64-5).

Nussbaum draws on Sen's capability theory to create a non-fungible list of ten capabilities which are 'concerned with entrenched social injustice and inequality' (Nussbaum, 2011: 19). The Capabilities Approach is a list of interlinked basic entitlements for all human beings regardless of background, ethnicity or nationality. Like Sen, Nussbaum asks what people are able to do and to be (Nussbaum, 2011: x), and she concurs with Sen that 'the intuitive ideas' behind capabilities are relevant to all cultures (Nussbaum, 2011: 123) because all human beings are entitled to opportunities and options. Providing people with principles (or capabilities) that they have a right to demand of government is central to Nussbaum's approach, whereas Sen's scope seems wider and less prescriptive. Furthermore, Nussbaum does not endorse the distinction between agency and

wellbeing that Sen advocates. These ideas will be unpacked more fully in Chapter 2.

Nussbaum suggests that the internal capabilities, ‘those developed capacities of mind and body that prepare a young citizen to pursue personal achievement and to play a meaningful role in the life of the community’ (Nussbaum, 2009: 345), must be developed first. Crucial to understanding, promoting and attaining these basic capabilities or entitlements is education ‘fitted for human freedom’ (Nussbaum, 1997) regardless of socio-economic status. Nussbaum believes that equal rights to educational benefits are essential for human flourishing and this is also a belief that I hold dear. The capacity for education to transform lives and the necessity to strive to ensure that all young people have equal access to educational opportunity is essential in ensuring social justice. Deprivation of the central capabilities blights people and prevents social justice. An education ‘fitted for human freedom’ can only be achieved, Nussbaum argues, if it produces citizens ‘who are not free because of wealth or birth, but because they can call their minds their own’ (Nussbaum, 1997: 293). She judges the equal right to educational benefits as ‘inherent in the equal dignity of persons’ and education as having a pivotal role in securing human development and opportunity (Nussbaum, 2011: 154).

Building on the work of Nussbaum and Sen, Wolff and de-Shalit (2007) create an account of disadvantage to provide an understanding of equality on a theoretical and practical level. They address the need for ‘a realistic and practically applicable account of what it is to be well-off or badly-off - advantaged or disadvantaged’ (2007: 1), and this has been useful for my study. Like Sen and Nussbaum, Wolff and de-Shalit acknowledge the notion of lower income causing harm but, again, see the solution as much more complex than simply earning higher income. Wolff and de-Shalit see Nussbaum’s list as a good starting point in addressing disadvantage largely due to ‘its grounding in cross-cultural empirical and theoretical work’ (Wolff and de-Shalit, 2007: 38), and are in agreement with Nussbaum that a life that lacks any of her listed capabilities is deprived or disadvantaged in some way (Wolff and de-Shalit, 2007: 40). Nussbaum’s vision is described by Wolff and de-Shalit as ‘a rich and plausible account of human well-being’ (Wolff and de-Shalit, 2007: 40), but they seek to test her categories, as I

discuss in the next chapter. In brief for now, the main revision to the Capabilities Approach suggested by Wolff and de-Shalit is the equal importance not only of what people can do and be at a particular time, but also the possibilities to sustain this being and doing (Wolff and de-Shalit, 2007: 9). The combination of the work of Nussbaum, Sen, Wolff and de-Shalit provides a firm foundation on which to build this dissertation because they all view education as crucial in addressing inequality (or disadvantage).

1.4 Dissertation Aims and Methodology

The dissertation topic seemed to evolve as the Ed. D. course progressed. Having worked in so called 'less affluent' areas all of my teaching career, I am committed to addressing social justice and ensuring equality of educational opportunity for all young people, regardless of socio-economic circumstances. Each young person has different support mechanisms at home and arrives at school with different aspirations. Sadly, some young people leave school without the necessary means to make informed choices about who they want to be and what they want to do. Scotland's *Curriculum for Excellence* appears to promote inclusion and human flourishing through its principles and practice, experiences and outcomes (which I examine in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5), and minimising educational inequality should be more easily achieved through such a curriculum.

My emic position as an English teacher in a comprehensive school in Scotland would have allowed me to adopt a whole range of research approaches - from focus groups to interviews to questionnaires. However, I was not keen to use the young people I teach or my colleagues as the means to a personal end (that is, the Ed. D. dissertation). In addition, I wanted to avoid potentially pejorative labelling which might suggest that some of the young people I teach are any way 'less' than others and, therefore, bound not to do well in school - a negative form of the self-fulfilling prophecy whereby pupils conform to teacher expectations. Instead of a limited, narrow viewpoint, I aim to provide a much broader, more conceptual, critical picture than could have been painted by utilising one school in one particular area of Scotland in an empirical investigation. All of these are my

reasons for choosing this type of study. Using the Capabilities Approach as an evaluative framework, I attempt to shed new light on the links between disadvantage and educational opportunity, and to suggest a different way to understand educational inequality. I also hope to highlight that philosophical work can contribute 'not only to understanding the world but to changing it, and changing it for the better' (Shrader-Frechette, 2008: online source).

This is a conceptual study combining the two disciplines of sociological and philosophical work with a strong interest in social justice. Sociology interests me because of its potential to help us to understand education as 'an art as well as or as much as a science' (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2009: 20). Sociologists urge consideration of the economic and political institutions of society, not just personal situations. Mills (1959) provides an example of one man being unemployed as 'his personal trouble' (p. 9) whereas fifteen million unemployed men is 'an issue' (p. 9). A correlating example from education would be one young person without equal access to educational opportunity being his or his family's 'personal trouble' whereas large numbers of young people not experiencing equal access to educational opportunity is definitely 'an issue'. The 'sociological imagination' makes a distinction between 'the personal troubles of milieu' and 'the public issues of social structure' (Mills, 1959: 8). The seemingly impersonal changes in societal structures - in schools and employment opportunities, for example - affect the everyday worlds and private lives of individuals. Yet, individuals seldom define personal problems in terms of social change (though they are more likely to do so if they are experiencing this as part of a group such as class, ethnicity or gender). The 'sociological imagination' - the capacity to shift from one perspective to another, from the political to the psychological (Mills, 1959: 7) - involves an increasing awareness of how structures, such as the education system, have an impact on the individual, as an individual and as a member of a group or class.

The Capabilities Approach, as possibly the most significant recent development in political and moral philosophy, complements a sociological perspective because it 'begins to plug an important moral, political and ... sociological gap, where humanity and human rights could co-exist with inclusion, compassion and education' (Rogers, 2012: 988-9). Sociological macro structures can overlook

individuals and the Capabilities Approach fills the gap by reintroducing the individual and micro structures. The Capabilities Approach takes us ‘part of the way’ and ‘offers a theory with practical outcomes to set us on the road’ (Walker, 2003: 179). It could be argued that Nussbaum’s Capabilities Approach examines neglected frontiers of justice not addressed by sociologists - each and every young person who experiences inequality of educational opportunity. However, individual change only takes us so far and ‘we need at the same time to re-construct unjust institutions and practices’ (Walker, 2003: 184) - which are addressed by sociology. The Capabilities Approach highlights what education needs if it is to develop the capabilities and what capabilities promote education. However, because ‘disparities in education are powerfully connected to wider disparities’ (Watkins, 2012: 1), we must also look at how our society is structured.

This combined sociological and philosophical approach seems fitting for a dissertation about young people and equal access to educational opportunity because it covers ‘both changing our public institutions and the lives of individuals’ (Walker, 2003: 180). Together, the sociological and philosophical perspectives complement each other: they are two sides of the same coin, the currency being social justice. The sociological layer deals with ‘public institutions’ (such as schools) whereas the Capabilities Approach deals with ‘the lives of individuals’ (Walker, 2003: 180), the young people attending school. By looking at what individuals are able to do and to be (Nussbaum, 2000: 5), the human flourishing of each and every person, we cannot avoid addressing societal structures that impede individuals - and I discuss these later. Power structures have an impact on individual lives but perhaps individuals working together (groups of teachers, local authorities, politicians) can start to challenge this - or, at least, raise awareness that power structures sustain inequality within our society. The sociological and philosophical perspectives working in tandem should ‘enable an understanding of the social and cultural constraints on choice *and* the processes that shape the persistence of disadvantage and poverty’ (Bowman, 2010: 14). I will discuss the importance of sociology mainly in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.

1.4 A Literary Thread

To add a further dimension to these philosophical and sociological perspectives, I have chosen selected work by four Scottish writers to bind the dissertation chapters and sections together. To create this literary thread, I turned to Scottish writers whose work is taught in Scotland's schools and features in the *Curriculum for Excellence* national qualifications set text list⁹: Alan Spence, Liz Lochhead, Carol Ann Duffy and Janice Galloway. Alan Spence was born in Glasgow in 1946 and Liz Lochhead was born in Motherwell in 1947. Carol Ann Duffy and Janice Galloway were both born in 1955, in Glasgow and Saltcoats respectively. All four writers are critically acclaimed, have written in a variety of genres and explore a range of themes. They have also all been involved in some form of teaching in their adult lives and two (Duffy and Spence) are currently teaching in Scottish universities. All four writers tackle social inequality in their work and therefore seem particularly appropriate accompaniments to this dissertation. From each writer I have borrowed characters to enliven my own text: Alec from Spence's play (joined by Jamie, a fictional character of my own); Mary and Liz from Lochhead's poem; a nameless disaffected youth from Duffy's poem; a young Janice Galloway from her memoir. These fictional characters remind me of many young people I have come across in my professional practice and seem, therefore, all the more real to me. Alec, Jamie, Mary, Liz, Duffy's character and Janice could be pupils in Scotland's schools in the twenty-first century. The characters also replace case studies and examples I might have used in a different type of dissertation. Current Scottish educational policies framed by the Capabilities Approach should allow young people equal access to educational opportunity and the wherewithal to choose who they want to be and what they want to do with their lives. Such policies did not exist for the literary characters binding together this dissertation.

⁹ This is a list of Scottish texts collated after consultation with a range of stakeholders. It is a mandatory examinable element in National 5 and Higher English.

1.6 The Way Forward

In this chapter I have tackled four main areas: setting the scene with a brief career trajectory and an informative chronology; introducing the Capabilities Approach; establishing the origins of my research topic and strategy; explaining the purpose of the literary thread.

After this introduction, the dissertation is divided into five further chapters. In Chapter 2, I analyse the Capabilities Approach in more detail with a particular focus on education. In Chapter 3, I discuss barriers to equality of educational opportunity. These barriers include: austerity; precarity; deficit ideology; class structures. In the fourth chapter, I use the Capabilities Approach as a lens to critically appraise two Scottish educational policies: *Getting it Right for Every Child* (2008 and 2012) and *Curriculum for Excellence* (2009). I also unearth further barriers to unequal educational opportunity. In Chapter 5, I suggest what teachers need to do and to be in order to ensure equity of educational opportunity for all the young people they teach. I highlight too that teachers need support from managers, local authorities and, ultimately, the government in order to do so. Finally, in Chapter 6 I draw conclusions about how cognizance of the Capabilities Approach might suggest a new conceptual direction for Scottish comprehensive schooling that could be a step closer to greater equality of educational opportunity for young people in Scotland's schools. Education is at the heart of the Capabilities Approach and should help to 'even things out', to promote equality and to ensure greater social inclusion: 'Nothing is more important for democracy, for the enjoyment of life, for equality and mobility within one's nation, for effective political action across national boundaries' (Nussbaum, 2006: 322). However, I repeat that there are societal constraints in the way of achieving this. In the next chapter I introduce Alec and his father Davie from Spence's play 'Sailmaker' and Jamie (a fictional character of my own creation). I use these characters to highlight aspects of the Capabilities Approach that pertain to education.

Chapter Two: The Capabilities Approach and Education

2.1 Chapter Introduction

‘This is a great chance yer getting son. Great opportunity. Get yerself a good education. Nothin tae beat it.’¹⁰

‘Sailmaker’ by Alan Spence is a short play set in Glasgow and there are clear autobiographical details from Spence’s own life. The protagonist of this play is a young boy named Alec whose mother has died and whose father is an ex-sailmaker (much like Spence’s own parents when he was growing up). It is fair to say that Alec is disadvantaged - both materially and emotionally. His father Davie (quoted above talking to Alec) struggles being a single parent and coping with his grief. Davie experiences redundancy and he drinks and gambles. He does not always provide a proper meal for the two of them and there are often power cuts because he has not paid the electricity bills. Although Spence’s play is set in Glasgow in the 1960s, today many young people in Scotland’s schools undoubtedly face similar issues (bereavement, redundancy and unemployment, gambling, money lending) and all of these affect what they are able to do and to be - or blight their capabilities. However, young Alec in Spence’s play realises that education is his escape route from the life he is leading. He works hard to ensure a place at university and, consequently, increase his chances of a life of his own choosing. In other words, Alec seeks a life of human flourishing in which he pursues plans and goals that are of value to him for their own sake and for instrumental reasons (such as gaining employment of his choice as opposed to insecure employment like that which his father undertakes). It seems that Alec knowingly exercises his capabilities as we understand that to mean from a Capabilities Approach perspective - and which I explain more fully as this chapter unfolds. Not all young people from disadvantaged backgrounds manage to do this. Perhaps greater cognizance of the Capabilities Approach in Scottish education would ensure that more young people actively choose their life paths - just as Alec did. However, to enable young people to do so, there also needs to be recognition of macro issues,

¹⁰ Spence, A. (2008 [1988]) ‘Sailmaker’, p. 44

the ‘public issues of social structure’ - as well as ‘the personal troubles of milieu’ (Mills, 1959: 8), mentioned in the last chapter.

Freedom and opportunity are central components in the Capabilities Approach: we should all be ‘free to determine what we want, what we value and ultimately what we decide to choose’ (Sen, 2009: 232). The Capabilities Approach promotes the case for using direct indicators of the quality of life, such as literacy, wellbeing and freedoms that human lives can bring. It focuses on ‘a person’s capability to do things he or she has reason to value’ (Sen, 2009: 231), such as, for example, experiencing equal access to education regardless of socio-economic status as Alec illustrates. In Scotland, all young people have equal access to school; what they might not have, as I illustrate in subsequent chapters, is the capacity to make equal use of the resources available to them. This seems to be illustrated by the fact that the gap in achievement between young people from less affluent homes and their more affluent peers is marked, suggesting that not all young people experience equal access to education. For example, the disparity between high achieving boys from disadvantaged backgrounds and their better off peers is equivalent to thirty months of schooling (Jerrim, 2013: 2). One contributory factor is the possession or lack of the various forms of capital which I discuss later. Education should help people to choose in an informed way how to live instead of simply following the paths tread by their siblings, peers or parents - which I discuss more fully in Chapter 3. Of course, many young people might ‘wish’ to live like their parents but it is important to enable them to pursue a worthwhile or fulfilling life that they have actively and reflectively chosen. Schools are vital in helping young people to develop agency in order to make their own choices, which, again, I discuss more fully in Chapter 3.

In this chapter, I now dig deeper into the Capabilities Approach with a particular focus on capabilities and functionings, first of all. Then, I turn to fertile functioning and corrosive disadvantage and explain how education can be both. Next, I look at the sources of variation (personal heterogeneities; physical environment; the social climate; differences in relational perspectives) all of which have an impact on equal access to educational opportunity. I also discuss the clustering and counterfactuality of disadvantages followed by the risk and

sustainability of capabilities. I link all of these concepts to education. Like Alec's father (Davie) in 'Sailmaker', many people in twenty-first century Scotland still believe that education is a 'great opportunity' for young people to improve their life chances: there is 'nothing tae beat it'¹¹. I argue that today this 'great opportunity'¹² of education could be enhanced by using the Capabilities Approach to better assess the extent to which schools are enabling young people to develop their capability set - since education is outcome oriented the issue is about how the outcomes are achieved. I unpack all of these ideas throughout this chapter.

2.2 Capabilities and Functionings

To recap, the Capabilities Approach marks a departure from measuring wellbeing in terms of finances and concentrates on the '*actual opportunities of living*' (Sen, 2009: 234), not on the *means* of living. It focuses on human life rather than purely on income or commodities which, in contemporary society, we often view as the signs of 'success'. A person could have a high income but difficulty in 'translating that into a good living' (Sen, 2009: 234), due, for example, to illness or disability. Or, people suffering from grief (like Alec and his father in 'Sailmaker') might have difficulty in functioning well due to their feelings of hopelessness, despair and depression. Sen provides an alternative account of wellbeing that hinges on the freedom to *choose* how to live, emphasising that the means and ends of 'satisfactory human living' are not interchangeable (Sen, 2009: 234). He defines a capability as 'a person's ability to do valuable acts or reach valuable states of being...the alternative combinations of things a person is able to do or be' (Sen, 1993: 30); alternatively, 'the power to do something, the accountability that emanates from this ability' (Sen, 2009: 19). It is important that one capability is not traded for another and we should not be made to choose among the capabilities. For example, all people 'irrespective of citizenship, residence, race, class, caste or community' (Sen, 2009: 355), are entitled to equal access to education as well as the means to maintain good health and we should not have to

¹¹ Spence, A. (2008 [1988]) 'Sailmaker', p. 44

¹² Spence, A. (2008 [1988]) 'Sailmaker', p. 44

sacrifice one for the other. Sen's suggestion is that we should look at the opportunities for people to choose good health and wellbeing and to make choices about how to live (Sen, 2009: 234) - living well as opposed to earning well. How we can transfer this philosophy to education and enable young people to secure a 'good living' - especially in our increasingly materialistic society in which many young people seem impressed by what people have rather than what people are or do - is an interesting question.

A functioning is an achieved outcome, a being and doing, such as reading. To highlight the difference between functionings and capabilities, Sen uses the example (and is oft quoted on this - for example, Nussbaum 2009, Wolff and de-Shalit, 2007) about a person who voluntarily fasts being possibly just as deprived of food and nourishment as a victim of famine (Sen, 2009: 237). The achieved functioning of the two people could well be the same: under-nourishment. However, the capability of the person who chooses to fast may be much greater than the person who does not eat due to poverty. This example illustrates once more that the crux of capabilities is freedom and opportunity: the fasting person has the freedom and opportunity to eat (or not to); the famine victim completely lacks this freedom. Circumstances have decreed that the famine victim cannot eat and it is macro structures that dictate this rather than personal choice.

To translate this into a Scottish education example, we could look at two underachieving pupils with equal academic ability as shown by their Cognitive Ability Tests¹³, but from very different backgrounds. The pupils I describe here are fictional but are based on my years of teaching. The first pupil is a twenty-first century Alec from 'Sailmaker' living with his father who has insecure employment and whose mother has died. There are few books available to Alec at home and he has never visited an art gallery or the theatre. Further, his father struggles to cope with being a single parent and often does not provide a nutritious meal for his son. The second young person, Jamie, has supportive professional parents, ample

¹³ Cognitive Ability Tests measure the three main areas of reasoning - verbal, non-verbal and numerical - as well as an element of spatial ability. Standardised scores allow comparison of pupils' results with the national average.

access to quality literature and newspapers, regular visits to galleries and the theatre - he appears to be well off in the various forms of capital that will be discussed more fully in the next chapter. In Bourdieusian terms (1986), people's overall possession of different forms of capital (economic, social and cultural) all play a vital, though barely acknowledged, role in inequality of educational opportunity. Social capital can be described as social networks, shared values and understandings that enable groups and individuals to trust and work together. Cultural capital, first articulated by Bourdieu and Passeron in 1977, is the non-financial assets that promote social mobility. Alec is lacking in the various forms of capital that Jamie possesses. However, both Alec and Jamie often neglect to hand in homework; neither read widely at home; both struggle with school assessments. Jamie is uninterested in school and would prefer to 'hang out' with friends. Alec is keen to do well but he is often tired and run down; he worries about his father and misses his mother. Jamie's and Alec's functioning is being exercised differently because one is undernourished, worried and grieving, whereas the other is not. Alec lacks opportunities for functioning at a threshold level for minimum flourishing; Jamie does not. Despite his opportunities, Jamie chooses not to function to his full educational potential. However, the outcome for both boys is the same - their underachieving academic performance which later will impact on the functioning of both in key areas of their lives such as employment, further education and security. This is why we need to know how outcomes are realised, as I suggest above. The boys' capabilities, understood as opportunities for freedom, are quite different: Jamie has greater opportunity to achieve functioning than Alec. When applied to particular examples, the distinction between capabilities and functionings can become complex and fluid: functionings are specific and factual whereas capabilities are general and abstract. In many ways, Jamie can be said to be advantaged due to his background: he has the opportunity to work hard and achieve well, and has a great deal of parental support but he chooses not to take advantage of any of this. On the other hand, Alec can be said to be disadvantaged because of his background: he is often under-nourished, depressed and lacks support from home. Alec has 'less real opportunity', less capability to achieve the things that he has reason to value. Like Sen's famine victim, Alec's underachievement is involuntary whereas Jamie chooses to

underachieve (in some ways like the fasting person chooses not to eat). Both pupils require support in school to ensure that they are making active choices about who they want to be and what they want to do with their lives.

Sen had 'a major intellectual role' in framing Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach. However, her approach does not include 'all aspects of his (pragmatic and result-oriented) theory' (Nussbaum, 2011: 17). Nussbaum uses the term 'basic capabilities' to describe 'these innate powers that are either nurtured or not nurtured' and which can 'be shaped by maternal nutrition and prenatal experience' (Nussbaum, 2011: 23). She also introduces the term 'internal capabilities', which can broadly be described as a person's natural talents or characteristics which have been trained or developed - wit, intellect, levels of confidence, and so on. These internal capabilities can be developed through education which both Sen and Nussbaum see as the key to all capabilities. A functioning in Nussbaum's terms provides a capability with its end-point (Nussbaum, 2011: 25), meaning that it is 'an active realization of one or more capabilities', 'beings and doings that are the outgrowths of realizations of capabilities' (Nussbaum, 2011: 25). Nussbaum and Sen are in agreement that capabilities (not functionings) are appropriate political goals, because they are general and abstract and because capabilities allow room for freedom and respect for people's lifestyle choices rather than dictating how people should live (Nussbaum, 20011: 26). Our school systems have a role to play in fostering freedom and respect - despite the fact that schools themselves can be highly prescriptive with regards to subjects and examinations, for example.

Nussbaum refers to Sen's substantial freedoms as 'combined capabilities'. These are internal capabilities combined with freedoms - all the opportunities available for choice and action within a specific social, political, cultural or institutional setting (for example, school). Nussbaum insists that it is important to differentiate between internal capabilities and combined capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011: 21) because a society might do well enough in producing internal capabilities but not provide opportunities for these to be fully realised or developed. The example that Nussbaum provides is of a society that educates its citizens to utilise free speech but denies free speech in practice (with regards to political matters for instance).

Usually an internal capability is secured through some kind of functioning and an internal capability can clearly be lost if people are not allowed opportunities to use and develop it (Nussbaum, 2011: 23). So for Alec, his combined capabilities are the opportunities available to him in his home setting and in school - and schools have a role to play in helping young people whose home circumstances are not conducive to the development of their capabilities. Arguably, full and proper implementation of education policies like *GIRFEC* and *Curriculum for Excellence* would ensure that young people's capabilities are fully realised. I will test this assumption in Chapter 4.

To reiterate, Nussbaum creates a list of capabilities, the minimum core social entitlements, and she asserts that no individual should fall below certain threshold levels. Nussbaum's capabilities, her 'set of opportunities that interact and inform one another' (Nussbaum, 2006: 76-77) are listed below.

1. Life: being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length; not dying prematurely, or before one's life is so reduced as to be not worth living.
2. Bodily Health: being able to have good health, including reproductive health; to be adequately nourished; to have adequate shelter.
3. Bodily Integrity: being able to move freely from place to place; to be secure against violent assault, including sexual assault and domestic violence; having opportunities for sexual satisfaction and for choice in matters of reproduction.
4. Senses, Imagination and Thought: being able to use the senses, to imagine, think, and reason - and to do these things in a "truly human" way, a way informed and cultivated by an adequate education, including, but by no means limited to, literacy and basic mathematical and scientific training. Being able to use imagination and thought in connection with experiencing and producing works and events of one's own choice, religious, literary, musical, and so forth. Being able to use one's mind in ways protected by

guarantees of freedom of expression with respect to both political and artistic speech, and freedom of religious exercise. Being able to have pleasurable experiences and to avoid nonbeneficial pain.

5. Emotions: being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves; to love those who love and care for us, to grieve at their absence; in general to love, to grieve, to experience longing, gratitude, and justified anger. Not having one's emotional development blighted by fear and anxiety. (Supporting this capability means supporting forms of human association that can be shown to be crucial in their development.)
6. Practical Reason: being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life. (This entails protection for the liberty of conscience and religious observance.)
7. Affiliation:
 - A. being able to live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction; to be able to imagine the situation of another. (Protecting this capability means protecting institutions that constitute and nourish such forms of affiliation, and also protecting the freedom of assembly and freedom of speech.)
 - B. having the social bases of self-respect and nonhumiliation; being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others. This entails provisions of non-discrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, caste, religion, national origin.
8. Other Species: being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the world of nature.
9. Play: being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities.

10. Control Over One's Environment:

A. Political - being able to participate effectively in political choices that govern one's life; having the right of political participation, protections of free speech and association.

B. Material - being able to hold property (both land and movable goods), and having property rights on an equal basis with others; having the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others; having the freedom from unwarranted search and seizure. In work, being able to work as a human being, exercising practical reason and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers.

Like Sen's approach, Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach is intended to be fully universal. She advocates 'a dignity that is far beyond the outer dignity of class rank' (Nussbaum, 1997: 293), and that should be afforded to all citizens of the world regardless of where they are born or, to return to Sen's words, 'every person anywhere in the world, irrespective of citizenship, residence, race, class, caste or community' (Sen, 2009: 355). A life worthy of human dignity is the ultimate goal for all people; deprivation of the central capabilities is limiting and prevents social justice. This is just as true in Scottish comprehensive education as it is in 'developing' countries throughout the world; it is just as true for young Alec growing up in Scotland as it is for a famine victim thousands of miles away.

Building on the work of Sen and Nussbaum, Wolff and de-Shalit (2007) provide an account of disadvantage that shines fresh light on 'how to think about policies of poverty relief, justice, and equality' (2007: viii). Their central idea is disadvantage rather than equality because they believe that understanding and identifying the worst off will enable reflection on the requirements of social justice and appropriate policies. Wolff and de-Shalit have a 'general sympathy with the Capabilities Approach' but seek to validate Nussbaum's list through their research - in-depth interviews or semi-structured discussions in Israel and England (Wolff and de-Shalit, 2007: 11). Participants were either involved in service delivery and/or support of 'the disadvantaged' or were recipients of such services (Wolff

and de-Shalit, 2007: 12), because the researchers wanted to improve their understanding of what it was to be disadvantaged. The demographic of their group included immigrants, which is bound to have a bearing on the responses because such people are even less likely than others to experience the central capabilities. Interviewees were asked for their views about the most important human functionings then there was more explicit discussion of the categories. Wolff and de-Shalit used Nussbaum's ten capabilities and added four of their own - in brief: (11) complete independence; (12) doing good to others; (13) living in a law abiding fashion; (14) understanding the law. I now take each of these in turn.

'Complete independence' (new category 11) is what Wolff and de-Shalit call 'the dummy libertarian category' (Wolff and de-Shalit, 2007: 57) meant to test the participants and ensure authenticity of the results. Wolff and de-Shalit's analysis of participants' responses to this new category does not suggest a compelling reason to include it and it seems to be amply incorporated into Nussbaum's list (Capabilities 6 and 10 - practical reason and control over one's environment). Responses to this and other categories reassured Wolff and de-Shalit that there was genuine engagement with the process in that no participant simply agreed with all the categories (Wolff and de-Shalit, 2007: 58). Another new category, 'doing good to others', was enthusiastically endorsed by the participants. However, this category would appear to me to be encompassed by Nussbaum's Capability 5 emotions, described as being able 'to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves; to love those who love and care for us, to grieve at their absence' and not having one's emotional development 'blighted by fear and anxiety' (Nussbaum, 2000: 12). There are echoes too of Nussbaum's affiliation (Capability 7) here which is described as 'being able to live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings... to be able to imagine the situation of another' as well as the references to being treated 'as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others' (Nussbaum, 2000: 12). The third new category suggested by Wolff and de-Shalit, 'living in a law abiding fashion', could also be encompassed by one of Nussbaum's existing capabilities - practical reason: 'being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life' (Nussbaum, 2000: 12). The fourth new category suggested by Wolff and de-Shalit, 'understanding the law',

also raises questions in my mind. Put simply, I am not sure how this would be achieved. If the suggestion is that all young people would study law in school or take law as a compulsory subject in a further or higher education course then those who go straight into employment (or unemployment) after compulsory schooling would miss out. Arguably, young people should be taught how their country operates, learning about finances, for example, and the importance of saving for a pension in order to avoid poverty and social exclusion in later life. I would suggest that if young people are equipped with adequate literacy skills then this should enable them to understand the laws of the country in which they reside, or at least to know how to access these services. Again, possession of the various forms of capital is beneficial here, as I will later discuss.

Wolff and de-Shalit also claim that education did not always seem to be ‘captured well’ in Capability 4, senses, imagination, and thought ‘which is where it is placed on Nussbaum’s list’ (Wolff and de-Shalit, 2007: 106). They suggest that the role of education, particularly for people from disadvantaged backgrounds, should be ‘far more instrumental, as a means towards employment and participation as a full citizen’ (Wolff and de-Shalit, 2007: 106). However, it is clear that Nussbaum treats education (however defined - in the family or the community, in school, in church and so on) as both an end in itself *and* as an instrumental tool to achieving valued ends. For Nussbaum, education fits us for freedom in the sense of creating minds that we can call our own. Education is a primary good and all of Nussbaum’s capabilities can be developed by close attention to education broadly defined - as I will try to show, particularly in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. Education is for the enrichment of life and Nussbaum is concerned that we pay heed to the importance of the humanities in order to produce reflective and imaginative minds rather than focussing exclusively on attainment and other measurable outcomes, as many of our educational policies and managerial structures enjoin us to do (as I mentioned in Chapter 1). So, I suggest that education permeates Nussbaum’s Capabilities Approach, just as it does the work of Sen, and that it is not restricted to one capability as Wolff and de-Shalit suggest.

To sum up, it is difficult to discern if Wolff and de-Shalit’s extra categories actually add much to Nussbaum’s ten existing capabilities. Wolff and de-Shalit

concede that their list is provisional and that it would need further development and refinement. For me Wolff and de-Shalit's research confirms the comprehensive nature of Nussbaum's list and provides reassurance that her list does indeed cover the minimum core social entitlements for all people, wherever they live, whatever their background. In other words, Wolff and de-Shalit have certainly validated Nussbaum's list through their research. Where Wolff and de-Shalit make significant developments is with their discussions about fertile functionings and corrosive disadvantages and the risk to capabilities - which follow later in this chapter.

With regard to capabilities and functionings, I now focus on children and young people specifically. Nussbaum stresses that a distinction has to be made, between children and adults:

Children, of course, are different; requiring certain sorts of functionings of them (as in compulsory education) is defensible as a necessary prelude to adult capability' (Nussbaum, 2011: 26).

It seems acceptable to restrict young people's present freedoms for their own future good because developing their functionings in schools should lead to an enhancement of their capabilities. The result should be that young people are enabled to make informed decisions about the lives they choose to lead - now and in the future - and this links to agency which will be discussed in Chapter 3. Adverse familial or economic conditions can blight young people's functionings and capabilities or prevent them from choosing to develop their internal capabilities. Worse still, certain conditions can actually stunt the development of internal capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011: 30-31). This can be seen in some Scottish schools in which it is clear that some young people are stunted by their backgrounds - often despite their innate ability and potential. Alec struggles to develop his internal capabilities due to his home situation; Jamie's stunting, on the other hand, appears to be self imposed as his home environment seems conducive to developing his internal capabilities.

Perhaps, too, young people are stunted by education systems that sometimes appear to be more driven by finances (the metrics or utilitarian principles in action mentioned previously in this chapter) than by the development of capabilities - as

can be seen, for example, by budget and staff cuts in Scotland over recent years. The Education Institute for Scotland (EIS) one of the main teachers' unions revealed in 2010 that there were 2 500 fewer teachers in classrooms than two years previously, and more recent headlines cite, for example, a cut of £15 million to Glasgow City Council's education budget. From a personal perspective, I have experienced growing class sizes and increasing numbers of teachers made 'surplus' only to be replaced by newly qualified teachers (NQTs) who were supposed to be supernumerary¹⁴. Austerity has an impact on society generally and education specifically - as will be discussed more fully in the Chapter 4. It is young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who lose out the most but the effect of this will take several years to materialise (Asenova et al., 2013: 35). By then the damage could be even more difficult to remedy.

Not all young people are like Alec in 'Sailmaker', able to recognise that education can improve their lives and enable them to make informed choices about who they want to be and what they want to do. As aforementioned, a growing issue in Scotland's schools is not only catering for young people like Alec but also those like Jamie who *choose* not to develop their functionings despite coming from seemingly advantaged backgrounds. The important difference is that Jamie has the resources to utilise his capital should he at some point decide to do so. Others do not. *Curriculum for Excellence* aims to provide all children and young people 'with the knowledge, skills and attributes they need to thrive in a modern society and economy'¹⁵. Whether or not it can actually achieve or is achieving this goal, is discussed in Chapter 4. Other factors that have an impact on young people's lives are fertile functionings and corrosive disadvantages which I discuss next.

¹⁴ In Scotland all newly qualified teachers (NQTs) are guaranteed a year of employment after graduating.

¹⁵ From *Building the Curriculum 4: Skills for Learning, Life and Work*, The Scottish Government (2009)

2.3 Fertile Functionings and Corrosive Disadvantages

Wolff and de-Shalit develop Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach by introducing the notion of fertile functionings and corrosive disadvantages. Although Nussbaum suggests that these concepts lack 'theoretical clarity' (Nussbaum, 2011: 44) because of lack of clear distinction between functioning and capability, all four (Sen, Nussbaum, Wolff and de-Shalit) seem to concur that looking for fertile capabilities or functionings and corrosive disadvantages allows identification of the best intervention points for public policy (Nussbaum, 2011: 44). Fertile functionings are those that open up and have a positive impact on others; corrosive disadvantages are those that have a negative impact on others. A corrosive disadvantage is 'the flip side' of a fertile functioning: 'it is a deprivation that has particularly large effects in other areas of life' (Nussbaum, 2011: 44). So important is education that it is a fertile functioning (it can enhance a life, as it seems to do for Alec in 'Sailmaker') and lack of it can be a corrosive disadvantage that can thwart a life - and this explains why education permeates all of Nussbaum's capabilities as discussed earlier. Consequently, as well as targeting resources at fertile functionings because this will result in improvements in other areas (a sort of domino effect), politicians and policy makers should work towards eradicating corrosive disadvantages because these too have an impact on other areas of life (Nussbaum, 2011: 99).

The concepts of fertile functionings and corrosive disadvantages 'enhance the theoretical apparatus of the Capabilities Approach' (Nussbaum, 2011: 42-3), because assessing capabilities as fertile or corrosive provides a very good way of seeing how people are faring. Nussbaum concurs with Wolff and de-Shalit that 'education plays a fertile role, opening up options of many kinds across the board' (Nussbaum, 2011: 44), a fertile functioning that is crucial in addressing disadvantage and inequality (Nussbaum, 2011: 152). As Davie (the father) in 'Sailmaker' seems to realise, 'a good education'¹⁶ should lead to enhanced chances of employment, political affiliation and bodily health - whereas lack of it can have a negative impact on all these areas. Clearly then, providing better education is

¹⁶ Spence, A. (2008 [1988]) 'Sailmaker', p. 34

key to addressing other forms of disadvantage because the less well educated a person is, the fewer chances of gaining ‘a decent job’¹⁷. Lack of employment in itself also results in risk to other capabilities such as practical reason, control over one’s environment (in the form of insecurity) and affiliation (lacking the resources to be socially included): the clustering of disadvantage that I discuss later in this chapter.

Corrosive disadvantages can also be dynamic and transgenerational, meaning particular disadvantages that parents are exposed to can also have adverse consequences for their children - which will be discussed fully in Chapter 3. Research shows that children from poorer families are often less well educated than children from wealthy families (Mayer, 1998: 1). In addition, young people who grow up in poverty have an increased likelihood of ending up ‘poor’ and needing state support when they become adults (Mayer, 1998: 1). However, this is not to say that increased income per se would improve the life chances of young people in poorer homes. Mayer’s research shows that the relationship between parental income and children’s outcomes is more complicated than was previously thought because it is not simply income that makes a difference in young people’s lives (Mayer, 1998: 8), as highlighted by Sen (2000: 3). Not all parents are like Davie in ‘Sailmaker’ who recognises that education is the key to a better life for his son - it is ‘a great chance’, a ‘great opportunity’¹⁸ to improve his situation. Equality of educational opportunity should combat disadvantages that some young people bring with them to school - or at the very least, not add another layer of disadvantage to those that already exist. However, schools cannot always compensate for what goes on (or does not) in young people’s homes - despite the aims of policies like *GIRFEC (Getting it Right for Every Child)*¹⁹ which will be discussed fully in Chapter 4. Furthermore, it cannot be said that all young people growing up with disadvantaged parents will themselves remain disadvantaged in their adult lives. However, children and young people from disadvantaged homes

¹⁷ As above

¹⁸ Spence, A. (2008 [1988]) ‘Sailmaker’, p. 34

¹⁹ *GIRFEC* is a Scottish Government policy that supports children and young people by providing a framework for all those working with them.

might need more support to secure functionings (Wolff and de-Shalit, 2007: 121) - hence the raft of policies concerned with social justice we have in Scotland, such as *GIRFEC* and *Curriculum for Excellence*. Wolff and de-Shalit's strong assertion is that 'governments ought to attend to corrosive disadvantages and fertile functionings' (Wolff and de-Shalit, 2007: 152). Since education can be both a fertile functioning and a corrosive disadvantage, I suggest it is a good place to start and the Capabilities Approach might help to evaluate how each and every young person is doing.

However, there are of course criticisms of the Capabilities Approach. There are claims, for example, that the Capabilities Approach is too individualistic (Gore, 1997; Sen, 2002; Stewart, 2004) because of the insufficient attention to groups and social structures. Robeyns (2005), however, refutes the overly individualistic criticism outright and concludes that these claims are evaluative rather than factual judgements. To elaborate, firstly Robeyns explains that the Capabilities Approach embraces ethical individualism, which purports that only individuals are the units of moral concern, but does not rely on ontological individualism, the notion that all social entities and properties can be identified by reducing them to individuals and their properties. Further, ethical individualism still allows for recognition of the interconnectedness of people. With regards to education, it could be argued that ethical individualism is required to meet the needs of each and every child: education should be 'sensitive to the individuality of every child' (Nussbaum, 2006: 377). Besides, how can we assess the 'doings and beings' of a structure? We can and do say that a school is doing well or badly, or that the educational system is flourishing or mediocre, or perpetuates inequality (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1997). However, following Mills (1959), we can quickly see that the ethics of the 'sociological imagination' demand that we turn our attention to the person who is part of the social structural nexus. It is, of course, easier to assess the doings and beings of groups of people, such as those of a certain nationality or religion, or marginalised groups such as people with disabilities. Knowing how groups of people are faring can inform social and political policy - and much is known about this. There is a wealth of literature and policies which address class, gender and race. However, we still want to know how the person is doing and being, since the person, arguably, is often overlooked in policy statements and

instruments, or homogenised and subsumed into groups (and I discuss the demerits of homogenisation and group labelling in Chapter 3). For example, if Alec were autistic we would know that he has characteristics he shares in common with other people with autism such as repetitive behaviours or a narrow range of interests. However, Alec will still be unique and his needs may not be the same as others on the autistic spectrum. I would argue that individual wellbeing is important in an approach that is designed to bring about a change in society and encourages each and every person to make choices about how they wish to live. This seems to accord with the *GIRFEC* policy and *Curriculum for Excellence*, which I discuss in Chapter 4.

The listing of specific capabilities and the universal nature of the list for everyone everywhere in the world have also raised some questions (for example by Sen, 2004; Robeyns, 2005) with claims that it is a series of general rules to be applied universally without reference to context. Nussbaum acknowledges this universality, advocating that the capabilities are indeed ‘for each and every citizen, in each and every nation’ (Nussbaum, 2000: 6), and asserts that her highly general list should be made specific by local people (Nussbaum, 2000, 2003a). Nussbaum’s list is not a series of general rules to be applied everywhere without reference to context because that would make it crude and inflexible. The universal principles are broad, general, and with little content so that they can be infused with contextuality and rich particularity by complex, varied local contexts. Further, the Capabilities Approach is not a *comprehensive* ethical doctrine, it is a *partial* one, meaning that at the political level, and depending on the country’s level of development, it is up to governments to decide the minimal threshold levels to which the capabilities should be developed. In light of criticism, in 2003 Nussbaum subsequently detailed six ways in which her Capabilities Approach deals with cultural differences. For example she contended that the list is ‘open-ended and subject to revision’ (2003a: 37), and that the items on the list are specified in an abstract and general way to allow for local interpretations. To me, this universality seems fitting when discussing equal access to education if no group of children or individual child is to be treated differently to another due to background or any other reason. The general nature of Nussbaum’s list with specific details being determined by different sets of people in their different

locations (Nussbaum, 2000, 2003a) seems to resonate in some ways with *Curriculum for Excellence* in Scotland. For example, the curriculum advocates different schools creating their own particular courses while adhering to the universal prescription of the curriculum, such as pupils taking subjects in the eight curricular areas, their entitlement to all the experiences and outcomes and to be literate and numerate.

Nussbaum acknowledges that her Capabilities Approach ‘demands a great deal from human beings’ and asks if it is ‘hopelessly unrealistic’ (Nussbaum, 2006: 409-10). In response to her own question she suggests that the Capabilities Approach encourages us to ‘think creatively about what justice can be’ (Nussbaum, 2006: 415). I suggest that an education system, in Scotland and every other country in the world, should demand a great deal from human beings. Further, I opine that there is nothing unrealistic about hoping and planning for all young people in a nation to have equal educational opportunity regardless of where they live or what their parents do. Enhanced by the concepts of fertile functionings and corrosive disadvantages, the Capabilities Approach can help educators to judge how well young people are managing. Educators in Scotland would also benefit, I suggest, from consideration of what Sen calls sources of variation and I discuss these next.

2.4 Sources of Variation

By all three accounts (that of Sen, Nussbaum, Wolff and de-Shalit), young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, like Alec in ‘Sailmaker’, should have the same freedom and opportunities as others - the same educational opportunity and, hence, the same life chances as young people from more privileged homes. However, today in Scotland and throughout the United Kingdom, differences in young people’s environment and parentage clearly still matter. For example, children with better educated parents are ‘doing better’ by age seven than those with ‘poorer educated parents’ (Ermisch and Del Bono, 2010: 11). Today, those who have ‘less real opportunity’ like Alec due to his family circumstances have less capability to achieve the things that they have reason to value. The Capabilities Approach is about more than what people actually end up doing: it focuses on

what people are able to do, whether or not they choose to use these opportunities (Sen, 2009: 235). Education is the means by which to achieve important later freedoms, as is recognised by Alec and his father in 'Sailmaker'. Young people can exercise a certain freedom by choosing to engage in opportunities that schooling provides (like Alec); alternatively, they may choose to eschew these educational opportunities by disengaging from school (like Jamie). Disengaging from educational opportunities and acting on disaffection can clearly have a detrimental impact on capability, leading to a 'famine' of sorts in terms of limited life opportunities - if only young people and their families could realise it. Choosing not to engage in education might be due to what Sen (1997) describes as sources of variation: personal heterogeneities; physical environment; the social climate; and differences in relational perspectives.

Personal heterogeneities (the first source of variation) include individual characteristics such as gender, age or disability which cannot be altered and over which we have no control - regardless of income. People's needs are diverse and 'some disadvantages may not be correctable even with more expenditure on treatment or care' (Sen, 1997: 2). This would be the case with a disability, for example - although more expenditure could obviously support and enhance the lives of people with disabilities. What schools can do is teach young people (and staff) to be respectful of personal heterogeneities and to avoid prejudicial comments and actions - more of which I discuss in Chapter 3 and Chapter 5.

The second source of variation, physical environment, also contributes greatly to our quality of life, but it is arguably more 'correctable' than personal heterogeneities. In Scotland for example, the climate clearly has an impact on our way of life and results in higher heating bills than in a warmer climate. People living in Scotland are forced to spend more money on heating their homes (if they can afford to do so) than those in warmer climates, and this leaves less money to spend on other items or activities of their choosing. We see this in Spence's play in which Alec's father struggles to pay the electricity bills and to heat their home: 'Nae light. Place like a midden... It's freezing'²⁰. It is easy to imagine Alec's

²⁰ Spence, A. (2008 [1988]) 'Sailmaker', p. 55-56

difficulties trying to study in such an environment and the shortage of money must also mean that books and other resources to support Alec's learning are probably in short supply. This example again highlights the notion of the possession of various forms of capital that enhance educational opportunity - discussed more fully in Chapter 3. To 'correct' physical environment seems utopian in times of austerity and insecure employment (more of which I discuss later).

The third source of variation is social climate. Scotland provides free healthcare and education for all but there are still variations in public facilities and community relationships, as well as variations in incidences of crime and violence in different areas. In Alec's world, his father faces violence in the community where he works as a debt collector and other than his own motivation there appear to be few opportunities for Alec to engage in activities that will broaden his horizons. The quality of life of some people in Scotland is undoubtedly better than that of others depending on where they live and even in small towns in Scotland where I have taught, there are variations in the quality of lives of young people: some live in quiet, safe areas, while others live in environments where there is high crime and drug taking as well as disruptive neighbours. Clearly this has an impact on ease of studying as well as social activities that young people are able to engage in. In addition to public facilities, the nature of community relationships can be very important as are opportunities to build social capital (the social networks, shared values and understandings that enable groups and individuals to trust and work together) - of which Alec and his father seem to have few. Our social climate can affect our emotional wellbeing and our ability to convert personal incomes and resources into valued capabilities. The impact of this on our ability to engage in education is not to be underestimated.

Sen's fourth source of variation is relational perspectives, which involves the ability to participate in community activities and again this can vary from one community to another. Relational perspectives might include having a certain standard of clothing or other commodities in order to live 'without shame' (Smith, 1776), a central capability in Sen's view. In schools in contemporary Scotland, there are some attempts to address variations in relational perspectives. For example, school uniform policies ensure that all young people are provided with a

range of low cost school clothes so that all are dressed the same - which avoids stigmatisation and bullying, at least for reasons of dress. However, there are undoubtedly still challenges to ensure that no young person is left out due to having fewer commodities at home than others - for example having access to a computer or books to aid studying, or indeed a quiet place from which to complete school work - more of which I discuss in Chapter 3.

It seems to be Alec's physical environment, social climate and relational perspective that potentially reduce his access to educational opportunity - and hence could reduce his capacity for a life of human flourishing. In 'Sailmaker' Alec appears to realise this and fights against these sources of variation, eventually securing a place at university - a route that he himself chooses. Unfortunately, the non-fictional Alecs in Scotland's schools are not all able to do so - and, as highlighted, some of the Jamies actively choose not to. Questions about why this is the case and what we can do about it are often debated in Scotland's schools and I try to provide some answers in Chapter 3. Another factor that has an impact on education is the clustering and counterfactuality of disadvantages which I discuss next.

2.5 Clustering and Counterfactuality of Disadvantages

Further to the four sources of variation between income and poverty, Sen suggests that there can be coupling of disadvantages between different sources of deprivation. Wolff and de-Shalit discuss a similar notion but call it the 'clustering of disadvantages' (2007). An example of such coupling or clustering might be an illness or disability that affects a person's ability to work fulltime (if at all), but that also renders other daily activities (such as food shopping or participating in leisure activities) much more difficult. For a young person attending school in Scotland, this coupling or clustering might include poor housing (which makes daily life and completion of homework difficult, as discussed) combined with lack of parental support (which has a similar impact).

Wolff and de-Shalit (2007) pull together ‘sense, imagination and thought’ and ‘health and nutrition’ and provide some interesting statistics. For example, in America the poorest twenty per cent of the population spend approximately sixty per cent of what the middle twenty per cent spend on food (Wolff and de-Shalit, 2007: 127), with an obvious impact on the nutritional levels of young people in less affluent homes. Hungry children cannot study properly and ‘their results are much inferior to satisfied children’ (Wolff and de-Shalit, 2007: 127). Undernourishment could result in difficulty concentrating in school with a knock-on impact on attainment, rendering some young people doubly disadvantaged (if not multiply so). In other words, children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds have fewer chances to flourish than their middle or upper class peers: lack of bodily health (Capability 2) can affect the senses, imagination and thought and vice versa (as I discuss further in Chapter 5). This starts to show why the capabilities should be non-fungible because they are so tightly interrelated. The layering of one disadvantage upon another is well illustrated by Alec in ‘Sailmaker’ who suffers poor nutrition and a depressed father layered upon his own grief - as do some young people I meet in my daily practice. Alec recognises the challenges of his situation and the power of education to improve his life, but not all young people do, as I have said.

In many schools, there are measures in place to support young people like Alec whose disadvantage is involuntary and who seems to experience a coupling or clustering of disadvantages. These measures include: well equipped school libraries; supported study after school to allow pupils a quiet place to work; lunchtime and after school clubs; the Education Maintenance Allowance to provide financial support to allow young people from low income families to stay in school longer. However, the fact remains that family background, coupled with parental income (or lack thereof), have a significant impact on young people’s capabilities - on what they can do and be. There is also growing awareness in schools of pupils like Jamie who have the potential and support mechanisms to achieve but choose not to do so. These points link to agency, adaptive preferences and transgenerational disadvantages which will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Wolff and de-Shalit also introduce the notion of the counterfactuality of capabilities - 'what someone could achieve, or even could have achieved, had different choices been made' (Wolff and de-Shalit, 2007: 63), and this is relevant to schools in which some pupils could achieve much more if different choices had been made (and this is a central topic in Chapter 3). Jamie is an interesting example because he chooses to underachieve in school despite his resources. For other young people, the choices might not be their own but those of their parents or of society. It is important to consider what has been achieved in the present and what conditions prevail, and practical reason (Capability 5) could be used to imagine alternatives, situations which are currently unavailable. If it is clear that a person suffers inequality because of lack of something then we can posit quite categorically what could have been achieved had the circumstances been different. For example, it is not difficult to envisage how much easier Alec's life would have been if his mother had not died and if his father had regular employment with a decent wage. Equally, it is easy to imagine what a life without hunger, domestic violence or low expectations could be. Another complication is that people's capabilities are 'the alternative combinations of functionings that it is feasible for this person to achieve' (Wolff and de-Shalit, 2007: 63) - so we could aspire and strive for a presently unavailable opportunity, if we use practical reason imaginatively and creatively. Adaptive preferences and agency arise once more because what is feasible in a person's life (the choices that are available to them) is important - and this will be discussed more fully in the next chapter. If it is not feasible for a young person to escape her circumstances (of, for example, abuse, undernourishment or lack of parental support) then that young person might adapt herself to her circumstances as best as she can - hence, adaptive preferences. The point is how we *assess* the quality of life. Often people have to sacrifice one functioning to achieve another and this leads to risk and insecurity which I discuss in the next section. I argue that advanced or developed societies should not force people to make such sacrifices and that all people should experience capability security.

2.6 Risk and Security

*So that's me. Scrubbed. Again. Laid off. Redundant. Services no longer required. Just like that. Ah don't know. Work aw yer days an what've ye got to show for it? Turn roon an kick ye in the teeth. Ah mean, what have ye got when ye come right down tae it. Nothin.*²¹

When Davie in 'Sailmaker' is 'scrubbed'²², then his employment is clearly no longer secure and this has an impact on other areas of his life, such as taking care of his son properly. Wolff and de-Shalit extend the approach of Nussbaum and Sen by suggesting a shift from concentration on the presence or absence of capabilities to their security or sustainability. This is acknowledged as important by Nussbaum (2011: 145): 'People need to have not just a capability today but a secure expectation that it will be there tomorrow'. Some people's capabilities (such as access to employment) are at risk if they are unsustainable or insecure and this is another form of disadvantage (Wolff and de-Shalit, 2007: 65). This insecurity is exacerbated by zero hours and casual contracts that are now a feature of Scottish society. It is on the risk and sustainability of capability that this section now concentrates.

Wolff and de-Shalit identify three distinct ways in which functionings may be at risk or lack sustainability: risk to a specific functioning; cross-category risk; inverse cross category risk. Risk to a specific functioning might be experienced by someone who sleeps rough and therefore faces daily threat to bodily integrity, or by someone who does casual work and is, therefore, under constant threat of unemployment. This seems particularly topical today in the United Kingdom with large numbers of homeless people: in 2013-14, 29 326 households were accepted as homeless or potentially homeless by their local authority in Scotland²³. With regards to employment, in the United Kingdom a variety of jobs now involve zero hours contracts with no guaranteed hours or times of work each week. In July

²¹ Spence, A. (2008 [1988]) 'Sailmaker', p. 31

²² As above

²³ Shelter Scotland is a housing and homelessness charity.

2013, the Office for National Statistics reported that 250 000 people in the United Kingdom were on such contracts, which is thirty-two per cent more than the previous year. Someone who has a zero hours contract clearly has risk to a specific functioning (employment) and this can have a detrimental impact on many other areas of that person's life - such as health and affiliation. There will be many parents of young people in Scottish schools who have zero hours contracts and this is bound to have ramifications for their children.

Clearly, unemployment or lack of stability of employment, such as having a zero hours contract or being 'scrubbed' as Davie is in 'Sailmaker', may lead to risk to other functionings (such as proper nutrition as mentioned above) and this is what Wolff and de-Shalit call a cross-category risk - one that spreads to other functionings. Casual employment and zero hours contracts must make any type of planning (of meals or recreational activities, for example) very difficult - not to mention the payment of bills and rent as we see in the fictional 'Sailmaker' and as many people experience in reality on a daily basis. Wolff and de-Shalit (2007: 69) call this planning blight and this too can spread to other areas of a person's life. So, risk to a specific functioning (such as employment) can easily become a cross-category risk by spreading to bodily health, nourishment and suitable shelter. In a similar way, lack of bodily health could also be a cross-category risk as it could have an impact on the capability of senses, imagination and thought including education. As aforementioned, children and young people from less affluent homes (like that of Alec in 'Sailmaker') are less likely to have sufficient nutrients and consequently are more likely to be tired and find it difficult to concentrate - with an obvious impact on their education. Vulnerability is crucial to how well people can function and it is clear that low income work in volatile sectors corrodes security, undermines self-esteem and increases vulnerability - with an impact on families and communities. The Labour Party's proposal to ban zero hours contracts in the 2015 election campaign, supported by the Scottish National Party (SNP), seems to suggest some political recognition of the difficulties of insecure employment. However, often governments simply pass responsibility to the

individual²⁴ concerned instead of looking at how economic and welfare policies contribute to employment issues - and this links to the deficit ideology, which I discuss in the next chapter.

A third type of risk identified by Wolff and de-Shalit is inverse cross category risk. This could be experienced when people take steps to secure one functioning but this leads to instability of other functionings. A person may even willingly sacrifice one functioning to ensure security of another if this is considered to be the lesser of two evils. For example, a person may work in a risky job or dangerous area if this means they are able to provide for their family - despite the dangers to their own bodily integrity or health. For a period of time, young Alec's father Davie chooses to work as a 'tick man' (a debt collector) despite facing threats and violence as part of this job: he risks his bodily integrity in order to have employment and to secure other functionings such as providing food for his son. Governments could alleviate inverse cross category risk by introducing legislation to reduce the effects of employment vulnerability and state dependence and ensuring that people do not have to work in jobs that lead to instability of other important functionings.

These assertions about risk and sustainability are also relevant to the education of young people in Scotland's schools. It is surely the case that young people whose parents face capability risk or lack of sustainability must also suffer. As young people mature and gain increasing awareness of the world around them, the challenges facing their parents must be challenges that they too face. While younger children will probably only be aware of the direct tangible results of their parents lacking capability (for example, lack of heating, clothing or ample food), as they mature there will also be more awareness of the stress and anxiety facing their parents. Young people in secondary school will undoubtedly share their parents' anxiety and stress. Consequently another layer of the effects of capability risk is added to the lives of these young people who must have more to worry about than their peers from homes in which capabilities are secure (as well as the tangible results mentioned above). This is bound to affect their educational

²⁴ Zero hours contracts can have corrosive effects on the person and this is why, I believe, our society would benefit from the Capabilities Approach which focuses on the individual (see p. 39).

attainment. Like Alec in 'Sailmaker', young people whose parents face instability of work must be affected by this, making life in general and school life specifically much more challenging. Other events in school such as bullying and insensitive interactions with teachers can also undermine security and sustained functioning - as I discuss in later chapters.

It seems obvious to state that the blighting of parents' capabilities also results in the blighting of young people's lives. I wonder how we can really expect young people to study without proper nutrition and a suitable place to do homework or to engage fully in education when they are worried about their parents' unstable employment and the other obvious consequences of this. Regardless of their academic potential, the capability risk of their parents is extremely likely to influence young people's attainment. Many young people in Scotland's schools have to deal with unstable living conditions and the repercussions of this on their parents' capabilities and consequently their own. These young people's capabilities are at risk - they are below the threshold level or at threat of falling below the threshold level of functioning. So, clearly a crucial aspect of advantage and disadvantage is not simply what functionings are achieved, but also a person's prospects of attaining and, importantly, sustaining a level of functioning if they choose to (Wolff and de-Shalit, 2007: 72). Hence, policies aimed at rectifying disadvantage and ensuring social justice must concentrate on how to secure functionings and the minimum threshold advocated by Nussbaum.

Education is one way of addressing the far reaching impact of the capability risk of parents on their children. Since young people's 'choice capabilities are immature' (Nussbaum, 2011: 156) these require development in school - as well as in the home. However, this development could take more skill and care for those young people already experiencing the challenges I have described. In addition to acknowledging the impact of lack of sustainability of parents' capabilities on young people, school staff should be alert to the pressure on some teenagers to find work early rather than carrying on their studies (Nussbaum, 2011: 156). Many of these issues appear to be recognised in Scotland's educational policies such as those I discuss in Chapter 4: *GIRFEC* and *Curriculum for Excellence*.

2.7 Chapter Conclusion

*Ach aye, ye take yer brains fae yer mother son. She was clever ye know.
Just wurnae the same opportunities when we were young. You stick in son.
Get yerself a good education. Get a decent job.*²⁵

Throughout this chapter I used the characters of young Alec, his father Davie and Jamie (another character I created) to exemplify various concepts such as sources of variation, clustering and counterfactuality of disadvantages, risk and security. Davie recognises his son's ability - 'ye take yer brains fae yer mother'²⁶ - and realises the importance of 'sticking in' and getting a 'good education'²⁷, despite the challenges. He instils this attitude in his son Alec who also appreciates the value of education to enhance his life. The Capabilities Approach is useful in the assessment of social inequality and can make a major contribution in assessing societies and social institutions (Sen, 2009: 233), such as schools. However, social policies 'aimed entirely at equating everyone's capabilities, no matter what the other consequences of such policies might be' (Sen, 2009: 232), can lead to inequalities by failing to take into account sources of variation (personal heterogeneities, physical environment, social climate and differences in relational perspectives). Sen suggests that governments can be measured by the capabilities of their citizens; similarly, schools can be judged, I believe, by how well they prepare young people for their adult capabilities. The Capabilities Approach can be a very helpful tool to enable educational stakeholders to see how well they and their pupils are doing.

In this chapter I drilled deeper into the three perspectives of the Capabilities Approach - that of Sen, Nussbaum, Wolff and de-Shalit. First of all I highlighted the distinction between functionings and capabilities from each of the three perspectives. I stressed the necessity for the development of functionings in schools as this should lead to an enhancement of young people's capabilities.

²⁵ Spence, A. (2008 [1988]) 'Sailmaker', p. 34

²⁶ As above

²⁷ As above

Following this, I introduced the notion of fertile functionings and corrosive disadvantages, the identification of which can highlight ‘the best intervention points for public policy’ (Nussbaum, 2011: 45). I also explored four sources of variation that can have an effect on people’s levels of disadvantage, followed by the clustering and counterfactuality of disadvantages. Finally, I discussed the risk to and sustainability of capabilities and the impact of this on young people in Scotland’s schools. In addition, I introduced selected societal features that are pertinent to young people and education such as austerity and the various forms of capital. In the next chapter I discuss these more fully and introduce further barriers to educational opportunity with a more detailed focus on agency; out of school activities, attitudes and aspirations; transgenerational disadvantages and adaptive preferences.

Chapter Three: Barriers to Equality of Educational Opportunity

3.1 Chapter Introduction

*We were first equal Mary and I
With the same coloured ribbons in coloured hair...
I remember the housing scheme
Where we both stayed.
The same house, different homes,
Where the choices were made...*

*I think of the prizes that were ours for the taking
and wonder when the choices got made
we don't remember making.²⁸*

Like Spence's play 'Sailmaker', 'The Choosing' by Liz Lochhead (extract above) is a poem often studied in Scottish schools. Written in first person narrative, it describes the writer and a school friend who were 'first equal'²⁹ at primary school but whose lives then took very different paths: young Liz stayed on at school then went to university while her friend Mary left school as early as possible, married young and was soon pregnant. Lochhead's poem seems to highlight how family dynamics and disparity in wealth can send two apparently 'equal' children in two quite diverse directions. The poet highlights that young people from 'the same house' can come from quite 'different homes'³⁰ and that the choices made by parents often map out the rest of their children's lives.

Lochhead's poem is set in the 1960s but still has resonance today. Much as it did for Liz and Mary, family background continues to play a key role in determining a young person's future (Gilligan, 2000; Hirsch, 2007; Raffo et al., 2007; Ball, 2010). However, as stated, this is not simply about finances. In discussing the impact of

²⁸ Lochhead, L. (1972) 'The Choosing'

²⁹ As above

³⁰ As above

family background on young people's learning we must once again acknowledge 'the multiple aspects of disadvantaged children lives' (Hirsch, 2007: 2) - the 'impoverished lives' not simply the 'depleted wallets' highlighted by Sen (2000: 3). In 'The Choosing', Liz (the writer) seems to have family support to go to university while her friend Mary leaves school at the first available opportunity largely because her father 'didn't believe in high school education, especially for girls'³¹. These girls of equal intellect have the same capability set, but they do not appear to have the same opportunities to develop these capabilities due to differences in support and finances at home - similar to Jamie and Alec in Chapter 2, but for different reasons. Nowadays, there is certainly more support for young people from less affluent homes to stay on at school. However, despite the many laudable inclusive policies (some of which I discuss in Chapter 4), it is clear that family background still has a major impact on young people's educational experiences and attainment, regardless of raw intellect. I suggest that the Capabilities Approach can shed new light on how to tackle the issue of unequal access to educational opportunity, but also that we need to consider how our societal structures influence young people's trajectories because many do not fulfil their educational potential for a variety of reasons, such as disengaging from school (Rogers 2010, citing Benjamin, 2002). We must ask ourselves why.

In this chapter, I discuss agency and how family background can result in young people going in different directions (and not always by choice) despite starting out with similar academic potential. I also consider out of school activities, attitudes and aspirations surrounding education. Thereafter, I turn to transgenerational disadvantages and adaptive preferences again, highlighting how these concepts can make it difficult for young people to make genuine choices about who they want to be and how they want to live their lives. I continue to suggest that using the Capabilities Approach as a tool and a framework (Robeyns, 2005: 93) helps to evaluate the extent to which young people are able to access educational opportunity. However, I also highlight that despite the many merits of the Capabilities Approach there are societal barriers in Scotland that hold some young people back and which render the struggle for equality of educational opportunity

³¹ Lochhead, L. (1972) 'The Choosing'

more difficult. Such barriers include differing access to the various forms of capital and the power of habitus delineated by Bourdieu (1986); restrictive social structures and the scholarisation of childhood. All of these percolate through this chapter.

3.2 Agency

When writer Liz Lochhead was growing up (she was born in 1947) there might have been less awareness of the inextricable links between education and agency, but nowadays agency is a commonly used term in education and it features in much educational literature and policy. For example, agency is implied throughout *GIRFEC* and the four *Curriculum for Excellence* capacities (successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, effective contributors), as I discuss fully in Chapter 4. Developing agency is an important goal for young people because it ‘potentially enables us to imagine and act toward new ways of being’ (Walker and Unterhalter, 2007: 6). In twenty-first century Scotland, young people’s educational achievements ‘should not be dictated by the wealth of their parents, their gender, their race or their ethnicity’ (Watkins, 2012: 1-2), and imagining new ways of thinking and being is extremely important if young people are to choose how they want to live instead of simply following already established patterns (which I discuss in more detail later in this chapter). However, I suggest that there is variability in practitioners’ understanding of what agency actually means and how to develop it in young people. A definition of agency is provided on the *Journey to Excellence*³² website:

the degree of self-belief or self-confidence. It is the belief that one has the capacity and ability to learn and achieve. Young people who believe that they can learn and achieve their goals through effort and technique, are

³² *The Journey to Excellence* is a five part professional development resource created by school inspectors.

much more likely to succeed. By contrast, the belief that ability is fixed is a major cause of underachievement in schools³³.

Although I understand that self-belief or self-confidence can affect agency, I suggest it is more about making and enacting choice. A clearer definition, in my opinion, is provided by Sen who describes agency as ‘all the goals that a person has reason to adopt’ (Sen, 2009: 287). The process of exercising agency (acting on goals) is one of Sen’s two main purposes of education - the other purpose being education as a form of functioning and wellbeing achievement³⁴. Education should lead to a life of ‘genuine choices with serious options’ (Sen, 1992: 41), and Sen promotes the notion of the capability of the individual agent ‘to critically reflect and make worthwhile life choices from the alternatives available to her’ (cited in Walker and Unterhalter, 2007: 15). However, the development of agency requires equal educational opportunity: ‘If a person has equal educational opportunity, the person’s practical skills and human agency can be shaped in a fair way’³⁵. Without equality of educational opportunity, agency can be undermined and young people’s choices limited. It could be said that lack of or restricted agency equates to a disadvantage.

Both Mary and Liz seem to have decisions made for them - ‘the choices...we don’t remember making’³⁶ - and therefore to lack agency. The girls, like some young people I meet in my daily practice, appear not to shape their lives ‘in the light of goals that matter’; instead, they appear to be ‘shaped or instructed how to think’ (Walker and Unterhalter, 2007: 5) by their family background. Rather than being active participants in their own development, they appear to be passive spectators (Walker and Unterhalter, 2007: 5). Non-ideal contexts (Walker and Unterhalter, 2007: 9), such as home background and lack of parental support, can diminish agency thus lessening the chances of young people making informed choices about

³³ *The Journey to Excellence, Research Summary - Building Self Motivation* (2006) is available from the Education Scotland website.

³⁴ Flores-Crespo, cited in Walker and Unterhalter (2007: 49)

³⁵ Flores-Crespo, cited in Walker and Unterhalter (2007: 50)

³⁶ Lochhead, L. (1972) ‘The Choosing’

how they want to live. Each person's agency goals are affected by their previous circumstances (Burchardt, 2009: 7), and this seems to be the case with Mary's father who sees so little value in education, especially for girls - and consequently this has an impact on Mary. Since constructing agency goals can be influenced by 'pre-existing inequality' (Burchardt, 2009: 11), young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely than those from advantaged backgrounds to have the resources to formulate agency goals. An obvious example of this is the choice and ability to apply to university and, having gained a place, possessing the wherewithal to know what to read, where to gain support and so on. Many schools take on very supportive roles here and show that educational practices that embrace agency can 'open the possibility to interrupt a pervasive relationship in education that tends to link learners' origins and outcomes' (Walker and Unterhalter, 2007: 6). Scotland's *Curriculum for Excellence* seems to recognise the importance of agency in opening up new possibilities - as will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Agency is less explicitly stated in Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach than in Sen's approach, but it seems to permeate all of Nussbaum's listed capabilities especially practical reason which advocates 'being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life' (Nussbaum, 2012: 120). Nussbaum sees people as 'sources of agency and worthy in their own right, with their own plans to make and their own lives to live' (Nussbaum, 2000: 58), which links back to Sen's points about selecting important goals. Both Nussbaum and Sen recognise that external circumstances 'affect the inner lives of people: what they hope for, what they love, what they fear, as well as what they are able to do' (Nussbaum, 2000: 31). Two people could have the same capability set (like Liz and Mary) but choose to follow different paths, not because of different interests and goals, but because of inequality and deprivation limiting or restricting their agency and aspirations. In other words, social conditioning can lead to adaptive functioning which might mean that parents' past experiences render them unable to provide their children with the requisite social and/or cultural capital to make agency creating decisions.

Bourdieu's various forms of capital (1986) are highly relevant here. The concept of cultural capital refers to a whole array of symbolic elements such as tastes, speech, credentials and so on that people acquire from belonging to a certain social class. Sharing similar forms of capital with others, such as speaking in a similar way or sharing the same taste in leisure activities, creates a sense of collective identity and group position ('people like us'). However, Bourdieu highlights that cultural capital can be a major source of social inequality, 'an instrument of reproduction capable of disguising its own function' (Bourdieu, 1986: online source), because certain forms are valued above others and can help or hinder social mobility just as much as income or wealth. Cultural capital takes three forms: embodied, objectified and institutionalised. Accent or dialect is an example of embodied cultural capital, while possession of material goods (such as an expensive house or additional educational resources) is cultural capital in its objectified state. Institutionalised cultural capital refers to credentials and qualifications such as degrees or titles that symbolise cultural competence and authority. The cultural capital of working class, disadvantaged or marginalised people in society is not generally valued (for example, certain ways of dressing - such as 'the hoodie' - and speaking are scorned). Some young people do not possess much of any form of capital and are, therefore, further disadvantaged in the education system. Clearly the effects on agency will be significant.

In judging if people are truly agentic there is a need to recognise the interdependency and inseparability of agency and societal structures, 'to tackle and to combine agency and structure rather than conflating them' (Archer, 1979: ix). Because 'Unequal social and political circumstances lead to unequal chances to choose' (Walker, 2003: 172), and individual agency depends on social and economic arrangements, it is difficult to evaluate what people have genuine access to. In sociological terms, 'unequal chances to choose' can be due to lack of cultural or social capital, as described above, and the education system is judged to be one of the most efficient ways of reproducing inequality - but also, paradoxically, in acquiring the necessary social, cultural and linguistic capital (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). In my daily practice I find it challenging to judge if agency has been respected and encouraged in schools (Ibrahim and Tiwari, 2014), and to discern if young people are truly making decisions about what they value or

if the decisions are based on parental, community or peer pressure. So, if I had been Mary's teacher, how could I know if she chose to leave school and get married when she did, or if she simply did so because it was expected of her? It is difficult to know if a young person is opting for goals that are less ambitious (Burchardt, 2009: 8) purely because that is what is expected by peers and family members. In other words, working out if subjective aspirations are low - and, indeed, judging what is ambitious and what is not - is complex. The challenge of discerning if young people are really making their own choices can be just as true of young people who go from school to university as it is of those who go straight into paid employment or 'choose' to stay at home - and in schools we must be wary of promoting further or higher education as 'the be all and end all'. As teachers we have to accept that there are 'different conceptions of the good life' (Walker, 2003: 178), and we should try not to foist our own views on young people. What we can and should do, I think, is to respect young people's choices and support their agency by enabling them to exercise practical reason with regards to political and economic opportunities - for example, to engage in reflection in planning their lives and enter into 'meaningful relationships with people like and unlike themselves' (Walker, 2003: 179). How young people function or act cannot be predetermined (Walker, 2003: 177) but, if unchecked, the possession of various forms of capital might influence what young people choose. This is why education is so important in enabling people to exercise agency and to develop their capabilities.

It has been claimed that the Capabilities Approach does not fully acknowledge that agency can be impeded by power structures, such as teachers, parents, governments and their policies (Jackson, 2005; Zimmerman, 2006). However, I suggest that the point is that Nussbaum's evaluative framework allows us to assess the extent to which a person has developed capabilities and can realise these as functionings. It allows us to ask important questions about flourishing and opportunities for flourishing and is not prescriptive about precisely what should be done - except that dignity should be preserved and opportunities provided. Nussbaum's illustration of women in developing countries makes it clear that she understands that structures are so designed and that they can disable, quite

severely, women's capabilities. Often sociologists highlight the importance of agency 'as a way of indicating the capacity for people to bring about change rather than simply to be subject to the determining effects of social structure' (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2009: 50). However, as stated, previous circumstances can influence a person's agency goals - either positively or negatively - and people's upbringing and possession of capital affects the choices that are open to them. Research shows that children from less advantaged backgrounds can feel less in control in educational situations and have reduced agency because they are often under pressure to perform tasks in which they lack confidence (Hirsch, 2007). In my experience of teaching English, for example, many young people are reticent to talk out to the whole class, either to answer questions or to deliver prepared talks (an assessable element of English courses). Work has to be done to convince some young people that the best solo talk is not about 'talking posh', but about the content, structure and audience awareness demonstrated in their talk. However, these too could be construed as forms of capital (embodied cultural capital or linguistic capital - Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977) in which many working class young people lack confidence.

Language is not neutral and rather than unifying (Bourdieu, 1992), it can be divisive. It carries symbolic power and the traces of social structures: words, as Cookson (1994: 116) argues, 'do not exist in a disembodied form; they have meaning within a social context that is class bound, conflictual and power driven'. We do not always use language benevolently. Sometimes we use language to exert power or authority, to coerce, intimidate or disparage - and teachers often use it for these purposes in order to control young people. The way in which we speak (our accent, dialect and word choice) denotes our class and social position, and this seems to be intuitively understood by young people - hence, perhaps, the reticence of some to perform solo talks in class. Linguistic capital is a manifestation of the socially structured character of habitus, as well as a complex set of social, historical and political conditions. Passeron's empirical research (1965) revealed that the main factor underlying inequalities in the academic attainment of children from different backgrounds was related to their levels of linguistic capital. Young people who cannot comprehend, define or utilise more complex language or who have not been exposed to quality literature, are at a

disadvantage. Lack of linguistic capital can have an impact on every area of education and by the time young people reach secondary school this can be difficult to remedy and there has to be great willingness on the part of the young person to do so.

From a sociological perspective, the existence of these structural impediments points towards the notion of agency having some limitations. Unless agency is constructed as ‘essentially illusory... merely a product of some or other social force’ then there has to be acceptance that ‘one part of what goes on in the social world is people’s choices’ (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2009: 106). Not surprisingly since schools are microcosms of the social structure, this view seems to be espoused by some teachers who contend that if all young people would simply choose to follow instructions and complete their homework, then educational success and a life of human flourishing would be theirs. Assuming that all that goes on in the social world is people’s choices can risk ‘individualising success and failure, and the social consequences that flow from personal choices’ (Walker, 2003: 178) - and this is related to the deficit ideology which I introduce in the next chapter. I am not convinced that all young people are free agents who are able to choose their own fate ‘through transcendence of structural constraints imposed upon individuals from birth’ (Kingsley, 2012: 5), for example, class, gender, race, disability, geography. However, I see that personal or individual agency is important and that agency as a worthwhile goal should not be dismissed, difficult as it might be for some to attain. Understanding the relationship between social structures and the individual and how to overcome the constraints on agency is paramount. First of all practitioners need to acknowledge that structural impediments such as class divisions and transgenerational disadvantages (more of which will be discussed later) actually exist; then, we need to work out how these might be transcended (if, indeed, young people actually wish to do so).

An enabling curriculum like *Curriculum for Excellence* coupled with a focus on the Capabilities Approach could help to endow a young person with agency. *Curriculum for Excellence*, I think, sets out to promote what Walker and Unterhalter (2007: 32) describe as ‘achievement of important levels and skills acquisition, which play a vital role in agency and well-being freedom’ - I discuss whether or not it actually

achieves this in the next chapter. The same applies to *GIRFEC* with outcomes and wellbeing indicators that, if achieved, could enhance agency. Both policies seem to further socially just outcomes for all pupils. What can be said now is that Scottish educational policies and initiatives emanate from the Scottish government - an important source of power - and that attempts to promote inclusion, wellbeing, social justice and equal opportunity are ongoing. From a sociological perspective, there needs to be recognition that societal structures can limit agency and it is not easy to determine 'how far it is possible for things to be different from the way they are' (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2009: 50). Another relevant factor to equality of educational opportunity is young people's out of school activities which I discuss next.

3.3 Out of School Activities

In addition to dissimilar levels of agency, young people from 'different homes'³⁷ might well have divergent experiences of out of school activities such as homework (Hirsch, 2007). We can speculate that Mary has less support with her homework than Liz due to Mary's father's negativity about the value of education. This means that although the two girls have similar academic ability in primary school (they are 'first equal' with 'a common bond in being cleverest'³⁸), their capabilities and consequently their functionings at home (their opportunities to do and to be) are quite different. These differences are carried on into school to the extent that one goes on to realise those functionings in a deeper and more sustained way.

It seems to be Mary's personal heterogeneities and the social climate in which she is brought up (terms discussed in Chapter 2) that reduce her agency. Experienced practitioners are well aware that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds sometimes (but not always) receive less parental support in the completion of homework, and that they are less likely to be involved in out of school activities that will broaden their horizons and enhance their capital. This could be for a variety of reasons: parents might not have the educational experience or

³⁷ Lochhead, L. (1972) 'The Choosing'

³⁸ As above

confidence to help their children with school work; they might not have the time (due to younger children to look after, work patterns or zero hours contracts); they might not be able to afford extra books and resources. Young people from 'different homes' will also have differing physical environments in which to complete homework, with affluent children more likely to have their own rooms and/or a quiet space in which to work (though their parents might be 'time poor' which seems to be a twenty-first century affliction of the professional classes). This contrasts to some disadvantaged children's homes in which there might be shared bedrooms, no space in which to work and many other distractions. This is not to say that less affluent parents do not care about education - or, indeed, that more affluent parents care more about education. However, less prosperous parents might lack the resources (academic, financial, psychological or physical) and access to so-called 'hot information' (Ball, 2002), the social or cultural capital which enables young people to succeed within the education system.

Such resources include support materials (additional books, for example), tutoring and organised out of school activities to which young people from less affluent homes have less access due to costs and perceptions of their families and friends (Wikeley et al., 2007). The ability to buy in support and 'enrichment of various kinds for their children' (Ball, 2010) might also help to explain the disparity in attainment between affluent and disadvantaged young people. Middle class, sometimes paranoid, parents (Furedi, 2001) who are anxious about poor attainment and downward social mobility often invest in strategies to improve their children's chances. For example, these parents are more inclined to seek out private tutors and tutoring agencies like the ubiquitous Kumon or Kip McGrath centres which (according to their websites) have, respectively, twenty-seven and twenty-eight centres throughout Scotland³⁹. These, and a variety of other activities and experiences, are opportunities that less affluent parents simply cannot afford. This buying in of resources is linked to 'the scholarisation of childhood' (Ball, 2010) with the marketing of academic resources aimed predominantly at middle class parents. This signals 'a conceptual and very practical shift' (Ball, 2010: 160) away from the intrinsic value of education and

³⁹ Kip McGrath and Kumon are worldwide tuition centres.

towards 'a consumer product or an investment for which individuals who reap the rewards of being educated (or their families) must take first responsibility' (Ball, 2010: 160) - either positively or negatively. This changes the relationship between the citizen and the state by insinuating that it is parents who must ensure 'a good education' for their children - and those with less available capital will obviously be less able to do so, through no fault of their own.

Since academic and linguistic capital increasingly require economic capital (Ball, 2010: 158-160), the current situation in Scotland potentially marginalises less affluent families. As 'privileged groups within society sustain a whole range of social structures - including the education system - to maintain their positions of privilege' (Raffo, 2007: viii), less advantaged groups can struggle to compete. It is little wonder then that two children with apparently similar potential but contrasting homes, such as Mary and Liz, can end up on quite different paths - and not always by choice. Prohibited by finances, young people from disadvantaged backgrounds often miss out on opportunities to enhance academic capital (through the purchase of the aforementioned resources and tutoring, for example) and also to engage in other out of school activities. These increase the social advantages of wider networks of friends and chances to form relationships with positive non-teacher role models as well as to develop self-control and confidence - not to mention the sheer pleasure of engaging in activities of their choosing (Wikeley et al., 2007). I often wonder what dormant talents (musical, dance, culinary) young people might have that simply remain inactive due to lack of opportunity - and the subsequent reduction in life choices available to them.

So, since young people from working class and disadvantaged homes do not possess the same social or cultural capital as those from middle and upper class homes, they can be educationally disadvantaged. In the education system 'the rules of the game' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) are not shared by all participants, perhaps because 'the hidden and most specific function of the education system consists in hiding its relationship to the class structure' (Bourdieu, 1997: 208). In Bourdieusian terms, different players are arbitrarily dealt cards of different values (in various forms of capital) and possessing prized social capital enables some players to have a head start. It could be said that the education game is rigged from the beginning

and ‘players’ without the various forms of capital are disadvantaged. Once more, possession of capital adds a layer of advantage to already advantaged young people and leaves disadvantaged young people further behind. It is clear that lack of capital can impede agency: it is difficult for a young person to ‘play the game’ without knowledge of the rules or the language (linguistic capital), experience or confidence to articulate what is of value.

In recent years, strategies and policies have been introduced in an attempt to bridge the gap in educational opportunity between affluent and disadvantaged young people (some of which will be discussed in the next chapter). It is recognised, for example, that homework is a useful tool in building capacity for independent learning but that often it builds capacity for those who already have it and undermines confidence for those who do not (Hirsch, 2007). One strategy introduced in many Scottish schools is supported study or homework clubs after school. However, it is my experience (and, anecdotally, that of colleagues throughout Scotland) that the very pupils that supported study and homework clubs are intended for are the least likely to attend. Often it is young people who have parental support and a place to study who stay behind after school for extra tuition - sometimes even those pupils who already have private tutors or attend tutoring centres. This could be as a result of parental paranoia (Furedi, 2001) mentioned earlier, or perhaps greater knowledge of ‘the rules of the game’ - a simple example of which is the realisation that attendance at after school study sessions might allow access to ‘extra’ exam advice or materials, as well as more teacher attention.

Thus we can see that strategies aimed at supporting young people from disadvantaged backgrounds sometimes fall short and that often ‘the system’ best supports those who least need it. Often, too, it is ‘middle-class children within poorer schools that benefit most from school-based initiatives’ (Perry and Francis, 2010: 2). Some aspects of *Curriculum for Excellence* offer opportunities for disadvantaged young people to be involved in out of school activities such as sports events, theatre trips and so on - although these opportunities also existed before the introduction of *Curriculum for Excellence*. In the past some schools had so called ‘deprivation funds’ which were utilised, for example, to take all young

people in a school to the theatre or an art gallery. Such an experience could develop cultural capital and open up new horizons for young people, offering different leisure and/or career options - which links back to my previous point about dormant abilities and interests. Opening up new horizons also links to agency once more because people with very limited choices are not as truly agentic as those with a broad range of choices. Sadly, education budget cuts often result in this type of fund (for 'extras') being terminated first and, again, it is young people from disadvantaged backgrounds that miss out most. Furthermore, the far-reaching effects of such activities are difficult to quantify so the measurable outcomes (predominantly exam statistics) always seem to be the focus - especially when budgets are limited. I discuss the attainment agenda more fully in the next chapter. From out of school experiences, I now turn my attention to attitudes and aspirations.

3.4 Attitudes and Aspirations

Attitudes and aspirations, which could be described as a form of psychological capital, can also vary in 'different homes'⁴⁰. Mary's and Liz's attitudes to education would have started to form at an early age, as do those of young people in Scotland's schools today. Early on too Mary and Liz would have developed awareness of social differences (Sutton et al., 2007): of the divide between the 'chavs' and the 'posh' (Sutton et al., 2007) as young people from contrasting socio-economic backgrounds label the two extremes; or the 'neds' and the 'swots' as I have heard them called by pupils. Again, this awareness seems almost subconscious in young people and might stem from obvious differences in aspects of linguistic capital (ways of speaking and expressing ourselves, for example). For Mary, this recognition of social differences could have meant that she engaged in the education system differently than a young person from a more supportive, more affluent home like Liz's. Class differences compounded by the education system can have a detrimental impact on the confidence, motivation and self-worth of some young people. As well as engaging differently in education (partly

⁴⁰ Lochhead, L. (1972) 'The Choosing'

for some of the reasons mentioned earlier), young people from disadvantaged backgrounds can be less involved in their learning and might become 'reluctant recipients of the taught curriculum' (Hirsch, 2007) because they feel they do not belong, that they are not affiliated to the school. The result could be that they switch off and eventually self-eliminate or 'drop out' after national exams or when they believe they have exhausted their academic talents or interests.

Reluctant recipients of education (like Jamie mentioned in Chapter 2) have also been described as the 'disappeared', 'disaffected' or 'disappointed' (Barber, 1994). Such labelling de-individualises and de-humanises (as will be discussed more fully in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5). Labelling of groups and types of pupils occurs explicitly, as can be seen by categorising classes, and implicitly, through teacher attitudes. It is a form of educational 'othering' which, in my experience, is divisive and destructive; it is certain to make some young people feel less valued than others and to have an impact on agency and educational equality. In an extensive study into student motivation and attitudes (Barber, 1994), it was discovered that despite most young people being positive about school, 40% of all pupils in secondary schools are affected by 'a general lack of motivation' (Barber, 1994), perhaps for some of the reasons delineated in this chapter. Reluctant or disaffected recipients of the curriculum can also be involved in 'challenging' behaviour and in extreme cases this can lead to exclusion from school: per 1 000 pupils, exclusion rates are almost eight times greater for pupils living in the 20% most deprived areas compared with pupils living in the 20% least deprived areas (Scottish Government, 2010: 4). If young people's experience of school 'is determined by the level of disadvantage they face' (Horgan, 2007: 1), then it is little wonder that the attitudes of those from less affluent homes differ from others.

Aspirations, like attitudes, are complex and influenced by multiple mutually reinforcing factors including place (Raffo et al., 2007). Some policymakers suggest that low aspirations 'are in part the cause of contemporary social and economic ills' with raising aspirations the remedy (Roberts and Evans, 2012: 70-71). Often too, low aspirations are construed as such simply because they 'do not comply with middle-class norms and ideals' (Roberts and Evans, 2012: 71) - examples of which

include teenage pregnancy and single parenthood being construed as low aspirations, as compared to a university education and deferring pregnancy as high aspirations. The implication seems to be that those who choose not to participate in higher education have less social value and this is evident in some schools in Scotland. This is also a possible interpretation of Lochhead's poem 'The Choosing' and the different adult lives of Mary and Liz: that one is 'better' than the other. Such an opinion (whether explicit or implicit) is unhelpful 'in enabling an understanding of the way in which young people imagine their futures and make choices' (Roberts and Evans, 2012: 84). In England, where the schooling climate is much more neo-liberal in intent and impact than in Scotland, some would portray this discourse of aspirations as 'an art of government' (Roberts and Evans, 2012: 72) which blames individual behaviour and choices for socio-economic status (Perry and Francis, 2010: 10). This does not take social inequality into account; again 'it implies that the responsibility for continuing inequality lies with those who are in fact the victims of policies which have increased social differentiation' (Roberts and Evans, 2012: 73). Here in Scotland, education policies promote greater social justice and inclusion, as well as active citizenship but, of course, there are still some practitioners who have fixed ideas about aspirations and social inequality.

Contrary to popular belief, patterns of job and education aspirations across the United Kingdom are varied and can be high even in disadvantaged areas (Raffo et al., 2007; St Claire et al., 2011). Research consistently finds that the majority of parents from low-income backgrounds have high aspirations for their children's education (Cummings et al., 2011), so generalisations regarding attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that surround aspirations in disadvantaged communities should be avoided (St Claire et al., 2011). Nor do young people from disadvantaged backgrounds lack aspirations, but they sometimes do not have the wherewithal (such as the various forms of capital discussed earlier in this chapter) to realise their aspirations. What it takes to succeed academically is not always fully understood by parents and young people - recall 'the rules of the game' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992), and the 'hot information' (Ball, 2002) highlighted earlier. Clearly, aspirations alone are not enough: young people and their parents need to be fully aware of success criteria, as discussed. While parents from low-income households do not always have the social or economic capital or the know-how to

achieve these goals (Kirk et al., 2011), educated middle class families understand how to yield the greatest rewards from education systems, actively exploiting class capital as a strategy in the search for advantage (Ball, 1993: 17). So, while the aspirations discourse espouses that social mobility for working class and disadvantaged young people is limited by low aspirations, in reality the situation is much more complicated. The influence of place, school and family means that local policies are needed in order to provide support and this is strongly advocated by *Curriculum for Excellence* as will be discussed in the next chapter.

So important is aspiration that some capability theorists argue that it should be a capability in its own right, 'commensurable with autonomy and planning a life' (Walker, 2007: 183). In part, at least, aspiration seems to be implicit in several of the existing capabilities, most obviously Capability 4 senses, imagination and thought; 6 practical reason; and 10 control over one's environment. Capability 4 (senses, imagination and thought) promotes the ability 'to use the senses, to imagine, think, and reason' and 'to use imagination and thought in connection with experiencing and producing works and events of one's own choice' (Nussbaum, 2006: 76). Capability 6 (practical reason) involves 'being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life' (Nussbaum, 2006: 77); Capability 10 (control over one's environment) involves opportunities 'to participate effectively in political choices that govern one's life... free speech and association' (Nussbaum, 2006: 77). All suggest to me the importance of aspiration and the ability to achieve - which is key to flourishing and the foundational idea of the Capabilities Approach. We are unlikely to flourish if we do not or cannot aspire. Once again, agency is relevant here and permeates all the capabilities because those who cannot exercise agency will find it difficult to articulate and realise aspirations. Schools should ensure the availability of 'new aspirational opportunities' and expand young people's horizons (Walker, 2007: 183) with a variety of educational activities including, as I suggested earlier, out of school experiences such as theatre trips that develop social and cultural capital - consequently opening up new aspirations.

If aspirations are 'cramped outside of school' then it is 'a particular ethical responsibility for the school to challenge exclusion, not to perpetuate it' (Walker,

2007: 184). For Mary and Liz, aspirations based on genuine choice producing ‘new possibilities’ (Walker, 2007: 183) might have resulted in different paths from those taken. Had Mary and Liz been encouraged to articulate valued beings and doings, they might have been better equipped to make their own decisions. With its emphasis on the flourishing of each and every person, the Capabilities Approach could help educationalists to nourish young people better by emphasising that all are entitled to the minimum core social entitlements delineated by Nussbaum and developed by Wolff and de-Shalit. Capability deprivation ‘alerts us to the ways in which education produces both equity and inequity, belonging and exclusion’ (Walker, 2003: 177). I refute claims that ‘institutional and systemic exclusions in education’ (Walker, 2003: 178) mean that there may be limitations to the Capabilities Approach and, once more, that the focus on individual autonomy risks individualising success and failure and the social consequences of this (Walker, 2003: 178). I suggest that this is not a valid concern about the Capabilities Approach as its whole ethical spirit is of respect and dignity for the person - it is never about individualising in a harmful way. Since the amount of effort they devote to learning is the main area in which some young people have real freedom to choose (Vaughan, cited in Walker and Unterhalter, 2007: 118), the challenge for the most disengaged young people and their teachers is better participation - which should result in higher aspirations and increased agency. Tailoring support services more effectively, treating young people as individuals and encouraging them to make their own informed decisions is not, however, a straightforward task.

In Scotland, there are initiatives and policies (such as *GIRFEC* and *Curriculum for Excellence* which I discuss in the next chapter) designed to address the aspirations and attitudes of young people. For now, one such example is LEAPS (Lothian Equal Access Programme for Schools) which aims to widen participation in higher education of young people in fifty-nine comprehensive schools in South East Scotland. LEAPS promotes social inclusion and equality of opportunity, targeting young people with little or no family experience of higher education and/or those facing ‘adverse social and/or economic situations’⁴¹. Pupils are identified in third

⁴¹ See LEAPS website (<http://www.leapsonline.org/>).

year of secondary school and involved in a range of activities such as visiting universities and talking to students from a variety of backgrounds. Mary would have been an ideal LEAPS candidate: the programme would have challenged traditional assumptions about higher education and allowed her to fulfil her educational potential (had she chosen to).

In addition to programmes such as LEAPS, there seems to be growing awareness in Scotland's schools of the need for alternative arrangements for young people who appear to be disaffected and likely to disengage from education, employment and training because of this. I have experienced an effective alternative arrangements programme that involves identifying 'potential NEETs' (young people who are identified as not likely to be in education, employment or training at age sixteen) at the start of third year of secondary school and involving them in a series of challenges that will enable them to take up a college place in fourth year instead of attending school - if they choose to do so. These challenges involve discussions with the pupils and their parents/carers about the possibility of attendance at college then setting targets for behaviour and completion of subject work. Following these milestone tasks the young people then have the opportunity to apply for a college place and to attend an interview. After securing a college place, completion of school course work is required before starting college.

This programme requires careful management of staff, parents, pupils and resources. By its very nature, the 'college group' often consists of young people who have behaved and attained less well than their peers. This means that empathetic staff supporters are required, those who can build positive relationships with sometimes more 'challenging' pupils - more of which will be discussed in Chapter 5. In addition, the parents/carers of these pupils have to be brought on board at an early stage since this is not a traditional pathway for a young person under the age of sixteen. There are also the attitudes of other pupils to be managed - with frequent claims of the perceived 'special treatment' of this small group being 'unfair'. The truth is that most young people do not actually want to be in this group because it is 'different' from the majority, but there can be resentment when selected pupils are not following the usual school curriculum. This links back to cultural capital once more because the college group is seen not

to possess the values held by the dominant peer group. Both groups of pupils here can be said to highlight the development of agency: the 'college group' because they have chosen an alternative educational route and all that it entails; the majority of the other pupils because they have chosen a more traditional educational route - and those who possess the greatest cultural and linguistic capital will in all probability go on to higher education later. On the other hand, it could be argued that neither group has actively chosen its own path because this has already been manipulated by class differences - put crudely, it is highly unlikely that anyone who has been designated a 'snob' or 'swot' (discussed at the start of this section) will be part of the college/alternative route group. Until societal attitudes evolve more fully, the alternative route remains less socially palatable to some; it is not accompanied by similar kudos to, for example, staying on at school and gaining five Higher examination passes⁴².

Recently I worked with two boys who were highlighted as pupils who might benefit from alternative arrangements (attending college instead of school for their fourth year of secondary education). These boys were disaffected at school and difficult to manage in a large mixed ability class. However, in preparation for alternative arrangements (applying for places at college then preparing for interview) they were like different people. With a prerequisite being that school course work had to be completed before they started college, the boys became more motivated than they had ever been and their behaviour also improved: they chose to participate, possibly for the first time in years. Perhaps they were finally realising their aspirations. One day whilst finishing an assessment, one boy said (smiling), 'I've never worked so hard in my life as I have these last few weeks'. On their final day at school the other boy said, 'Thanks for all your help and all you've done, by the way'. To teachers who do not work with disaffected young people, these may not seem like important events. For me, these were highlights of my teaching year. With the increased flexibility of *Curriculum for Excellence* these boys were offered alternative choices which will hopefully ensure that they have more opportunities to flourish. The boys developed their capabilities and actualised

⁴² Higher examinations are taken by the most able pupils in the fifth year (S5) of secondary school in Scotland.

their functionings because they were offered a valuable and meaningful goal. It seems that the boys finally had the chance to exercise agency to pursue educational goals of their own choosing; they were 'actively involved...in shaping their own destiny' (Nussbaum, 1999: 53), perhaps for the first time. Alternatively, it could be that the boys' school experiences had been so negative that college seemed like the only option. They appear to be examples of Bourdieu's 'outcasts on the inside' (1999: 425) of the system - and, at least, the college places allowed them a fresh start and the chance to engage differently in education. With their enthusiasm at the prospect of going to college, the boys could choose to move beyond their previous behaviour and lack of achievement and to enhance their social capital.

Some practitioners might judge that certain young people choose not to engage in education and that negative educational attitudes and/or low aspirations are choices. Faced with difficult to manage, disengaged young people in large classes during a busy day this is possibly an understandable stance to take. However, I do not believe that such young people are actually making active and/or informed choices like Sen's fasting person mentioned in Chapter 2. I believe they are more like Sen's famine victim, denied nutrition due to circumstances and societal structures, not choice. Such young people are undernourished socially and educationally due to their circumstances; they do not have the same freedoms and opportunities that other young people do; they lack agency and the various forms of capital. It is the job of educationalists to find ways to ensure that schools 'feed' such young people just as well as all the others - despite the challenges of doing so. Perhaps too there needs to be acceptance that some young people will still choose to fast educationally despite efforts to persuade them not to, but the very least we can do in Scotland's schools is equip young people to make their own choices.

Alternative curriculum arrangements can provide young people with a much louder voice and encourage them to question their aspirations through improved agency. This can enable young people to make choices for themselves rather than choices being made for them, as they were for Mary and Liz in Lochhead's poem. By strengthening young people's capabilities they can be enabled to actively choose

their own paths, like the two boys with whom I worked. Increased recognition of the centrality of education to the Capabilities Approach might lead practitioners and policy makers to view young people differently, forcing us to ‘ask important questions that are seldom included in large-scale measures of disadvantage’ (Price-Robertson, 2008: online source). Such questions must encompass the multi-dimensional nature of unequal access to education, the complexities of disadvantage, aspiration and normativity. Equality of educational opportunity cannot rely solely on better delivery of the new curriculum but must address a multitude of factors. We need a shift in attitude to working classes, a move away from ‘elites’ view of the working classes as an unruly undisciplined mass’ or people who need to take more responsibility for their own lives (Reay, 2012: 9). Changing views and increasing understanding of restrictive societal structures is a ‘vital precursor to a socially just educational system’ (Reay, 2012: 9). Such an educational system would recognise that lack of capital reproduces inequality and seals the fate of some young people. Out of school activities have an impact on social capital but aspirations and attitudes are not as polarised by location as many people assume. Other factors that can have an effect on young people’s choices and agency are transgenerational disadvantages and adaptive preferences which I discuss in the next section.

3.5 Transgenerational Disadvantages and Adaptive Preferences

Many young people in Scotland’s schools exemplify the dynamic and transgenerational nature of disadvantage - a term introduced by Wolff and de-Shalit and introduced in Chapter 2. As well as lacking agency, Mary in Lochhead’s poem seems to highlight the ‘intergenerational transmission of disadvantage’ (St Clair et al., 2011: 7). She lacks social and cultural capital (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977) and her functionings are probably less secure than others due to the unfairness of inequality. Since socio-economic status and past experience influence the ability to define objectives for our futures (Burchardt, 2009: 11), then clearly Mary’s choices would have been restricted due to her unsupportive father and her inability to stay on at school. So too are the choices of many young people in Scotland’s schools today, possibly because moderate aspirations are often much

easier to achieve than more ambitious plans (Burchardt, 2009: 8), as I stated in the section about agency. This also links back to the earlier points about unequal social and political circumstances leading to unequal chances to choose (Walker, 2003: 172), and the challenges of discerning whether or not young people are truly agentic. A multitude of cultural, social and economic factors reproduce social inequality across generations (Roberts and Evans, 2012: 72), and it is difficult to tell if young people's choices are conditioned by deprivation or not. Today, young people in Scotland's schools would appear to have more opportunities to form agency goals than Mary and Liz did, and there seems to be increased awareness that previous and/or persistent socio-economic inequality is not simply 'a matter of culture or taste, but of injustice' (Burchardt, 2009: 15). However, the gaps in young people's attainment and achievement persist.

When investigating the transgenerational nature of disadvantage (which could also be described as inherited forms of capital) it is interesting to unearth the reasons why some parents (and subsequently their children) see so little value in education. Apart from the financial implications of a daughter staying on at school at that time, why might Mary's father, for example, have such an attitude and deny Mary the chance to flourish educationally? We can postulate that Mary's father is a product of the time (the 1960s) and of his own family background. Possibly, too, he had a negative experience of education and could not rid himself of his 'past history and past resentments' (Hirsch, 2007: 5). Since all our educational experiences have an impact on choices we make and how we lead our lives (Hirsch, 2007: 11), clearly individuals who have had a negative experience of education are less likely to be able to support their offspring in engaging positively in education. Perhaps Mary's father was restricted educationally by his own parent(s), just as he restricts his daughter's choices. Will Mary and similarly disadvantaged young people today simply adopt the same attitudes as their parents and consequently deny their own children the chances to progress in education, thus perpetuating the vicious circle of disadvantage? It might have been due to Mary's parents' lack of skills and qualifications that the family had to move to somewhere with 'a cheaper rent'⁴³, and that Mary is forced to leave school

⁴³ Lochhead, L. (1972) 'The Choosing'

earlier than she might have chosen to despite having ability and receiving academic prizes at primary school. From the school bus, Liz would see Mary's father standing 'with the others on the corner'⁴⁴ and from this we can speculate that he did not work. He chose to spend whatever money he had on 'elegant greyhounds' rather than 'forking out for uniforms'⁴⁵. Clearly his choices have an impact on his daughter Mary which exemplifies the family as a key structure of society that has an effect on the wellbeing and future agency of children. Because 'material and non-material circumstances shape our opportunities and choices' (Robeyns, 2005: 99), the blighting of parents' capabilities affects their lives and those of their children - sometimes having an effect on educational attainment.

The impact of transgenerational disadvantage is widely recognised nowadays and it is known that 'low parental education and low parental social class are large, and statistically significant, predictors of the belief that there is no point in planning' (Burchardt, 2009: 11) - which must surely affect educational aspirations. Lack of opportunities among parents with low skills and low qualifications continues to affect their children (Hirsch, 2007). In Scotland, 21% of all children live in poverty⁴⁶ and being from a family whose income qualifies children for a free school meal halves a young person's chances of getting to Level 5 in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework⁴⁷. Young people with fewer qualifications are more likely to end up not in education, employment or training and those without a job, training course or study programme are reportedly more likely to become involved in crime: three in ten men (29%) and one in twelve women (8%) who were not in education, employment or training from the ages of 16-18 were involved in crime

⁴⁴ Lochhead, L. (1972) 'The Choosing'

⁴⁵ As above

⁴⁶ From Child Poverty Action Group website (2012).

⁴⁷ The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) promotes lifelong learning through 12 levels. Level 5 is the equivalent to National 5 which the most able pupils will attain in fourth year of secondary school.

between the ages of 17-30 - three times the rate among all young people⁴⁸. Poor educational attainment is also associated with an increased likelihood of mental health issues, substance abuse and economic marginalization in adulthood (Farrington, 1997). Perhaps less widely recognised is the other side of this particular coin: the intergenerational transfer of privilege among the middle classes. The various forms of capital are mechanisms through which higher class families maintain educational advantage for their children (Bourdieu, 1986: online source; Sullivan, 2001: 910), and the higher people rank in the social hierarchy, the more choices they and their children have (Bauman, 1998: 31). Today's education system in Scotland strives to find ways of establishing a greater equilibrium through a raft of educational policies and initiatives (for example, *Curriculum for Excellence* and *GIRFEC* which I discuss in the next chapter).

Bourdieu's notion of habitus (1990) is helpful in understanding transgenerational disadvantage. Habitus is historical, 'a kind of transforming machine that leads us to 'reproduce' the social conditions of our own production' (Bourdieu, 1990: 87). Since habitus is primarily transmitted through the home, 'a form of cultural inheritance analogous to genetic inheritance', argue Gewirtz and Cribb (2009: 47), attitudes to education could be a product of habitus. Take, for example, Mary's father's attitude to education which, as previously mentioned, might have been inherited from his own parents, and must, at some level, have been transmitted to Mary. There are some suggestions that habitus could predispose people to certain ways of behaving (Sullivan, 2002: 113) although it is not fixed - recall Alec from Chapter 2 who breaks away from the path set by his father. Bourdieu (1984) is clear that habitus allows for agency. However, when looked at objectively, individuals may not have the agency they need to overcome the influence of societal structures. This is where schools can play a vital role.

Greater parental involvement in schools could help to dissipate exclusionary habitus. In recent years there have been attempts to involve parents much more. For example, the Parental Involvement Act (2006) establishes parental rights to be

⁴⁸ From *More Choices, More Chances: a strategy to reduce the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training in Scotland*, Scottish Government (2006).

involved in their children's learning and makes local authorities responsible for promoting parental involvement in learning at home and parental representation in schools. In 2012, a National Parenting Strategy was also launched. However, there is not a great deal of evaluation about the implementation of such initiatives and the effect on children's attainment (Sosa and Ellis, 2014: 17), or on whether or not increased parental involvement in schools actually changes their attitudes to education. Given my previous comments about cultural and linguistic capital and the attempts of many middle class parents to do all they can to ensure that their children are as advantaged as possible educationally, it seems likely that the very parents to take up these opportunities will be those who are already involved in their child's education in some of the ways mentioned earlier. This certainly seems to be the case in my experience of participation in parent councils and similar groups. Perhaps too, such initiatives have been superseded by *GIRFEC* and *Curriculum for Excellence*. Inextricably linked to habitus and transgenerational disadvantages is the concept of adaptive preferences, which I discuss next.

In addition to appearing to exemplify transgenerational disadvantages and negative habitus, Mary seems to be someone whose adaptive preferences (Nussbaum, 2000) affect her life choices - she seems to adapt herself to her circumstances and do what is expected of her by leaving school due to the financial implications of staying on. Because 'processes of social and psychological adaptation can erode a person's desire of what, in reality, would give her well-being' (Sugden, 2006: 2), it is difficult to know if Mary's choices were ever her own even in adulthood and this links back to my points about agency. There are many contemporary examples of young people in Scotland's schools who also seem to exemplify adaptive preferences - who appear to adapt their lives in accordance with their family backgrounds and opt for socio-economically determined goals and specific paths because this is what is expected of them. This can also be the structuring and structured effect of habitus. When, like Liz and Mary, two people have similar academic potential but follow different paths, this could be due to conditions of inequality (different capabilities to achieve their functionings) and habitus that can limit aspirations - not always simply because they have different interests and ambitions. In other words, social conditioning can lead to adaptive functioning. Feeling that education is 'not for the likes of me' is prevalent in some Scottish

schools and is totally understandable when some young people come from generations of worklessness and (apparently) low expectations - which might also explain different aspirations and levels of agency.

Family background can affect people's hopes and fears and this is clear in many pupils in today's schools. Of course, there are young people who overcome 'challenging' circumstances at home - as exemplified by Alec in Chapter 2. For those like Mary who do not fulfil their educational potential, it cannot be said that their lives are necessarily 'less' because of their choices or the choices made for them. Who is to say that Mary with 'a husband who... has eyes for no one else but Mary'⁴⁹ flourishes less than Liz because she did not have the opportunity to go to university? What can be said with certainty, however, is that Mary and all young people should be equipped and encouraged to make their own choices - not to be restrained by family background or to lead the life of their parents' choosing; nor to be restricted by peers or public culture. We should all have agency freedom to advance goals and values of our choice (Sen, 2009: 289) and not be constrained by adaptive preferences. However, through habitus we develop 'a sense of our place in the world' (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2009: 47), and of the type of path we are expected to follow. School structures can reinforce this and the challenges of succeeding 'in a stratified education system in which opportunities for social mobility are severely limited' (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2009: 478), are not to be underestimated.

3.5 Chapter Conclusion

*I think of the prizes that were ours for the taking
and wonder when the choices got made
we don't remember making.⁵⁰*

⁴⁹ Lochhead, L. (1972) 'The Choosing'

⁵⁰ As above

Ensuring that the literal and metaphorical prizes of education are really there ‘for the taking’⁵¹ for all young people in Scotland would require change. All young people would need access to the same levels of agency, opportunities and experiences regardless of socio-economic status or family background. Without agency freedom, young people cannot become ‘citizens who matter and whose voice counts’ (Dreze and Sen, 2002: 288). Without access to enriching out of school experiences and educational resources as well as awareness of the ‘the rules of the game’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992), young people cannot be said to be competing on an even playing field because they possess less capital than others. Without awareness of the links between habitus, transgenerational disadvantages and adaptive preferences, young people cannot be properly supported in schools. Perhaps Liz and Mary do not ‘remember making’⁵² choices that affected their lives because they were products of a society which did not value agency and ignored the impact of socio-economic status and societal structures and they took this as ‘normal’.

Today education ‘is likely to be the most widely used and most acceptable policy tool for equalizing life chances’ (Ermisch, 2012: online source) and it can help young people to transcend transgenerational disadvantages, adaptive preferences and habitus. However, to tackle all of the issues raised throughout this chapter Scottish educationalists need ‘clear and well-thought through mechanisms for intervention and a nuanced understanding of what aspiration intervention can, and cannot, achieve’ (Raffo et al., 2007: 70). I suggest that the Capabilities Approach might be one such mechanism in that it recognises the intrinsic worth of education for each and every person and is a counter theory that challenges ‘entrenched but misguided theories’ (Nussbaum, 20011: xi-xii). The Capabilities Approach moves policy in a more egalitarian direction (Nussbaum, 20011: xi-xii) - much needed in the current economic and political climate. However, ‘to evaluate education institutionally and systematically, beyond the development of each individual’ we need a theory of justice that addresses societal values and constraints (Walker, 2003: 180): sociological barriers also have to be recognised. The Capabilities

⁵¹ Lochhead, L. (1972) ‘The Choosing’

⁵² As above

Approach encourages us to look at ‘the real lives of individuals behind the data’ (Watkins, 2012: 4), while sociology urges us to examine the intricate, often intimate, relation between structure and the individual (Mills, 1959). Together these approaches could lead to greater equality of educational opportunity. This certainly seems to be the aim of *Curriculum for Excellence* and *GIRFEC* which I discuss in the next chapter. For Mary and Liz in ‘The Choosing’, these policies might have resulted in the girls having more active involvement in their choices rather than having choices made for them.

Chapter 4: Curriculum for Excellence, The Capabilities Approach and Further Barriers

4.1 Chapter Introduction

*I am a genius. I could be anything at all with half
the chance. But today I am going to change the world.
Something's world. The cat avoids me. The cat
knows I am a genius, and has hidden itself.*⁵³

'Education for Leisure' by Carol Ann Duffy (extract above) was inspired by the poet's visits to run down, comprehensive schools in the 1980s. In this poem Duffy adopts the persona of a bored young adult who feels unfulfilled in his post-school, workless situation and has 'had enough of being ignored'⁵⁴. Sadly, it appears that this young person is intent on violence in order to alleviate boredom and frustration: 'I get our bread-knife and go out'⁵⁵. This poem resonates just as deeply with contemporary Scotland as it did with Thatcher's Britain in the 1980s when it was written, because some young people today also feel that their education has prepared them only 'for leisure' and that they have few prospects for further study or employment. In twenty-first century Scotland some young people who have not 'succeeded' in the education system continue to have much 'leisure time' - despite the policies and initiatives intended to iron out inequalities - and have even been given their own NEET (not in education, employment or training) acronym⁵⁶. I regularly meet young people who 'could be anything at all'⁵⁷, but who end up leaving school with few formal qualifications and little hope of securing employment. Perhaps this is because they have come from disadvantaged backgrounds with a multiplicity of challenges and have not been

⁵³ Duffy, C. (1985) 'Education for Leisure'

⁵⁴ As above

⁵⁵ As above

⁵⁶ The Scottish Government website states that 21 000 of 16-19 year old were NEET in 2014.

⁵⁷ Duffy, C. (1985) 'Education for Leisure'

given ‘half the chance’⁵⁸. They have probably not experienced equal access to educational opportunities. For many young people inequality and disadvantage coalesce to compound feelings of hopelessness and insecurity - as can be seen by Duffy’s character - and these feelings are not ‘merely concepts; they represent a real experience’ (Wolff and de-Shalit, 2007: viii).

There appears to be increased recognition of the impact of disadvantage in its various forms (exemplified well by Duffy’s ‘genius’) in *Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)* (2008 and revised in 2012) and *Curriculum for Excellence* (2009). Both Scottish policies are about ‘all learners and about taking action to remove barriers to participation and learning...eliminating discrimination and promoting equality’⁵⁹. These policies seem to recognise the ‘multi-dimensionality of deprivation’ (Sen, 2000: 18) and how this affects educational opportunity, all of which resonates with and complements the work of Sen, Nussbaum, Wolff and de-Shalit. Perhaps if GIRFEC and *Curriculum for Excellence* had existed when Duffy’s character was growing up, there would have been greater acknowledgment of the disadvantages he faced. The Capabilities Approach, as I explained in the previous chapter, helps us to analyse policies by providing ‘a tool with which to conceptualise and evaluate them’ (Unterhalter et al., 2007: online source). It helps us to understand the challenges of providing educational equity - although it ‘does not explain the causes of educational inequality’ (Unterhalter et al., 2007: online source). As such, the Capabilities Approach can illuminate what is required of schools and what governments should do for pupils to ensure equal access to educational opportunities.

Despite the illuminating, analytical nature of the Capabilities Approach to help us to understand equality of educational opportunity, there remain barriers in twenty-first century Scotland: austerity; precarity; deficit ideology; class structures. In this chapter I discuss these barriers and highlight the enormity of the challenge of achieving equal educational opportunity - despite laudable Scottish educational policies. I use a Bourdieusian lens to shine light on the dynamics of

⁵⁸ Duffy, C. (1985) ‘Education for Leisure’

⁵⁹ Education Scotland website: *Curriculum for Excellence*

power in our education system and the subtle ways in which power is transferred and social order maintained. In addition to the introduction and conclusion, this chapter is divided into three main sections. I discuss *GIRFEC* (2008 and 2012) and *Curriculum for Excellence* (2009), then I highlight some criticisms and concerns about the two policies. Interwoven throughout these sections are the barriers I have listed and two characters from Scottish literature (Duffy's 'genius' introduced at the start of this chapter and Janice introduced later). Each of the characters comes from what could be classed as a disadvantaged background yet they have divergent educational functionings, in some ways like Liz and Mary described in the previous chapter.

4.2 Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)

GIRFEC (2008 and 2012) is a coordinated approach that aims to improve outcomes for children and young people in Scotland by providing a framework for all services and agencies working with children and families. It is founded on ten core components which can be applied in any setting and any situation and highlights the unacceptability of families' economic circumstances still determining children's futures. Building on research and practice to help practitioners focus on what makes a difference to young people, *GIRFEC* addresses the need to meet the fundamental rights of children and young people as set out in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (2008). As such, *GIRFEC* would appear to be testament to the existence of inequalities and to recognise that there are structural impediments to educational flourishing in our society. Eight inter-related indicators of wellbeing, known by the acronym SHANARRI, are highlighted in *GIRFEC*: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. Every child has a 'named person' until the age of eighteen, a health visitor or a senior teacher who is the single point of contact for the family. Perhaps if *GIRFEC* had existed when Duffy's character was growing up, he would not have ended up feeling so marginalised. He would certainly have had a 'named person' who would have ensured that his voice was heard and worked towards realising his educational potential.

Interestingly, in a paper by the *Getting it Right* evaluation team⁶⁰ there is direct reference to Sen and his work on capabilities and functionings in an attempt to define wellbeing - a central component of *GIRFEC*. The *GIRFEC* team (2008) takes from Sen the notion of the importance of ‘the individual’s potential, building on their strengths and expanding the choices they can make in order to live full and creative lives and be active agents of their own development and wellbeing’ (p.5). The SHANARRI health and wellbeing indicators also appear to show a close conceptual affinity with Nussbaum’s Capabilities Approach (from bodily health and integrity to affiliation to control over one’s environment). *GIRFEC* recognises that some young people ‘may have unmet needs or poor functioning in some domains but not others’⁶¹, and works towards ensuring that all young people meet the SHANARRI health and wellbeing indicators, the basic requirements for all children and young people to grow, develop and reach their potential. Just as all the SHANARRI indicators are pertinent to ensuring that young people have ‘full and creative lives’⁶², so too are all of Nussbaum’s capabilities. Together they provide a good starting point in discussing how to minimise inequality of educational opportunity for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Young people need to be what *GIRFEC* describes as ‘included’ - ‘having help to overcome social, educational and economic inequalities and being accepted as part of the community in which they [young people] live and learn’⁶³. In addition, young people from disadvantaged backgrounds need to be ‘safe’, ‘protected from abuse neglect or harm at home’. They should be ‘healthy’, having ‘the highest standards of physical and mental health, access to suitable healthcare, and support in learning to make healthy and safe choice’⁶⁴. They should be ‘achieving’, ‘supported and guided in their learning and in the development of their skills,

⁶⁰ *Getting it Right for Every Child and Young Person: a Framework for Measuring Children’s Wellbeing* (2008) was prepared for the Scottish Government by Bob Stradling and Morag MacNeil, Getting it right Evaluation Team, University of Edinburgh.

⁶¹ As above

⁶² *Getting it Right for Every Child and Young Person: a Framework for Measuring Children’s Wellbeing* (2008) (online source)

⁶³ As above

⁶⁴ As above

confidence and self-esteem'⁶⁵. All young people should have 'a nurturing place to live'⁶⁶ and they should be 'active' with 'opportunities to take part in activities such as play, recreation and sport which contribute to healthy growth and development'⁶⁷. Furthermore, all young people should be 'respected', 'heard or involved in decisions which affect them' and encouraged to be 'responsible', with 'appropriate guidance and supervision...in decisions that affect them'⁶⁸. However, just as many young people in Scotland's schools lack some of Nussbaum's capabilities, so too do they lack some or all of the SHANARRI health and wellbeing indicators. It seems that Duffy's character was not always safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included when he was growing up and this has an impact on his post-school life - as does lack of the SHANARRI health and wellbeing indicators on the lives of many young people in Scotland today.

The values and principles of *GIRFEC* are helpful in illuminating what all young people are entitled to and what might be lacking in a disadvantaged home. In this way, they again resonate with the Capabilities Approach which also highlights what is needed to ensure social justice for each and every person regardless of background. It is important not to assume that all young people from less affluent homes lack the basic requirements listed in the *GIRFEC* report. Equally, it cannot be assumed that all young people from more affluent homes will experience all of the indicators. Not all young people who are materially well clad are always emotionally well clothed; others who may lack material possessions might well be metaphorically well turned out. However, despite the many merits of *GIRFEC* and its resonance with the Capabilities Approach, twenty-first century socio-economic constraints such as austerity and precarity stand in the way of its commendable aims being fully realised.

⁶⁵ *Getting it Right for Every Child and Young Person: a Framework for Measuring Children's Wellbeing* (2008) (online source)

⁶⁶ As above

⁶⁷ As above

⁶⁸ As above

I suggest that, despite the good intentions of *GIRFEC*, there also needs to be greater recognition of the impact of austerity on working class and disadvantaged young people in Scotland (as highlighted in Chapter 2). In recent years, the Scottish public sector has faced the ‘most dramatic reduction in public spending ever imposed by the UK government’⁶⁹, and for working class families ‘their relative disadvantage has increased in the twenty-first century from what was already a low base’ (Reay, 2013: 36). Spending cuts and the UK welfare reform have resulted in a new category of social risk associated with further socio-economic disadvantage, poverty and/or marginalisation of groups and individuals. This means that local authorities now have to deal with increased vulnerability and disadvantage of less affluent people (Asenova et al., 2013: 4). This ‘wider troubling economic context’, as Reay (2013: 34) suggests, is rarely considered by policy makers but it is central to working class educational underachievement and ‘provides the backdrop to working-class experiences of schooling’. From 2010 -11 to 2012-13, spending on school education fell by five per cent - leading to the employment of fewer staff (both teaching and support staff). As discussed in Chapter 2, in my experience this has resulted in larger class sizes, fewer support staff and newly qualified teachers (NQTs) replacing ‘surplus’ experienced teachers. This clearly affects the workload of remaining staff members with (again in my experience) a resultant reduction in ‘extra’ activities such as mentoring, after school clubs and so on - from which working class pupils can, arguably, gain the most. The longer-term impact is yet to be seen but what is clear is that the greatest impact of underfunded state provision is on working class pupils (Reay, 2013: 35). What this means is that the *GIRFEC* health and wellbeing indicators are rendered more difficult to achieve in times of austerity.

Closely linked to austerity is precarity. Nowadays there are increased numbers of people reliant on the benefits system due to short term working arrangements and zero hours contracts (discussed in Chapter 2 and 3). Such people are more likely to be members of ‘the precariat’. This is a term that originates from 1980s’ France to describe seasonal and temporary workers but has evolved to denote the growing

⁶⁹ Scotland’s Spending Plans and Draft Budget 2011-12 (online source)

numbers of people ‘who enjoy almost none of the benefits won by organised labour during the 20th century’ (Standing, 2011: online source). They often have to rely on food banks; they are ‘criticised, pitied, demonised, sanctioned or penalised’ by the state and the media (Standing, 2011: online source). Work has ceased to be a route out of poverty: in Scotland, one in eight adults in paid work is poor (13%) and almost half of all working-age adults in poverty are in work (46%). One third of adults (32%) in Scotland are in ‘exclusionary work’ which is defined as in work but in poverty; in low quality work likely to damage health or sense of wellbeing or having experienced prolonged periods of unemployment in the last five years⁷⁰. Exclusionary work leads to feelings of isolation and lack of security (which Duffy’s character seems to experience, perhaps due to lack of work) and it is clear that ‘habit, fear, low expectations, and unjust background conditions deform people’s choices and even their wishes for their own lives’ (Nussbaum, 2000: 14). Some young people in Scotland’s schools will be well aware of the effects of precarity - if not the term. Perhaps it is just one of a multitude of reasons why some become ‘reluctant recipients of the curriculum’ (Hirsch, 2007), and disengage from education as discussed in Chapter 3.

Greater recognition of the impact of austerity and precarity would need an approach that tackles social and educational inequality as well as considering the dynamics of local areas (Perry and Francis, 2010: 3). Some might describe *GIRFEC* as one such intervention and I suggest that it could be enhanced by greater recognition of the Capabilities Approach which sets out a list of capabilities for all people and asserts that no person should fall below threshold levels. Both the Capabilities Approach and *GIRFEC* concentrate on people, not places. The Capabilities Approach urges policy makers to focus on the expansion of choices of the most deprived and marginalised groups in society in order to support them in sustaining lives they have reason to value (Ibrahim and Tiwari, 2014: 5) and this seems to be the implicit in *GIRFEC* too. Duffy’s character could certainly have benefitted from support in the expansion of his choices. Together *GIRFEC* and the Capabilities Approach could help us to better understand the local circumstances

⁷⁰ Scottish Poverty Study, 2014 (online source)

and employment prospects of working class young people (like Duffy's character) and to focus on involving them with their education. This is 'a necessary precursor to attainment... of fundamental importance in facilitating success' (Perry and Francis, 2010: 3). The Capabilities Approach adds a deeper layer of understanding to *GIRFEC* by emphasising the value of each and every individual and insisting that all the capabilities are essential - just as the SHANARRI health and wellbeing indicators are. In this way, the Capabilities Approach could move us closer to equality of educational opportunity for all young people. It could also support young people to achieve the desired national outcomes of *Curriculum for Excellence*, namely to be confident individuals, effective contributors, responsible citizens and successful learners, which I discuss in the next section.

4.3 Curriculum for Excellence

To contrast to Duffy's character I now introduce Janice Galloway, another Scottish writer who paints a vivid picture of disadvantage. In Galloway's 2011 memoir 'All Made Up' (2011) she focuses on her teenage years at a comprehensive Scottish secondary school and disadvantage in various forms is well illustrated. Galloway lived with her mother and violent older sister after they left her alcoholic father. In the Galloway household 'stuff just happened'⁷¹ - such as being head butted and constantly belittled by her sister. It is clear that while growing up Galloway experienced risk and vulnerability, perhaps as Duffy's character did, but at school, 'none of it, not a word, was utterable'⁷². 'Stuff' still happens in many Scottish households and this can have an impact on young people's educational attainment. Unlike Duffy's character, Janice embraces education and realises 'everything was for me if I chose'⁷³.

⁷¹ Galloway, J. (2011) 'All Made Up', p.12

⁷² Galloway, J. (2011) 'All Made Up', p.53

⁷³ Galloway, J. (2011) 'All Made Up', p.54

Perhaps Scotland's *Curriculum for Excellence* would have supported both Duffy's character and young Janice better. Introduced in 2009, *Curriculum for Excellence* aimed to transform education in Scotland for three to eighteen year olds. It was promoted as 'a forward looking, coherent curriculum that provides Scotland's children and young people with the knowledge, skills and attributes for the 21st century'⁷⁴. *Curriculum for Excellence* entitles all children and young people in Scotland to a Broad General Education (BGE)⁷⁵ which will equip them with the skills, knowledge and attributes to flourish in contemporary society - regardless of family background. This curriculum responds, in part, to the 2007 OECD⁷⁶ report which highlights continuing issues of inequality in Scottish education. With its 'explicit and up front' values (Biesta, 2009: 42) of wisdom, justice, compassion and integrity, the Scottish curriculum rests on the four previously mentioned capacities (successful learners; confident individuals; responsible citizens; effective contributors). These capacities are developed through experiences and outcomes in eight curricular areas: Expressive Arts; Health and Wellbeing; Languages; Mathematics; Religious and Moral Education; Sciences; Social Studies; Technologies. The inclusive nature of *Curriculum for Excellence*, and the aspiration that all children and young people in Scotland will 'develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they will need if they are to flourish in life, learning and work, now and in the future'⁷⁷, would seem to resonate with much of the Capabilities Approach generally and Nussbaum's version specifically.

In this section I take five capabilities (4. senses, imagination and thought; 5. emotions; 6. practical reason; 7. affiliation; 10. control over one's environment)

⁷⁴ Education Scotland website: *Curriculum for Excellence*

⁷⁵ The period of education from pre-school to the end of third year at secondary school has the particular purpose of providing each young person in Scotland with a Broad General Education (BGE).

⁷⁶ Founded in 1961 to stimulate world trade and economic progress, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is an international organisation of 34 countries. Every 3 years, the OECD carries out the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) study in member and non-member nations of 15-year-old school pupils' scholastic performance in Mathematics, Science, and reading with a view to improving education policies and outcomes.

⁷⁷ Education Scotland website: *Curriculum for Excellence*

and explain how these link to aspects of *Curriculum for Excellence*. (The full expanded list of capabilities is provided in Appendix 1 and in Chapter 2.) Then I explain how each capability can enhance and deepen understanding of these aspects of *Curriculum for Excellence*. I also discuss the challenges in achieving each of the capabilities and, accordingly, aspects of *Curriculum for Excellence*. Of the ten capabilities, these five seem to be most directly relevant to education and young people, though none are fungible and all are inextricably linked. The capabilities I have chosen seem to be central components of education if all young people are to have lives of dignity in which they can flourish and make informed choices about who they want to be and how they want to live. Together the Capabilities Approach and *Curriculum for Excellence* provide a good starting point in ensuring equal educational opportunity for young people in Scotland's schools. However, there remain factors in twenty-first century Scotland that render equality of educational opportunity for all young people difficult to achieve.

Senses, Imagination and Thought (Capability 4)

Being able to use the senses, to imagine, think, and reason - and to do these things in a "truly human" way, a way informed and cultivated by an adequate education, including, but by no means limited to, literacy and basic mathematical and scientific training. Being able to use imagination and thought in connection with experiencing and producing works and events of one's own choice, religious, literary, musical, and so forth. Being able to use one's mind in ways protected by guarantees of freedom of expression with respect to both political and artistic speech, and freedom of religious exercise. Being able to have pleasurable experiences and to avoid non-beneficial pain. (Nussbaum, 2006: 76)

Capability 4 (senses, imagination and thought) states that 'an adequate education' should not be limited to literacy, numeracy and science. This is compatible with *Curriculum for Excellence* which focuses not only on literacy and numeracy but also on Health and Wellbeing, Global Citizenship and Enterprise in Education across learning (which all teachers are responsible for developing) as well as the eight curriculum areas mentioned earlier. The successful learner capacity of *Curriculum*

for Excellence, which states that young people should have enthusiasm and motivation for learning; determination to reach high standards of achievement; openness to new thinking and ideas⁷⁸, resonates most strongly with this capability. I suggest that this capability adds depth to the notion of successful learners by emphasising the importance of using the senses, imagination and thought in a truly human way (Nussbaum, 2006: 76), which is vital for ‘a healthy, engaged, educated population in which opportunities for a good life are available to all social classes’ (Nussbaum, 2010: 15). The ‘personalisation and choice’ component of *Curriculum for Excellence* also links clearly to the Capabilities Approach.

Personalisation and choice is one of the seven principles of curriculum design in Scotland - along with challenge and enjoyment; breadth; progression; depth; coherence; relevance. Personalisation and choice is an attempt to ‘give each child increasing opportunities for exercising responsible personal choice as they move through their school career’⁷⁹ and encourages more opportunities for young people to choose subjects and tasks as well as to recognise ‘particular aptitudes and talents’⁸⁰. This links to Nussbaum’s ‘experiencing and producing works and events of one’s own choice, religious, literary, musical, and so forth’ and being able to ‘use one’s mind in ways protected by guarantees of freedom of expression with respect to both political and artistic speech, and freedom of religious exercise’ of Capability 4 (Nussbaum, 2006: 76). These are vital entitlements in a socially just society.

Personalisation and choice is being addressed in Scotland’s schools but teachers will be very aware that it may yet take some time before the concept is fully embraced. Currently, the range of associated approaches includes: formative assessment; self assessment; recording achievement; encouraging pupil voice (through focus groups for example); flexible curricular arrangements. An important caveat is that teachers must not fall into the trap of thinking that ‘content should reflect the desires (as opposed to the needs) of the pupils’ (Priestley, 2010: 29)

⁷⁸ Education Scotland: *Curriculum for Excellence* website

⁷⁹ As above

⁸⁰ As above

because, as mentioned in Chapter 3, young people's functionings are not yet fully developed and it seems acceptable to restrict their freedoms for their own future good (Nussbaum, 2011: 26). There is growing awareness that schools have to change to fit the pupils rather than vice versa (Hargreaves, 2006: 16) - and part of this change is listening to the pupil voice (which links to agency discussed in the previous chapter). Much as we might applaud the aspirations of the personalisation and choice aspect of *Curriculum for Excellence*, most teachers will recognise that there are constraints to fully embedding it. These include funding, time and so called initiative overload (which has arisen from recent curricular changes in Scotland). Currently it seems that the main area in which young people have freedom to exercise their personalisation and choice is in the amount of effort that they devote to learning. It appears that not all are using their agency to benefit themselves and some young people in Scotland's schools today choose not to take up the opportunities available to them. Some appear to 'fast' educationally when they do not actually have to. We must ask questions about why this is the case - and some suggestions are made in the sections that follow. Capability 4, senses, imagination and thought, certainly clarifies for me the importance of choice if young people are to be motivated and if education is to be truly human. Equally important in twenty-first century Scotland is Capability 5, emotions, which I discuss next.

Emotions (Capability 5)

Being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves; to love those who love and care for us, to grieve at their absence; in general to love, to grieve, to experience longing, gratitude, and justified anger. Not having one's emotional development blighted by fear and anxiety.

(Supporting this capability means supporting forms of human association that can be shown to be crucial in their development.) (Nussbaum, 2006: 76-77)

Curriculum for Excellence and *GIRFEC* also accord with Capability 5 (emotions). This capability is pivotal in promoting the 'active realisation' (Wolff and de-Shalit,

2007) of all the others. If young people's emotions are not developed then, for example, their senses, imagination and thought, their practical reason and their affiliation must surely be limited. Most relevant to this study with regards to Capability 5 (emotions) is 'not having one's emotional development blighted by fear and anxiety' (Nussbaum, 2006: 76-77). The confident individual capacity of *Curriculum for Excellence* relates well here advocating the importance of self-respect; a sense of physical, mental and emotional wellbeing; secure values and beliefs⁸¹. Schools are instrumental in children's and young people's emotional development and must ensure it is not impaired by fear and anxiety due to discrimination or bullying for example - at least while young people are within the school building. Once more, this capability helps practitioners to see what all young people are entitled to - in this case emotional wellbeing.

Emotions tarnished by fear and anxiety can have an impact on every other aspect of our lives. Fear and anxiety are a disadvantage in their own right and, according to Wolff (2009: 218) can affect 'your mental state and can lead you to do things you would not otherwise'. Young people's fear and anxiety can be caused by a variety of factors. Take, for example, Janice's volatile older sister who must surely have caused fear and anxiety in the younger girl's life, or Duffy's character who has 'had enough of being ignored'⁸². These different situations (different forms of disadvantage, arguably) have an impact on young people and remind us of Sen's (2000: 3) 'impoverished lives', not simply the 'depleted wallets' mentioned previously. Not all young people are like Janice, able to transcend their home situations to embrace education - as we see from Duffy's character. Fear and anxiety manifest themselves in a variety of ways, such as poor cooperation in class, inability to concentrate, isolation, and so on, and it is clear that 'life's accidents can deform and deeply mar human powers' (Nussbaum, 2004: 337). For some young people, blighted emotions can minimise their engagement in education - as I see often in my daily practice - and perhaps a better

⁸¹ Education Scotland website: *Curriculum for Excellence*

⁸² Duffy, C. (1985) 'Education for Leisure'

understanding of this would encourage greater support in schools. The Capabilities Approach aids our understanding of the importance of the emotions in education: whereas healthy emotions promote fertile functionings opening up options for lives of human flourishing, blighted emotions impair functionings and can reduce the chances for human flourishing - as seems to be exemplified by the character in Duffy's poem.

The importance of the emotions does seem to be recognised in *Curriculum for Excellence*, most specifically under the aforementioned heading of Mental, Emotional, Social and Physical Wellbeing, and this capability adds another layer of meaning. Clearly there can be no disagreement with the health and wellbeing statement that all children and young people 'should feel happy, safe, respected and included in the school environment'⁸³. However, with large and diverse school populations, this can be easier said than done and the whole school community needs to be vigilant about pupils who are isolated and ostracised - like Duffy's character. Another irrefutable *Curriculum for Excellence* statement is that 'Good health and wellbeing is central to effective learning and preparation for successful independent living'⁸⁴. However, once more, school systems can mean that putting *Curriculum for Excellence* guidelines into practice is often challenging. For example, young people's emotional wellbeing can be affected by the persistent attainment agenda in schools which can increase anxiety and stress and have an impact on confidence and self-esteem. Despite the aspirations that *Curriculum for Excellence* would mark a step away from continual assessment and testing of young people, 'the obsession with testing and assessing' (Suisa, 2008: 2) persists. My experience is that there is no less testing or preoccupation with attainment than there ever was and that this can have a detrimental effect on the emotional health of young people - as well as adding stress and additional workload for teachers (more of which I discuss in the next chapter).

The emotions can also be affected by negatively stereotyping young people from particular backgrounds (which I touched on in the previous chapter). This could

⁸³ Education Scotland website: *Curriculum for Excellence*

⁸⁴ As above

add another disadvantage to those that might already exist - again somewhat like the coupling and clustering of disadvantages discussed in Chapter 2. *Curriculum for Excellence* urges practitioners to support young people to achieve their potential and to establish the highest expectations of all - regardless of where they come from. In essence, the suggested way to achieve this is by offering a range of learning opportunities that meet the needs of individual pupils. These aims are clearly admirable but the fact remains that some young people are still not included and do not experience equal access to educational opportunity in Scotland's schools: consequently their life choices can be compromised. Schools could be aided by consideration of Nussbaum's ten central capabilities that encourage people to make choices about who they want to be and what they want to do with their lives.

Protecting young people's emotional development by ensuring inclusion and targeting interventions can involve grouping certain 'types' of pupils. However, there are potential pitfalls here because labelling groups of young people can result in them being 'homogenized into a status quo reproducing injustice' (Enslin and Hedge, 2009: 390). Such homogenisation falls well short of the universality of Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach because it de-individualises: it dissolves the individual experience and can de-humanise or at least marginalise to a greater degree pupils already marginalised by disadvantage (as highlighted in Chapter 3). This seems evident in Duffy's genius whose isolation is clear. Social mixing (which already exists in the vast majority of comprehensive, non-selective secondary schools in Scotland) might start to combat this harmful homogenisation of certain 'types' of young people. It is known that 'low sets are clearly perceived to be coterminous with educational failure' (Reay, 2013: 45, and echoed by Ball, 1981) so delaying setting and streaming (Reay, 2013: 38) - apparently advocated by the Broad General Education (BGE)⁸⁵ of *Curriculum for Excellence* - might also make a difference. In schools there are many examples of 'exclusionary practices' (Bourdieu, 1999) such as divisive labelling by both teachers and pupils as I have

⁸⁵ As mentioned at the start of this chapter, the period of education from pre-school to the end of third year at secondary school has the particular purpose of providing each young person in Scotland with a Broad General Education (BGE).

encountered in my own practice - recall the 'neds' and the 'swots' from the previous chapter. Sadly, the new qualifications in Scotland do little to eradicate this problem and it is clear that the courses without formal examinations (National 3 and National 4)⁸⁶ are not as highly valued as the others (again as I highlighted in the previous chapter). Ironically, young people seem to actually want to sit examinations and they perceive exam subjects (National 5 and Higher) as having greater kudos than non-exam subjects (National 3 and 4), as do their parents or carers. Passing exams means the pupils can 'do' it. They are clever. Not passing or even sitting exams means the opposite. Being able to pass exams also confers status on pupils because they acquire valuable scholastic capital in the process, granting them the right to sit Higher examinations, enter Further Education and/or Higher Education or improve their chances of getting a job.

Greater inclusion in Scotland's schools, 'commonly regarded in public discourse and policy as a key solution to the injustices suffered by groups excluded from the mainstream of society' (Enslin and Hedge, 2009: 385), might ensure that the emotions of all young people are better taken care of. Many practitioners would judge themselves to be involved in inclusive practice but from my experience the reality is complex. Sometimes we are simply involved in what I would term physical inclusion - that is, physically including young people with a multitude of needs in the same school building, from those with severe emotional and behavioural issues to those who are deemed 'highly able'⁸⁷ and from a whole range of backgrounds. Meaningfully including all young people in the school curriculum and extra-curricular activities is quite a different matter from simply including them in the same building.

Another barrier to inclusion and a factor affecting the emotions is the attainment agenda. Many practitioners hoped that judging schools 'on a limited basis which

⁸⁶ In fourth, fifth and sixth year of secondary education in Scotland young people study subjects of their choice at National 1-6 level. In fourth year, the vast majority of pupils will study National 4 or National 5 courses. In fifth year, the most able pupils will study Higher courses then some will move to Advanced Higher courses in sixth year. National 1-4 courses are internally assessed on a pass/fail basis (no grades) and do not have formal examinations.

⁸⁷ Highly able pupils are those who are working or have the potential to work ahead of their age peers (Education Scotland website).

focuses strongly on the success of more able pupils in examinations and national tests' (*Count us in*, Scottish Government, 2002: 35) would change with *Curriculum for Excellence*. However, current approaches still measure 'success' through improved attainment and there is little evidence of sustained improvements with regards to the educational outcomes of disadvantaged groups (Perry and Francis, 2010: 3). *Quality and Equity of Schooling in Scotland* (2007)⁸⁸ highlights the gap in achievement between the least and most affluent children and communities in Scotland: 'Who you are in Scotland is far more important than what school you attend, so far as achievement differences on international tests are concerned' (OECD, 2007: 15). The most important difference between individuals is again cited as socio-economic status. Often the lack of sustained improvements is rationalised by claiming that certain groups of people have low aspirations (as discussed in Chapter 3). However, this is too simplistic and neglects the fact that 'the contemporary education system retains powerful remnants of past elite prejudices' (Reay, 2006: 293-4). The attainment gap discourse draws public attention away from structural inequalities in schools and blames young people and their families for their lack of educational success - more of which I discuss in the next section.

The obsession with exam results is 'a modern form of educational oppression, driven by deficit thinking' (Valencia, 1997: 5). This mass compliance with deficit ideology sets low expectations of low-income young people, according to Sleeter (2004). Rather than trying to understand and address the socio-political context of class inequity, schools attempt to redress the achievement gap with, for example, mentoring and raising attainment groups for low-income young people. Often this stigmatises young people further and we 'simply sustain disenfranchised people with a disenfranchising system' (Gorski, 2010: 20). The deficit ideology is often promulgated by the media which asserts that it is due to 'internal deficits or deficiencies' (Valencia, 1997 and 2010) that young people do not 'succeed' in the education system. The suggestion is that poor educational attainment is due to a

⁸⁸ *Quality and Equity of Schooling in Scotland* (2007) is a review by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) examining the strengths of Scotland's schools and the challenges they face in securing high standards for all children.

certain lack in young people and/or their families, that some are lazy or ambivalent about education or simply uninterested. This ‘othering’ of certain pupils or groups of pupils does little to support their emotional development through school: it hardly encourages human flourishing. It seems that the function of deficit ideology is to exploit public perceptions to divert attention away from the very systems and socio-political circumstances that exacerbate and compound inequalities (Garcia and Guerra, 2004; Jennings, 2004; Yosso, 2005; Gorski, 2010). Rather than tackling the root causes of disenfranchisement, it is often disenfranchised people and communities that are blamed (Gorski, 2010). Deficit thinking also makes the assumption that schools are fair places, ‘classless classrooms’ (Reay, 2006) in which all young people experience similar treatment and opportunities. The truth is the opposite: ‘schools are in fact manifestly unfair places with the rewards of education allocated primarily on the basis of class, gender and race’ (Smyth et al., 2014 citing Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990) - more of which I discuss later in this chapter. Phenomena such as deficit ideology severely restrict young people’s agency and class myopia hinders people from leading lives of dignity in which they can make informed choices about who they want to be and how they want to live.

Curriculum for Excellence and *GIRFEC* seem to acknowledge the complexity of young people’s lives and certainly increase awareness that emotional wellbeing permeates all aspects of the daily school experience (McLaughlin, 2008: online source). However, I feel that an understanding of Capability 5, emotions, and the impact of fear and anxiety (and the multiple manifestations of this) would be a further step towards ensuring that young people’s emotions are not blighted. Education with wellbeing at its heart must provide more than skills: it must include ‘some kind of imaginative and evaluative thinking about the kind of world we would like to live in and why’ (Suissa, 2013: 8). This imaginative and evaluative thinking demands recognition of the importance of the emotions in education. Important too is practical reason (Capability 6), which I discuss next.

Practical Reason (Capability 6)

Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life. (Nussbaum, 2006: 77)

The opportunity to plan our own lives is essential to human flourishing and links closely to the *Curriculum for Excellence* responsible citizens and effective contributors capacities. Practical reason (Capability 6) is one of two capabilities designated by Nussbaum as having an architectonic role in that they 'organise and pervade the others' (Nussbaum, 2011: 39) - the other architectonic capability is affiliation which I discuss in the next section of this chapter. Practical reason is architectonic because without it we are unlikely to be able to make rational choices involving the other capabilities. Nussbaum describes practical reason as 'another way of alluding to the centrality of choice in the whole notion of capability as freedom' (Nussbaum, 2011a: 39), and this links, once more, to agency (which I discussed in Chapter 3). If young people are to shape their own lives 'rather than being passively shaped or pushed around by the world in the manner of a flock or herd animal' (Nussbaum, 2001: 130), then practical reason is important. Being 'shaped or pushed around' by others, not living lives of their own choosing, is exemplified by situations in which people are well-nourished but not empowered to exercise free speech. With children and young people, clearly some choices have to be made for them - such as compulsory schooling. However, the personalisation and choice aspect of *Curriculum for Excellence* discussed earlier in this chapter and the increase in alternative pathways discussed in Chapter 3 encourage young people to be more involved in decision making about their education.

Integral to practical reason (and other capabilities) is critical thinking - which *Curriculum for Excellence* seems to recognise the importance of. Originating in Greece in the fourth century BC, critical thinking is just as vital in twenty-first century Scotland in order to maintain democratic citizenship because it enables people to take control of their own thoughts and to examine society's beliefs rationally. Critical thinking involves 'an active control or grasp of questions, the ability to make distinctions, a style of interaction that does not rest on mere assertion and counterassertion' (Nussbaum, 1997: 18). Regardless of setting in time

and place, critical thinking is crucial in order to develop young people into global citizens who can live lives of their own choosing. However, it is about more than simply imparting facts: it 'relies to a considerable degree upon example' (Passmore, 1967: 136) and here teachers play a crucial role as I discuss more fully in the next chapter. Forming 'a conception of the good' (Nussbaum, 2006: 77) and developing critical thinking skills is encouraged in the *Curriculum for Excellence* documentation and can be aided by literature which provides examples of what worthwhile lives might look like and can lead to discussions about the complexities of life. From practical reason, I now move to Nussbaum's other architectonic capability, affiliation.

Affiliation (Capability 7)

A. Being able to live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction; to be able to imagine the situation of another. (Protecting this capability means protecting institutions that constitute and nourish such forms of affiliation, and also protecting the freedom of assembly and freedom of speech.)

B. Having the social bases of self-respect and nonhumiliation; being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others. This entails provisions of non-discrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, caste, religion, national origin. (Nussbaum, 2006: 77)

Alongside practical reason, affiliation is also an architectonic capability (Nussbaum, 2011: 39) as it pervades all the others. Like the other capabilities discussed, affiliation also seems to fit with the *Curriculum for Excellence* capacities, in this case permeating all four and linking inextricably to two: confident individuals and responsible citizens. The confident individuals of *Curriculum for Excellence* are required to have the attributes of 'self respect' and 'secure values and beliefs'; to be able to 'relate to others' and to 'develop and

communicate their own beliefs and view of the world'.⁸⁹ Under the banner of responsible citizens, the attributes include 'respect for others' and 'commitment to participate responsibly in political, economic, social and cultural life' as well as developing 'knowledge and understanding of the world and Scotland's place in it'⁹⁰. In addition, young people are encouraged to develop the ability to 'make informed choices and decisions' and 'ethical views of complex issues'⁹¹. Important, too, is understanding different beliefs and cultures. All of these statements correlate closely with Capability 5, in particular 'being able to live with and towards others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction; to be able to imagine the situation of another' (Nussbaum, 2006: 77).

Affiliation seems to encapsulate Nussbaum's notion that we should all see ourselves as members of a heterogeneous nation. As Nussbaum states, we are not 'simply citizens of some local region or group'; we are 'human beings bound to all other human beings by ties of recognition and concern' (Nussbaum, 1998) regardless of background, nationality or social status. However, 'local affiliations' are also important as these too can enhance our lives (Nussbaum, 1997: 60). As with other capabilities, Nussbaum's insistence on the importance of affiliation also appears to be addressed in Scotland's educational policies and many correlating statements are to be found throughout the *Curriculum for Excellence* documentation, mostly obviously in Education for Citizenship, International Education and Social Studies. Among other ideals, *Curriculum for Excellence* advocates that young people should be provided with opportunities to exercise rights and responsibilities 'within communities at local, national and global levels'⁹²; to develop informed decision making and 'the ability to take thoughtful

⁸⁹ Education Scotland website: *Curriculum for Excellence*

⁹⁰ As above

⁹¹ As above

⁹² Education Scotland website: *Curriculum for Excellence* (International Education)

and responsible action, locally and globally’⁹³. These and other *Curriculum for Excellence* statements certainly link well to the notion of affiliation.

From my experience, work is being carried out in Scotland’s schools to address the above mentioned issues both in subject areas and in interdisciplinary programmes: the study of multi-cultural literature; fund and awareness raising initiatives for local and international charities; foreign exchange programmes, and so on. The impact of such activities is hard to measure but the hope is that young people will be better informed and more able to make choices about issues that affect them and others - and, in Nussbaum’s terms, should feel more affiliated to their schools and communities. However, some policies and approaches ‘undercut affiliation’ or ‘divide society into two groups by identifying, and thereby stigmatizing, those who need help’ (Wolff and de-Shalit, 2007: 172). The Capabilities Approach could help us to ‘think more broadly about the educational process and the supporting conditions that should exist within an academic context’ (Walker and Unterhalter, 2007: 50). These supporting conditions include fostering a sense of affiliation because without it our schools work less well and our lives are less fulfilling. Of the literary characters I have introduced, Alec, Liz and Janice blossomed due, I surmise, to the affiliation offered by school. On the other hand, many young people (like Duffy’s character) do not have a sense of affiliation: they do not ‘show concern for other human beings’; they do not engage in forms of social interaction; they lack ‘the social basis of self-respect and non-humiliation’ (Nussbaum, 2006: 77). This might be due to background and upbringing; it might also be due to the structural inequalities of the education system which I discuss next.

Affiliation can be threatened because twenty-first century schools in Scotland continue to be ‘classed institutions’ (Savage, 2003; Archer, 2007) in which middle class structures often compound inequalities. The United Kingdom has one of the biggest class divides in education in the industrialised world and there are clear connections between poverty, social class and poor educational attainment among British children (Ball, 2008: 197). Class continues to be the strongest predictor of low educational attainment (Perry and Francis, 2010; Ball, 2008) and the gap

⁹³ Education Scotland website: *Curriculum for Excellence* (Education for Citizenship)

between the achievement of disadvantaged children and their more affluent peers 'remains a complex and seemingly intractable problem' (Perry and Francis, 2010: 4). However, despite class differences and inequalities being firmly entrenched (Ball, 2008: 197), the term social class is rarely found in education policy. As Ball (2008: 197) tells us, 'it has been replaced first by social exclusion and now by social disadvantage'. Perhaps this is because class intersects gender and 'race' inequalities often resulting in clustering of disadvantages (Ball, 2008: 196). With such a fusion of issues, class, according to Reay (2006: 289), is 'everywhere and nowhere, denied yet continually enacted'. In Scottish educational policies, the term social class is seldom used (Priestley and Humes, 2010: 20), and when it is this will be linked to teachers' low expectations, underachievement and lack of aspirations (Priestley and Humes, 2010: 20). The different worlds in the same classroom (Perry, 1985) can lead to feelings of isolation and alienation and can often minimise affiliation to the school and to education as a whole - consequently, decreasing the chances of equal access to educational opportunity. Young people from middle class backgrounds are more likely to encounter a smooth transition from home to school (thus experiencing a greater sense of affiliation), while working class pupils are more likely to experience 'disjuncture and alienation' (Perry and Francis, 2010: 10) - recall, the solo talk example mentioned in the previous chapter. Continuing inequality would suggest, following Reay (2006: 288), that we need to reclaim social class as a central concern within education. This reclamation would involve recognition of the power of the various forms of capital articulated by Bourdieu and Passeron (1973) and could lead to greater affiliation.

As discussed in Chapter 3, middle and upper class children have greater social and cultural capital and, therefore, fit better into school structures which are built on middle class approaches and values. Following Bourdieu, 'cultural capital is inculcated in the higher-class home, and enables higher-class students to gain higher credentials than lower class students' (Sullivan, 2002: 146). Thus, it seems obvious that middle class children are far more likely to feel greater affiliation to school than others. As discussed in the previous chapter, young people from middle class homes also have different levels of linguistic capital, which allows them to cope better in school. There is little recognition, Reay argues (2013: 36), of 'how

painfully the educational world is experienced by those who occupy an inferior devalued position in a privileged universe'. Further, our education system actually perpetuates social patterns as it simultaneously 'provides an apparent justification for social inequalities and gives recognition to the cultural heritage, that is, to a social gift treated as a natural one' (Bourdieu, 1974: 32). As a result, those from higher classes maintain their class position and this legitimates and perpetuates their dominance (Sullivan, 2002: 146): a vicious or virtual circle, depending on your viewpoint. The Capabilities Approach maps onto this discussion because young people with different levels of capital might not function in the same way or have the same freedoms or opportunities to so function - and this will affect their affiliation to school. This, in turn, increases the likelihood of working class and disadvantaged young people 'railing against an education system that has no intrinsic value or purpose other than the need to acquire credentials to compete in a fragile and competitive global market' (Smyth et al., 2014: 167). Lack of affiliation is another reason why some young people become the 'outcasts on the inside' (Bourdieu, 1999: 425) mentioned in Chapter 3. These young people are also less likely to have control over their environment (Capability 10) which I discuss next.

Control Over One's Environment (Capability 10)

A. Political - being able to participate effectively in political choices that govern one's life; having the right of political participation, protections of free speech and association.

B. Material - being able to hold property (both land and movable goods), and having property rights on an equal basis with others; having the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others; having the freedom from unwarranted search and seizure. In work, being able to work as a human being, exercising practical reason and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers. (Nussbaum, 2006: 77)

Control over one's environment (Capability 10) also interweaves with the others because without control over our environment, we cannot exercise the other

capabilities. In the context of education, a young person who is not able to study 'as a human being' and who cannot enter into 'meaningful relationships of mutual recognition' (Nussbaum, 2006: 77) with others is unlikely to be able to use her senses, imagination and thought (Capability 5) in a truly human way. The responsible citizens capacity of *Curriculum for Excellence* with its 'commitment to participate responsibly in political, economic, social and cultural life'⁹⁴ seems to overlap with this capability. The majority of young people in Scotland have little or no control over the school they attend, the quality of the teaching they receive or the resources available to them in school. This is why the *Curriculum for Excellence* capacities and the experiences and outcomes are so important: to ensure that each and every teacher in Scotland knows what each and every young person is entitled to.

Lack of control over the environment can occlude people from lives of human flourishing. Janice faced 'deep seated economic and social disadvantage' (HMIE, 2002: 3), and she explains habitus well: 'Most of all, you couldn't ignore what was in the blood and marrow, the dance of habit and the deep-sewn seeds of upbringing'⁹⁵. Although current Scottish policies tend not to use such terminology, Galloway's description of what it is to be disadvantaged is as relevant in contemporary Scotland as it was when she was growing up. Galloway illuminates the social mores of a working class environment in a 1970s' Scottish town with unwritten rules about 'not getting above yourself' - which still echo in contemporary Scotland. On starting secondary school, young Galloway just wanted to be 'like all the rest. Normal, that was what I wished for'⁹⁶ and this, I think, is true of many of the young people I teach. For some young people that I encounter during my daily practice, school is the only place where they have some control over their environment. For many it is a safe haven - in some cases, the only place that takes them away from the fear and anxiety experienced in their homes. Young Janice, for example, would far rather be at school during study leave than at home

⁹⁴ Education Scotland website: *Curriculum for Excellence* (What is Curriculum for Excellence?)

⁹⁵ Galloway, J. (2011) 'All Made Up', p. 226

⁹⁶ Galloway, J. (2011) 'All Made Up', p.38

with her violent sister and cramped conditions: 'I didn't want to be at home and school chucking me out felt like a punishment' (Galloway, 2011: 251). I have had similar conversations with young people I have taught - those who dread the holidays and study leave due to conditions at home and who would prefer to be at school. Teachers cannot change what goes on in young people's homes but they can try to ensure that school is a safe and nurturing place in which young people are treated as human beings, able to exercise practical reason and enter into meaningful relationships with others (Nussbaum, 2006: 77) as advocated by this capability.

Duffy's poem, ironically titled 'Education for Leisure', is germane here too because the speaker clearly has very little control over his environment and education has prepared him for a 'leisure' that he has no capability to enjoy. He has not been well equipped for post-school life and, apart from terrorising the family pets and 'signing on' once per fortnight to claim unemployment benefit, he has few choices and little freedom. Because he is 'alienated from production, from work, he is also alienated from genuine leisure' (Mills, 1959: 170), making him feel frustrated and unfulfilled. He has no control over his present or his future and he has started to become destructive. Even if Duffy's character was able to make plans about what he had reason to value, he appears not to be in a position to control these plans because he lacks essential kinds of capital, including qualifications and wherewithal.

Many young people in Scotland find themselves in situations like that of Duffy's character or Janice. There are, too, a whole host of other challenging situations and circumstances faced by young people: recognised conditions such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or Asperger's Syndrome; young people caring for relatives with disabilities; pupils with a parent in jail or with drug or alcohol problems - not to mention an unsuitable physical environment in which to study. I suggest that few of these young people have control over their environment and that this is another form of disadvantage which means they do not experience education on an equal basis with others. Not being able to participate effectively in choices that govern our lives links back to agency and the freedom to choose how to live. This capability, like the others, is also affected by the barriers

discussed throughout this chapter, austerity; precarity; deficit ideology; class structures, all of which can serve to corrode, in varying and complex ways, the capabilities of the young person. Despite the many positive aspects of *Curriculum for Excellence* and *GIRFEC* and the resonance with the Capabilities Approach, there are of course criticisms of these policies and I deal with some of these next.

4.4. Criticisms and Concerns

Criticisms of *GIRFEC* and of *Curriculum for Excellence* cover a range of issues. In regard to *GIRFEC*, there are concerns about perceived government intrusion on family life. Apropos *Curriculum for Excellence*, the use of first person in the experiences and outcomes is questioned, as are both the terminology and values of the four capacities. Furthermore, there are claims that the curriculum lacks conceptual clarity. I deal with all of these issues now and later suggest that these criticisms could be countered by further cognizance of the importance of the Capabilities Approach in education.

GIRFEC has been labelled ‘the womb to tomb surveillance system’ or ‘Getting Information Recorded on Every Citizen’⁹⁷. This reminds me of Foucault’s panopticon metaphor for modern society⁹⁸. With the government metaphorically manning ‘the inspection house’ or observation tower, *GIRFEC* is unpalatable to some. This unpalatability stems from perceived state intrusion on family life with every detail of children’s lives being recorded. There are also questions about the ‘named person’⁹⁹ (Orwellian even in title), with many people assuming that children and young people already have a named person in the shape of a parent or carer. However, focussing on improving life chances for children, young people and families with wellbeing at its core, few could argue with *GIRFEC*’s aim -

⁹⁷ From Schoolhouse Home Education Association website.

⁹⁸ Michel Foucault (1977) compared systems of social control to Jeremy Bentham’s eighteenth century panopticon design which was an institutional building with a single watchman constantly observing all the inmates.

⁹⁹ The named person for every child and young person (until the age of eighteen) is a health visitor or a senior teacher who is the single point of contact for the family.

despite questions about the mechanisms through which to achieve it. *GIRFEC* would have supported the fictitious characters described throughout the dissertation and for the non-fiction young people I meet on a daily basis, it certainly attempts to ensure that more of their capabilities are developed and protected.

One concern about *Curriculum for Excellence* is the use of first person in the experiences and outcomes. Some practitioners and researchers feel that this leads to a ‘certain superficiality’ because the language of the experiences and outcomes may not match that of some of the pupils (Priestley and Humes, 2010: 353). Previous curriculum guidelines used either the passive or third person narrative so this is a radical step away from all that has preceded it - ‘no doubt intended to mark a departure from teacher-dominated approaches and to emphasise the importance of personal engagement by the learner’ (Humes, cited in Priestley and Biesta, 2013: 21). The notion of personhood in *Curriculum for Excellence* serves as a constant reminder to teachers that the child or young person is at the centre of the learning and that pupils should have a say in what goes on in the classroom. For example, in the literacy outcomes: ‘I develop and extend my literacy skills when I have opportunities to: communicate, collaborate and build relationships’¹⁰⁰. This also appears to shift the focus from the teacher to the learner, encouraging the child or young person to take responsibility for her own learning. As such, this would seem to promote agency by emphasising that each young person is an individual agent who can make choices about her own life (as discussed in the previous chapter). However, simply using first person in curriculum experiences and outcomes does not ensure that meaningful learning is taking place (Humes, cited in Priestley and Biesta, 2013: 21) - or that the young person has more agency, particularly if that young person cannot understand what the outcome actually means. For this reason, I refute the suggestion that the use of ‘I’ with different levels and numerous outcomes is a genuine way for young people to evaluate how well they are doing. It is teachers who assess and report on how well pupils are doing and I suggest that the use of ‘I can...’ to start each

¹⁰⁰ Education Scotland website: *Curriculum for Excellence* (Experiences and Outcomes)

outcome potentially ostracises young people who cannot achieve an outcome. Such concerns can render this element of *Curriculum for Excellence* ‘an artifice devised by the planners rather than a true reflection of the learning process’ (Priestley and Humes, 2010: 353).

There has also been some debate about the terminology of the *Curriculum for Excellence* capacities (Priestley and Humes, 2010: 351; Biesta and Lawy, 2006: 10). The pairings of adjectives and nouns of the four capacities seem to lack critical interrogation or a clear rationale. The four adjectives (successful, confident, responsible, effective) could just as easily be paired with any of the four nouns (learners, individuals, citizens, contributors) detracting, some might argue, from their impact. Questionable too is omission of the word ‘critical’ in any of the four capacities (Biesta and Lawy, 2006: 10), despite the references to critical thinking throughout the documentation (discussed earlier). Although the *Curriculum for Excellence* capacities are now embedded in the minds of Scotland’s teachers and emblazoned on the walls of every school, there continue to be concerns about their arbitrary nature - although most practitioners probably recognise that their purpose is to encourage a holistic approach to learning and teaching and to developing the young person. It could be argued that the capacities have now been ‘reduced to little more than slogans’ (Priestley and Biesta, 2013: 30), and that they are ‘not commonly informing curricular innovation’ (Priestley, 2010: 28). Rather, practitioners go to the experiences and outcomes and use these as a ‘tick box’ type of audit to ensure that they are covering all that they should.

In addition to questions about the terminology of the four capacities, there are concerns about their purpose, with claims that they focus too strongly on individual traits, values and dispositions (Biesta, 2008: 50). This apparent ‘shift towards socialisation’ (Biesta, 2008), focussing on what young people should be or become, might render the qualification function of education (what young people should know and be able to do) less important (Biesta, 2008). Furthermore, the ‘production’ of a particular kind of person (who is successful, confident, responsible and effective) appears to be a type of ‘moulding’ of individuals all from one pattern (Biesta, 2008). Arguably, this leaves little scope for diversity and individuality. From this perspective, *Curriculum for Excellence* risks turning

education into ‘an instrument of adaptation’ rather than promoting ‘the democratic agency of students’ (Priestley and Biesta, 2013: 45). I think we should be wary of dictating to young people what types of adults they must be: people should be able to choose and this is central to the Capabilities Approach. I now focus more closely on two specific capacities: responsible citizens and successful learners.

The responsible citizen capacity seems to concentrate on apolitical forms of citizenship such as understanding different beliefs and cultures and developing informed, ethical views of complex issues¹⁰¹. These aims are valuable in their own right but neglect the development of ‘the political dimensions of citizenship and the promotion of forms of political literacy that position democratic citizenship beyond individual responsibility’ (Biesta, 2008: 50), and as such do little to address sociological issues. In regard to the successful learner capacity, we must ask what this actually means. Is a successful learner a young person who enjoys learning or one who gains examination grades that contribute to school statistics? Following this line of thought might suggest that those who do not enjoy learning and/or achieve examination passes are unsuccessful - therefore, failed learners. This contradicts the whole philosophy of *Curriculum for Excellence*. It seems that the emancipatory potential of the successful learner category has been ‘eroded by national policy makers’ (Reeves, 2013: 70), in that the attainment agenda persists and methods of evaluating if young people are successful learners remain nebulous.

There is also concern about the lack of conceptual clarity of *Curriculum for Excellence* with claims that it mixes educational paradigms. The four capacities would seem to suggest that *Curriculum for Excellence* is a process curriculum - through the process of being educated in Scotland, young people will develop into a certain type of person (and there are reservations about this as discussed earlier). However, the four capacities and pedagogical issues are not fully developed (Priestley and Humes, 2010) and the retention of outcomes organised in

¹⁰¹ Education Scotland website: *Curriculum for Excellence* (The purpose of the curriculum)

progressive levels¹⁰² (now re-worded and re-labelled in the form of experiences and outcomes) points towards a mastery curriculum, albeit ‘an expression of vaguely defined content articulated as objectives’ (Priestley and Humes, 2010: 355). There are also some elements of a contents curriculum with the eight designated curriculum areas. However, these are unspecific in places - due perhaps to the desire to be less prescriptive - and this seems contradictory. The result is that this ‘forward looking, coherent curriculum’¹⁰³ is not as innovative as many practitioners would have hoped and this potentially restricts opportunities for autonomy or agency that many teachers looked forward to (Priestley and Humes, 2010: 357).

In our often frenetic comprehensive schools there are many challenges to ‘getting it right’ for pupils and achieving the ideals set out in *Curriculum for Excellence*. In Scotland these challenges include the recent pressures of curriculum changes¹⁰⁴. Challenging too are maximum capacity classes; increasingly demanding administrative duties (for example, many schools now send out tracking and monitoring reports once per month for all year groups) and spending a great deal of time ‘enforcing rules and managing classes’ (Cooper, 2004: 20). All of these demands can result in ‘challenges to empathy’ (Cooper, 2004: 20) which sometimes make achieving the eight SHANARRI health and wellbeing indicators and addressing all the curriculum experiences and outcomes seemingly impossible.

What redeems *Curriculum for Excellence* for me is the very capacities on which it is built: successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, effective contributors. In their fleshed out forms, these are worthy purposes for education, despite criticisms about the terminology and purposes. Since the four capacities are now embedded and ubiquitous, as teachers we must make good of them. What appeals to me is that the capacities are quite separate from exam results and

¹⁰² The previous curriculum (5-14) had outcomes organised into sequential levels.

¹⁰³ Education Scotland website: *Curriculum for Excellence*

¹⁰⁴ In the 2013-14 session a new curriculum was introduced for pupils in the fourth year of secondary school; in 2014-15 the Higher curriculum changed (for those in the fifth year of secondary school) followed by changes to the Advanced Higher courses in 2015-16 (for pupils in sixth year of secondary school).

league tables and far more inclusive. They encourage teachers to focus on what each and every young person can do and be - not purely on what exam results they can achieve. These four capacities encourage teachers to prepare all pupils (not just the most academic) for lives in a globalised society in which they are likely to have many jobs and roles. Of course we must still pay adequate attention to 'the qualification function of education' (Biesta and Lawy, 2009: 9), but in our increasingly diverse school microcosms we should also be interested in what students can 'be or become' (Biesta and Lawy, 2009: 9) - regardless of where they come from. If, as teachers, we can continue to think critically about what the four capacities demand then we will be more able to meet the needs of young people. The Capabilities Approach adds a further layer of understanding and meaning by emphasising the importance of the freedom to choose and by reminding us what all young people are entitled to.

4.5 Chapter Conclusion

Duffy paints a picture of doomed youth, bored and disaffected by educational experiences. She provides a snapshot of a young person who 'could be anything at all, with half/the chance'¹⁰⁵ but who is frustrated by lack of opportunities. Like the speaker in Duffy's poem, some young people in Scotland's schools might have experienced an 'education for leisure' which leaves them marginalised and without work or study opportunities - although hopefully not all are drawn towards violence because of it. In sharp contrast, young Janice is convinced that education is 'a passport to *getting on* via a dedicated process called *sticking in* which led by the natural law of fairness to a Better Life'¹⁰⁶. For Janice, this leads her to university then on to a career in teaching before she becomes the writer she is today. This is not to suggest that all young people must follow an academic route and that, if they do, it will automatically lead to a life of human flourishing. However, what is certain is that equal access to educational opportunity would

¹⁰⁵ Duffy, C. (1985) 'Education for Leisure'

¹⁰⁶ Galloway, J. (2011) 'All Made Up', p. 45

equip young people to choose their own path. This seems to be an aim of *GIRFEC* and *Curriculum for Excellence* and I suggest that the Capabilities Approach adds deeper understanding to what this requires.

Over the past decade, there have been attempts to support young people from homes like Duffy's character, Janice and those I meet in my daily practice who are at risk of missing out on educational opportunities. There is much in the policies that is praiseworthy and much with which it is difficult to disagree. *GIRFEC* is an all encompassing policy that pulls together all the agencies dealing with young people. *Curriculum for Excellence* is a linchpin policy that attempts to include all young people in Scotland's schools by focussing on an enabling curriculum. Both acknowledge that inequality of educational opportunity is due to a whole range of reasons many of which are outside the school environment and that to be disadvantaged is not straightforward. Both demonstrate a commitment to equity and encourage appreciation of diversity. As a practitioner I can critically endorse these Scottish policies and recognise their good intentions. Indeed, I feel compelled to find 'the good' in the policies because they inform my daily practice and I can recognise that, in many ways, they are enlightened. However, I realise too that not all policies and initiatives that purport to address inequality 'necessarily add up to greater equality and fairness' (Reay, 2006: 303). With Reay 2010: 4-5), I would argue that 'totally different ways of envisioning education' might result in a more just education system and this is much needed because in my experience some young people are still not experiencing equality of educational opportunity.

Perhaps one of these 'totally different ways of envisioning education' (Reay, 2010: 4-5) is the Capabilities Approach. It would certainly provide further guidance to support teachers in Scotland's schools to maximise equal access to educational opportunity for all young people. Adding more depth to *GIRFEC* and *Curriculum for Excellence*, the Capabilities Approach urges us to look at the capabilities of each and every young person and to ensure that all are equipped to make choices about their lives. The Capabilities Approach explicitly identifies areas of life in which people might experience inequality and insists that no person should fall below the minimum threshold. However, despite the potential of the Capabilities Approach

to help us to understand the challenges of educational equity for all young people, there are still great barriers to ensuring equal access to educational opportunity in Scotland: austerity; precarity; deficit ideology; class structures. These must also be addressed if all young people are to experience equality of educational opportunity. Teachers also face obstacles in supporting young people and in the next chapter I highlight some of these. I also reiterate that the Capabilities Approach illuminates what teachers need to do and to be and what they require from management and government in order to support young people.

Chapter Five: Teachers and The Capabilities Approach

5.1 Chapter Introduction

In the previous chapter I focussed on pupils and discussed *GIRFEC* and *Curriculum for Excellence*, their attempts to address educational inequality and their resonance with the Capabilities Approach. I highlighted that laudable though these policies may be, they do not fully address the societal barriers that challenge educational equality: deficit ideology; social class; austerity and precarity. In this chapter I shift the focus to teachers. I discuss how the Capabilities Approach can illuminate what contemporary teachers in Scotland's schools need to do and to be and what, in turn, they need from management and the government in order to be 'teachers of excellence'¹⁰⁷. However, I highlight that, just as there are barriers confronting young people, there are obstacles that stand in the way of contemporary teachers. Teaching has certainly evolved since Duffy's character, Janice, Alec, Mary and Liz attended school, but inequality of educational opportunity persists.

In *Teaching Scotland's Future* (2010), Donaldson asserts that 'The foundations of a high quality teaching profession lie in the nature of the people recruited to become teachers' so it is important that we get 'the right people in the right numbers'. The 'right people' are purportedly those who embody the core professional values outlined in *The Standards for Registration* (2012)¹⁰⁸, namely social justice, integrity, trust and respect and professional commitment. Donaldson (2010: 18-19) encourages teachers to 'actively seek, apply and evaluate approaches to supporting children in ways which result in tangible improvement in learning'. Teachers should be 'confident in understanding and addressing the consequences of various barriers to children's learning and their needs for additional support' (Donaldson, 2010: 18-19). The 'right people' can encourage

¹⁰⁷ Education Scotland website: *Curriculum for Excellence* (What is Curriculum for Excellence?)

¹⁰⁸ *The Standards for Registration* (2012) sets out expectations of teachers seeking to gain full registration with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS).

‘right actions’ to be taken at ‘the right time along the pathway’¹⁰⁹, breaking the links between ‘childhood difficulties and adult adversity’ (Gilligan, 2000: 18). I suggest that the ethical framework of the Capabilities Approach could support school leaders and teachers to take the ‘right actions’ at ‘the right time along the pathway’ for Scotland’s young people, thus contributing to reducing inequality of educational opportunity. I also suggest that the Capabilities Approach can highlight for local authorities and the government what teachers need if they are to be these ‘teachers for excellence’¹¹⁰ who could be instrumental in ensuring equal access to educational opportunity for all young people. However, in addition to cognizance of the Capabilities Approach, there would need to be recognition of the obstacles facing teachers if they are to address educational inequality.

To recap, the ten capabilities, the ‘minimum core social entitlements’, are listed below. (For the full expanded list of capabilities, see Appendix 1.)

1. Life
2. Bodily Health
3. Bodily Integrity
4. Senses, Imagination and Thought
5. Emotions
6. Practical Reason
7. Affiliation
8. Other Species
9. Play
10. Control Over One’s Environment

Realising the capabilities is just as important for teachers in Scotland’s schools as it is for young people. If Scotland’s teachers are to be able to address inequality, they need an awareness of the significance of developing their pupils’ capabilities and they themselves need certain capabilities. I suggest that capability enabled

¹¹⁰ Education Scotland website: *Curriculum for Excellence*

teachers who recognise their role in facilitating human flourishing are the twenty-first century educators that we need in Scotland - and throughout the world. Such teachers would be better equipped to address and model the four *Curriculum for Excellence* capacities (successful learners; confident individuals; responsible citizens; effective contributors) and to tackle educational inequality. However, there needs to be recognition of the fact that teaching is a very demanding profession and ‘you cant [sic] expect the teacher to be the everything, the heavyweight boxing champion of the world’¹¹¹ (Kelman, 1999: 276). With a similar approach to Chapter 4, in this chapter I focus on five capabilities: 4. senses, imagination and thought; 5. emotions; 6. practical reason; 7. affiliation; 10. control over one’s environment. I explain how these capabilities can illuminate what teachers need to do and to be to support young people from disadvantaged backgrounds like the fictional characters described throughout this dissertation and the non-fictional pupils in Scotland’s schools today. I also suggest that recognition of the importance of these capabilities could help school management teams, local authorities and the government to support teachers in Scotland’s schools. However, in addition to recognition of the barriers facing pupils discussed in Chapter 4 (unequal class structures, austerity, deficit ideology, meritocracy and precarity), I highlight that there are obstacles confronting teachers: challenges to teacher health and wellbeing and autonomy; the crisis discourse and the attainment agenda; countering hegemony; lack of control over the teaching environment.

¹¹¹ As stated previously, the protagonist of Kelman’s novel ‘A Disaffection’ (1999 [1989]) is a bored, 29 year old Scottish school teacher who is bitter about the education system he has been employed to maintain.

5.2 Senses, Imagination and Thought (Capability 4)¹¹²

Just as young people are to be encouraged to use the senses, imagination and thought in a ‘truly human’ way so too should teachers be. In this section, I unpick the components of this capability that pertain to teachers and highlight how the senses, imagination and thought cluster with health. I then discuss teacher autonomy.

If teachers are to realise this capability for themselves and their pupils, they need awareness that the use of senses, imagination and thought cluster with health (Wolff and de-Shalit, 2007: 125), as discussed in Chapter 4. Inequalities in educational outcomes affect physical and mental health (Marmot, 2010: 24) - and vice versa - so to reduce ‘both social and health inequalities, we must maintain our focus on improving educational outcomes across the gradient’ (Marmot, 2010: 24). There is evidence to suggest that the school environment can have an impact on the health outcomes for pupils and even change attitudes (Marmot, 2010: 109), and teachers are compelled to recognise this through the health and wellbeing component of *Curriculum for Excellence*. Teachers also need to be vigilant to the fact that less well educated parents might lack awareness of health issues and how best to deal with them, often being reluctant to seek professional advice or, on doing so, lack understanding of diagnoses and treatment (Wolff and de-Shalit, 2007: 125). (An example of this is provided in Galloway’s memoir ‘All Made Up’ when she divulges that her family was ‘not the kind who sought medical advice’¹¹³). Further, as discussed in Chapter 2, there needs to be recognition that families who have less money to spend on food are less likely to have the right

¹¹² Capability 4 Senses, Imagination and Thought: being able to use the senses, to imagine, think, and reason - and to do these things in a “truly human” way, a way informed and cultivated by an adequate education, including, but by no means limited to, literacy and basic mathematical and scientific training. Being able to use imagination and thought in connection with experiencing and producing works and events of one’s own choice, religious, literary, musical, and so forth. Being able to use one’s mind in ways protected by guarantees of freedom of expression with respect to both political and artistic speech, and freedom of religious exercise. Being able to have pleasurable experiences and to avoid nonbeneficial pain. (Nussbaum, 2006: 76)

¹¹³ Galloway, J. (2011) ‘All Made Up’, p. 253

balance of vitamins and minerals¹¹⁴, like Alec in ‘Sailmaker’. This results in increased chances of ill health and, potentially, a serious domino effect with regards to education - such as difficulty concentrating in school resulting in poorer exam results leading to fewer employment opportunities and, hence, lower income (Deary and Johnson, 2010). Put bluntly, there is evidence to suggest that lack of awareness about health issues and poor nutrition can have a harmful effect on the senses, imagination and thought. This is important for all teachers to know so that they do not assume that non-attendance or poor concentration is always the fault of the young person.

Another related topic is the destructive influence of drug and alcohol abuse on the senses, imagination and thought. As with nutrition, there are clear links here to social and economic disadvantage (Wilkinson and Marmot, 2007) and, again, potentially a detrimental impact on education. It is widely recognised that children living in homes where other people are using illegal drugs are more likely than their peers to start illegal drug using (seven times more likely to be precise¹¹⁵). For young people with drug and alcohol problems themselves, their senses, imagination and thought are obviously harmed - as is their engagement with education and all the accompanying results of this. Perhaps greater awareness of the connections between health and wellbeing and the senses, imagination and thought would encourage teachers to understand and empathise more with young people who disengage from education and to realise that anxiety and stress (whatever the causes) can close down our senses and the capacity to imagine.

Sometimes schools are so focused on the outcomes for pupils that they seem to forget about the health and wellbeing of teachers. It often takes an attention grabbing newspaper headline to highlight this. One example of such a headline appeared in ‘The Scotsman’ newspaper in May 2014, ‘Scots teachers ‘stressed out’ by severe workload’, followed by a worrying statement that ‘Severe workload pressure is damaging teachers’ health and well-being, according to a new survey

¹¹⁴ Wolff and de-Shalit (2007: 126-7); Wilkinson and Marmot (2003: 26)

¹¹⁵ Information from Scottish Government website, *Training Resource Manual - Volume 2 - Children’s Hearings Handbook* (2013).

by Scotland's largest teaching union'. Clearly 'stressed out' teachers could have a detrimental impact on learning and teaching. Teacher stress can be caused not only by workload but by a whole range of 'related adversities' such as 'conflicts within workplace hierarchies, restricted participation of employees in decision-making, and covert or overt discriminatory practices' (Marmot, 2010: 73). These examples of stress at work can lead to teacher absence which, in turn, detracts from continuity and progression of teaching and learning with an obvious impact on young people. The *Job Satisfaction and Wellbeing Survey* (2014) reported on the consistency and commonality of responses to questions about causes of stress: excessive workload and working hours being 'demanded'; large amounts of paperwork; the number and speed of changes - in particular, changes to the curriculum; issues with management/leadership¹¹⁶. Capability 4 reiterates the importance of ensuring that teachers are able to use their senses, imagination and thought in a truly human way and protecting teacher health and wellbeing is an important component of this.

From a teacher perspective 'experiencing and producing works and events of one's own choice' (Nussbaum, 2006: 76) highlighted in this capability, seems to point towards teacher autonomy. When *Curriculum for Excellence* was introduced there were mixed views about promises of an unprecedented degree of autonomy with regards to curriculum content. The new curriculum appeared to be less prescriptive than what preceded it and advocated the use of teachers' professional capacity to 'adapt curriculum guidance to meet the needs of local school communities' (Priestley and Humes, 2010: 345). Teachers were granted the freedom to create courses and units of work that are relevant to and interesting for their specific pupils. However, in my experience, this was a step too far for some teachers who were concerned about the potential disintegration of subject integrity, being lost in 'a cross-curricular mess' and being abandoned 'to invent the whole curriculum themselves' (Paterson, 2012: online source). Anxiety was

¹¹⁶ The *Job Satisfaction and Wellbeing Survey* (2014) is available from the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) website. Founded in 1847, the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) is the largest teaching union in Scotland.

also caused by teachers wondering if they were ‘doing the right thing’ coupled with an awareness that their views of what was suitable might differ from that of school inspectors - and there were few changes to the traditional (and much dreaded) school inspections which, again from my experience, seem to have changed little in nature despite being re-labelled ‘light touch’ in August 2008.

The greater autonomy promised by *Curriculum for Excellence* was supposedly to be gained through reduced government prescription and the removal of objectives and assessment targets. However, the creation of experiences and outcomes seems to have simply replaced the attainment targets and strands of the previous curriculum and has ‘divided the curriculum into several hundred discrete objectives spread over six levels to cover schooling from 3-18’ (Priestley and Humes, 2010: 353). The reality is that there appears to be no greater autonomy or opportunities to be involved in ‘experiencing and producing works and events of one’s own choice’ (Nussbaum, 2006: 76) for teachers than there ever was. Despite promises of this being ‘a visionary piece of work’ in that it concentrated on ‘outcomes for learners, rather than inputs or teachers’ (Boyd, 2010: online source), it seems that the early aspirations of the curriculum have been limited, ‘rendering classrooms predictable, limited and uncreative’ (Priestley and Humes, 2010: 359), in some cases - the very opposite of what was intended. However, it is important to note that some teachers never had predictable, limited or uncreative classrooms and still do not, despite a new curriculum. It is my view that in Scotland today teachers have just as few (or as many) opportunities to produce ‘works and events’ (Nussbaum, 2006: 76) of their own choosing. However, there appear to be ‘more highly prescriptive initiatives and directives and increasingly regulated teacher autonomy’ (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2009: 158). In Scotland this takes the form of seemingly constant justification, recording and auditing of the experiences and outcomes for each and every child, as well as addressing the three ‘responsibility for all’ areas (health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy across learning) of *Curriculum for Excellence*. Teachers find themselves ‘between a rock and a hard place’ (Reeves, 2008) because the promise of greater autonomy (which some teachers did not actually welcome) has been limited somewhat by the retention of literal and metaphorical boxes to tick - just slightly different boxes

from those that had to be ticked previously. So, in some ways, the status quo remains largely unchanged. Ironically, it could be argued that all the debate and anxiety over the ‘new’ curriculum in recent years has attracted teacher attention away from pupils - thus reducing the focus on equality of educational opportunity. From senses, imagination and thought I now move to Capability 5 emotions to see what further light can be shed.

5.3 Emotions (Capability 5)¹¹⁷

Awareness of the importance of the emotions in education is not to be underestimated. This is vital if teachers are to support young people from disadvantaged backgrounds like Duffy’s character, Janice, Alec, Mary and Liz and, equally, if teachers are to feel supported in their work. In this section I highlight teacher wellbeing and its effects on pupil performance. I then suggest that an important component of this capability is the examined life. Finally in this section, I discuss the challenges to the examined life in twenty-first century Scottish schools.

Teacher and pupil wellbeing are inextricably linked, ‘two sides of the same coin’ (Roffey, 2012). Like young people’s emotions, teachers’ emotions should not be ‘blighted by fear and anxiety’ (Nussbaum, 2006: 76-77) in the workplace - which could be caused, for example, by some of the factors discussed in the previous section such as anxiety about the new curriculum. Like pupils, teachers must also feel valued, respected and cared for at school in order to flourish, but this does not always seem to be the case in contemporary education and much has been written about teacher stress and retention (for example Galton and McBeath, 2008; Roffey, 2012). In the *Education Staff Health Survey* (2014) carried out by the Teacher Support Network there are worrying statistics. For example, out of 2 463 people working in schools, colleges and universities across the United Kingdom,

¹¹⁷ Capability 5 Emotions: being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves; to love those who love and care for us, to grieve at their absence; in general to love, to grieve, to experience longing, gratitude, and justified anger. Not having one’s emotional development blighted by fear and anxiety. (Supporting this capability means supporting forms of human association that can be shown to be crucial in their development.) (Nussbaum, 2006: 76-77)

88% experienced stress; 72% anxiety and 45% depression in the workplace with reasons for this cited as excessive workload, rapid pace of change and unreasonable demands of managers. The previously mentioned ‘Job Satisfaction and Wellbeing Survey’ (2014) commissioned by the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)¹¹⁸ states that of almost 7 000 respondents, only ‘26% feel well, health-wise in their jobs’. Since it is obvious that ‘how teachers feel makes a difference to their ability to respond effectively to the challenges they face’ (Roffey, 2012: 8), this does not bode well and the added pressure of introducing the new qualifications in Scotland seems to have exacerbated the situation, as I have mentioned.

There is also a clear connection between teacher wellbeing and pupil performance (Holmes, 2005; Bajorek et al., 2014), so looking after teachers should be high on the agenda. This must involve recognition that good teachers ‘are not just well-oiled machines’, but are ‘emotional, passionate beings who connect with their students and fill their work and their classes with pleasure, creativity, challenge and joy’ (Hargreaves, 1998: 835). This accords with Donaldson’s assertion (2010) that we must get ‘the right people in the right numbers’. Because it is ‘the daily experience of children and young people in schools that seems to matter most, not the construction of special programmes’ (McLaughlin, 2008: 355), we must take care of our teachers. Furthermore, young people’s emotional habits are learned through relationships so positive teacher interactions with young people are very important (McLaughlin, 2008: 356).

In order to embody Capability 5, emotions, in supporting the emotional development of young people and in maintaining their own emotional wellbeing, I suggest teachers must examine their own lives – just as they must help young people to do so. Socrates’ universally recognised notion that ‘the unexamined life is not worth living’ transcends time and geography to remain extremely useful for Scotland’s teachers in supporting the emotional development of today’s young people and in protecting their own wellbeing. What Nussbaum describes as ‘self

¹¹⁸ As stated previously, the *Job Satisfaction and Wellbeing Survey* (2014) is available from the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) website.

scrutiny' (Nussbaum, 1997: 26) should start, I suggest, with teachers. We must first train and sharpen this Socratic self-criticism (Nussbaum, 1997: 26) in ourselves, then in the young people we teach. This is important because the unexamined life 'threatens the health of democratic freedoms' (Nussbaum, 1997: 49). Every country needs 'citizens who can think for themselves rather than simply deferring to authority', people who can 'reason together about their choices rather than just trading claims and counter-claims' (Nussbaum, 2010: online source). This is not easy to achieve in our teachers or in our young people but in Scotland's *Curriculum for Excellence* and *GIRFEC* (discussed in the previous chapter) it is actively encouraged. Furthermore, teachers' *Professional Update*¹¹⁹ demands reflection and self-evaluation to improve educational outcomes for all young people in order to 'break the cycles of poverty and disadvantage that blight our society'¹²⁰. Nussbaum refers to Socrates' image of himself as a gadfly on the back of a noble but sluggish horse 'waking democracy up so that it could conduct its business in a more reflective and reasonable way' (Nussbaum, 2010: online source). I suggest that we need our teachers in Scotland to be twenty-first century gadflies so that they can 'probe' and 'investigate' educational policy and practice - by doing so they will be better equipped to support the emotional development of young people, to protect their own emotional wellbeing and, hopefully, to work towards equality of educational opportunity

Another important component of the examined life and also closely connected to the emotions is questioning established social norms, not simply accepting beliefs or traditions because they have been passed down and/or are habitual (Nussbaum, 1997: 9). This links to assumptions about class, habitus, perceived ability and aspiration discussed in Chapter 3 and is relevant here because social norms play a role in 'shaping emotions at all stages' (Nussbaum, 2011: 181). Misogyny continues to be rife throughout the world and traditional views about gender roles correlate

¹¹⁹ Engagement in *Professional Update* became a requirement for all registered teachers from August 2014. The key purposes of *Professional Update* for teachers are: to maintain and improve the quality of teachers as outlined in the relevant Professional Standards and to enhance the impact that they have on pupils' learning; to support, maintain and enhance teachers' continued professionalism and the reputation of the teaching profession in Scotland.

¹²⁰ The General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) website: *Professional Update*

with attitudes towards male violence against intimate partners (McCarry, 2010). It seems too that our technology obsessed world has exacerbated and depersonalised problems such as misogyny and there is research to confirm that traditional, often stultifying, gender roles have yet to be obliterated (Scottish Government, 2007¹²¹; McCarry, 2010; Paechter, 2006 and 2012). On a daily basis I encounter examples of this: pupils calling others 'gay' because they refuse to fight or answer back; young males making misogynistic comments about females (both pupils and members of staff), and so on. Intervention by teachers can help to 'legitimate the rejection of gendered violence and facilitate the development of gender identities which have positive rather than negative implications' (McCarry, 2010: 20).

Teachers can also help to develop 'understandings of what it is to be a boy or a girl, or, indeed, this particular boy or girl in a specific social context' (Paechter, 2011: 239), and establish that there are numerous ways to be and to do, numerous ways to live a life. I regularly encounter examples of 'the gendered characteristics that are seen to be of most value to girls' (Read, 2011: 2), often embodied by the latest celebrities in this synopticon¹²² of a society. These 'popular girls' are influential amongst their peers and focus on 'attractiveness and appearance rather than activity and accomplishments' (Read, 2011: 2). This links back to my points in Chapter 3 about the necessity of teachers enabling young people to develop agency so that they can make their own informed opinions and choices (rather than teachers or pupils imposing their views on young people). For some young people, questioning attitudes to gender roles, peer influence and other issues such as disability might only take place in school.

The examined life is all the more important in the image-obsessed, air brushed world of teenagers in which being perceived as 'different' in any way, shape or form can lead to stigmatisation. It is important, therefore, that 'the shame that society so often metes out to those who are different should be countered'

¹²¹ Scottish Government (2007) *Gender Equality: a toolkit for practitioners*, Edinburgh, Scottish Executive

¹²² Mathieson's (1997) term synopticism connotes a society in which the majority of the population closely watches (and sometimes emulates) the lives of a few celebrities, enabled by technology and mass media. Synopticism provides a counterpart to panopticism discussed in Chapter 4.

(Nussbaum, 2004: 347). This involves investigating emotions that subvert the Capabilities Approach such as hatred of the 'other'; disgust for people who do not conform to peer standards or who come from other ethnic groups; 'shame about one's own helplessness' (Nussbaum, 2011: 182), at the thought of not being masculine or feminine enough - and encouraging young people to do the same. If, as Wolff and de-Shalit (2007: 167) claim, 'the goal of equality is avoiding oppression, exploitation, domination, servility, snobbery and other hierarchical evils', then our teachers need to pay heed to the emotions, particularly those that perpetuate injustice. The Capabilities Approach could help us to do so by promoting the equal dignity of all human beings and urging us to treat each person as an individual whose human flourishing and wellbeing are important:

Once we understand that not all masculinities are entirely masculine, or femininities feminine, we may be able to think of ourselves as humans who construct our identities in various ways, some of which are related to ideal typical forms of masculinity and femininity, and some of which are not (Paechter, 2006: online source).

It is clear that understanding the emotions is central to meaningful teaching and learning. This is a matter of social justice because stunted emotions in pupils and in teachers can limit functioning and have a detrimental impact on the quality of life. If young people's emotional development is blighted by fear and anxiety they may find it difficult to thrive in school. The same can be said of teachers who might experience anxiety due to some or all of the obstacles discussed previously - such as lack of autonomy. It is vital that teachers themselves display healthy emotions and encourage the same in young people. How else can we co-create a just society in which all young people have equal access to educational opportunity and lives of human flourishing? Twenty-first century teachers in Scotland's schools are shaping 'future citizens in an age of cultural diversity and increasing internationalization' (Nussbaum, 1997: 6). In order to do this well, I suggest that teachers must realise the importance of the emotions and encourage young people to explore them through the arts, literature, philosophy and debating. It is only by doing so that we can prepare young people for lives of human flourishing - and ensure that teachers can have such lives too.

However, living an examined life is not always a straightforward matter in hectic comprehensive schools. Societal expectations that teachers should deal with a whole host of health and wellbeing issues that affect young people's lives as well as teaching subjects can leave little time for reflection and evaluation. This can lead to exhaustion and 'burn out' (Hargreaves, 1998) which, again, can result in staff absences. This is obviously far from ideal for young people and detracts from efforts to ensure equal access to educational opportunity: the young person whose teacher is constantly absent is quite likely to do less well at school due to lack of continuity and consistency. Once again this has the greatest impact on those young people who do not have access to extra educational resources (such as materials and tutors). So, protecting teachers' emotions is equally as important as protecting those of young people. From the emotions, I now move to two architectonic capabilities - practical reason (Capability 6) followed by affiliation (Capability 7) - both of which 'organise and pervade the others' (Nussbaum, 2011: 39), as I highlighted in Chapter 4.

5.4 Practical Reason (Capability 6)¹²³

Practical reason is inextricably linked to all the other capabilities because without practical reason we are unlikely to be able to make rational choices involving the other capabilities - hence the reason Nussbaum deems it architectonic. It is 'another way of alluding to the centrality of choice in the whole notion of capability as freedom' (Nussbaum, 2011: 39) - as stated in Chapter 4. In this section I stress the importance of modelling critical thinking, followed by the dangers of hegemony and the benefits of praxis. Again I finish this section by highlighting the challenges in addressing this capability in comprehensive secondary schools in Scotland.

In enabling young people to be critical thinkers, teachers must once more look to themselves first of all. Closely related to the examined life (discussed in the

¹²³ Capability 6 Practical Reason: being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life. (Nussbaum, 2006: 77)

previous section), critical thinking has to be modelled by teachers (as highlighted in the previous chapter). Still true today, I think, is Passmore's (1967: 138) assertion that 'being critical can be taught only by men who can themselves freely partake in critical discussion'. So, as teachers we must ourselves be critical thinkers and we must model this to the young people we teach. Modelling 'behaviour which promotes effective learning and wellbeing within the school community'¹²⁴ is integral to adhering to *Curriculum for Excellence* and *GIRFEC* for teachers in twenty-first century Scotland. Teachers need to be able to think and reflect critically and to develop the capacity in young people 'to argue, rigorously and critically, so that they can call their minds their own' (Nussbaum, 1997: 295) - and once more this all links back to agency, discussed in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. In order to work towards equality of educational opportunity, teachers need to create conditions in which young people are respected, valued and heard (Brookfield, 1995: 27; Fink, 2005); simultaneously, school and local authority management must also ensure that these conditions exist for teachers.

Teachers who are critical thinkers should be better equipped to avoid the entanglements of hegemony which blurs the lines between dedication to the wellbeing of pupils and 'self destructive workaholism' (Brookfield, 1995: 16). In so doing they would be more able to concentrate on what really matters - such as working towards equality of educational opportunity. Hegemony denotes the dominance of one group over another and the ability of the dominant group to project its views as being accepted common sense (Palmer, 2012: online source). In the context of education, vocation sometimes seems to have become a hegemonic concept. In a school setting this could mean that the views of the senior management team, parents or fellow teachers are projected onto others and there is little room for dissent because 'it's all for the pupils' - examples include many extra hours of work over the contractual thirty-five hours per week¹²⁵ because that is the school expectation. Hegemony can also cover entrenched school practices such as labelling pupils and setting classes (the demerits of which are discussed in earlier chapters - 3 and 4 - and later in this chapter). Countering

¹²⁴ Education Scotland website: *Curriculum for Excellence*

¹²⁵ The 35 hour week was part of *The McCrone Agreement: a Teaching Profession for the 21st Century* (2001) which is an agreement about Scottish teachers' pay and conditions.

this can be challenging because teachers who have the courage and energy to speak up are often in the minority. Others might judge themselves to be too busy, too tired or too 'stressed out' to speak up. Alternatively, some teachers could have become institutionalised into the norms and the hegemony of the school - which might not have changed very much since teachers themselves attended school.

The importance of critical thinking is acknowledged in several Scottish educational reports, for example *Teaching Scotland's Future* (2011) and *Teachers Matter* (OECD, 2011). The former is the response to the Scottish government's request for a review of teacher education. It proposes fifty recommendations designed to build the professional capacity of Scotland's teachers and to support teacher development to ensure excellence in Scottish education. The latter report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) investigates teacher policy issues in twenty-five countries, offering development policy issues for consideration. Both reports stress the importance of skills such as critical thinking alongside pedagogical knowledge. Twenty-first century teachers should be 'reflective, accomplished and enquiring professionals' with 'critical and creative thinking skills' (Donaldson, 2011: 12). However, just as the term 'excellence' permeates *Curriculum for Excellence* documentation and related policies with few specific definitions about what it actually means, so too does the term critical thinking. Perhaps this is due to an assumption that, as with a definition for excellence, we all know what it is to be a critical thinker and to actively engage in critical reflection. Teachers need the ability 'to see fine detail and nuance... to discern the differences between this situation and others that to the inexperienced eye might seem the same' (Dunne and Pendlebury, 2003: 207) in order to carry out appropriate action. Hence, teachers must develop the characteristics of 'insight and discernment' (Dunne and Pendlebury, 2003: 208), a twenty-first century version of phronesis (the virtue of practical thought and choice about how we should live; wisdom in action). Critical thinking is 'crucial for teachers' survival' (Brookfield, 1995: 1), and important to ensure that we understand how power is exercised in schools. This skill would ensure that more teachers question oppressive structures (of which hegemony is one) that are unhealthy for them and for the young people they teach.

In addition to critical thinking, praxis is also embedded in the capability of practical reason, I would contend. In order 'to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life' (Nussbaum, 2006: 77) advocated by this capability, I suggest that teachers' actions must be 'morally-committed and oriented' (Kemmis and Smith, 2008: 3). Praxis is about much more than simply teaching skills and passing on knowledge: it is about 'right conduct' - 'walking the walk' rather than simply 'talking the talk' (to use now clichéd phrases) and 'having a sense of the role education plays in the upbringing and formation of students as persons committed to the good' (Kemmis and Smith, 2008: 265). A praxis oriented teacher has moral agency, acting deliberately to challenge injustice. For me this is a necessary condition for 'being able to form a conception of the good' (Nussbaum, 2006: 77) in Capability 6, practical reason, and working towards ironing out inequalities in educational opportunity.

As with the other capabilities, in today's schools exercising practical reason (in my chosen terms being a praxis oriented, hegemony countering teacher) can be challenging. Such a teacher questions policies and practice and this can cause conflict because in 'doing the right thing' for our pupils (and ourselves) we become 'more than employees or technicians whose conduct is entirely governed by institutional rules' (Kemmis and Smith, 2008: 273). Being a praxis oriented teacher who has 'a critical spirit' highlights 'the possibility that the established norms themselves ought to be rejected, that the rules ought to be changed, the criteria used in judging performances modified' (Passmore, 1967: 137). This is not always welcomed in schools, for a multitude of reasons. It is difficult to change established norms and it takes time, energy and the development of what it is to be reflective in the ways I mention. Some practitioners continue to view young people as causes of classroom difficulties rather than manifestations of injustice; some teachers are still stuck in the 'if only pupils would behave/follow the rules/learn discipline' quagmire which does little to recognise the individual lives of young people or the socio-economic barriers they face. Teachers who engage in critical thinking and educational praxis are helping young people to think, speak and act well and to treat others humanely inside and outside the classroom (Kemmis, 2008: 287). By doing so, young people will be better equipped to make

choices about who they want to be and how they want to live. Teachers modelling praxis are encouraging young people to ‘become agents capable of making moral choices’ (Suissa, 2008: 7) so that they can embrace the freedom to plan their own lives - unlike some of the literary characters discussed throughout this dissertation. In Scotland’s schools there are teachers who are agents capable of making moral choices, socially just teachers who are able ‘to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection’ (Nussbaum, 2006: 77) advocated by this capability. However, they need the support of colleagues, senior managers and local authorities. Such support would also allow teachers to feel greater affiliation to the school in which they work and it is to this capability (affiliation) that I now turn.

5.5. Affiliation (Capability 7)¹²⁶

Affiliation is yet another crucial capability if teachers are to work towards equality of educational opportunity. Like practical reason, affiliation is an architectonic capability and there seems to be implicit recognition of its importance in *The Standards for Registration* (2012) document¹²⁷ mentioned earlier. It states that (amongst other prerequisites) registered teachers must show ‘commitment to social justice, inclusion and caring for and protecting children’¹²⁸ - all important aspects of the ability ‘to live with and towards others’ (Nussbaum, 2006: 77). Commitment to social justice involves teachers reminding themselves what it is to be a learner and understanding the many and varied backgrounds from which

¹²⁶ Capability 7 Affiliation: (A) being able to live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction; to be able to imagine the situation of another. (Protecting this capability means protecting institutions that constitute and nourish such forms of affiliation, and also protecting the freedom of assembly and freedom of speech.) (B) having the social bases of self-respect and nonhumiliation; being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others. This entails provisions of non-discrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, caste, religion, national origin. (Nussbaum, 2006: 77)

¹²⁷ *The Standards for Registration* (2012) sets out expectations of teachers seeking to gain full registration with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS).

¹²⁸ *The Standards for Registration* (2012: point 3.1) can be found on The General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) website.

young people originate - in other words showing affiliation to their pupils through empathy. For young Alec in Spence's 'Sailmaker' such understanding would have meant teachers recognising and empathising with his home situation: the loss of his mother; his father's difficulties in coping. For Mary in Lochhead's poem 'The Choosing' this would have involved awareness of her father's attitudes to education and attempts to help Mary to plan her own life. Teachers with 'a sympathetic responsiveness to another's needs' (Nussbaum: 1997: 90) and awareness of how these needs can be shaped by circumstances will be more able to ensure equal access to educational opportunity. In this section I discuss the ability 'to imagine the situation of another' (Nussbaum, 2006: 77) and teacher attitudes to young people. Then, I dig deeper into teacher/pupil relationships (discussed previously) followed by teacher affiliation specifically.

The ability to 'imagine the situation of another' (Nussbaum, 2006: 77) demanded by this capability could help teachers to gain an understanding of how pupils are experiencing learning and an insight into 'how power dynamics permeate and structure' young people's interactions with teachers (Brookfield, 1995: 94). If young people feel powerless as learners, they could become the 'reluctant recipients of the curriculum' (Hirsch, 2007) discussed in Chapter 3. This can lead to disappointing educational results (Raffo, 2007) - a good example of the classic causality dilemma. Without the ability to imagine the situation of others, teachers could struggle to treat pupils from disadvantaged homes, like those introduced throughout the dissertation chapters, in a truly human way. Greater affiliation might help to eradicate the so called 'hierarchy of student worth' (Reay, 2013: 43) by which values held by teachers about 'good' and 'bad' pupils are transmitted to young people through attitudes, words and actions. This hierarchy of worth can pertain not only to individual pupils, but also to whole classes and is sometimes a result of setting and streaming (the early, and arguably unnecessary, labelling of young people discussed in Chapter 3). To my dismay, some teachers still persist in labelling a class 'the bottom set' (or something even more derogatory). Such pejorative labelling clearly links to the self fulfilling prophecy and is hardly treating young people as dignified beings 'whose worth is equal to that of others' (Nussbaum, 2006: 77). If some pupils are prejudiced against or favoured more than others, justice cannot prevail (Reay, 2006), so as teachers we must remember that

‘these are real people’s lives we are talking about, and that how we conceptualise and describe them has material effects’ (Paechter, 2011: 239). Again the deficit ideology discussed in the previous chapter comes to the fore here - the projection of deficits onto working class young people and their families that stigmatises and focuses on individual problems rather than institutional, financial or societal issues (Perry and Francis, 2010: 10). Teachers who hold such views will obviously find it difficult to feel any sense of affiliation to the young people they teach or to the communities they teach in. The same can be said of teachers who do not understand the ways in which the various forms of capital (cultural, linguistic and social) can disadvantage young people in our education system. The importance of such connections is inferred in *Teachers Matter* (2011: 101) which highlights the need for ‘cognition, character and teacher knowledge of, and sensitivity to social and political contexts and the environments of their students’.

To enable young people to affiliate to the school as equal moral persons whose class bearing is of no importance, building good relationships is vital (Wikeley et al., 2007; Frankham, 2007; Thomson and Russell, 2007). However, some young people feel ‘targeted, judged, labelled, and prematurely given up on by their teachers’ (Hilton, 2006: 304) - small wonder considering some of the examples provided above. A sense of disaffiliation is created by lack of positive images of working class young people and this contributes to them being ‘educationally disqualified and inadequately supported academically’ (Reay, 2006: 295). In Reay’s research (2006)¹²⁹ the working class students expressed ‘a sense of educational worthlessness’ (p. 295) and feelings that they were not valued and respected in school. Pupils stated that some teachers ‘look down on you’ and that, instead, they should ‘treat us like humans’ (Reay, 2006: 298). Supportive ‘and mutually respectful relationships’ (Nussbaum, 2006: 146), especially with more vulnerable young people and their families (Hilton, 2006: 304), can empower: ‘those who are cared for (students and parents) have agency, dignity, and a voice’ (Hargreaves, 2003: 62). Affiliation can also be strengthened through recognition of ‘the unseen strength and wisdom that is possessed in even the most apparently deprived

¹²⁹ Reay’s data arose from two research projects, a large project on pupils’ perspectives on their teaching and learning carried out from 2000 to 2002 (Arnot and Reay, 2006a; 2006b; Reay and Arnot, 2004) and a second smaller study on assessment in primary schools (Reay and Wiliam, 1999).

communities' (Hargreaves, 2003: 64), such as loyalty, perseverance in difficult circumstances and high aspirations for young people.

It is teachers who can ensure that disaffiliation and young people's feelings of 'powerlessness and disengagement from the world of education' (Hirsch, 2007) is addressed. As well as the respectful relationships discussed above, this includes teachers making opportunities for formal and non-formal educational activities such as theatre trips and other valuable out of school experiences which enhance the various forms of capital (discussed in Chapter 3). However, often it seems that the priority in schools and the focus of many educational initiatives is raising attainment (as aforementioned), rather than interventions to support young people from disadvantaged backgrounds (Hilton, 2006: 308). This concentration on exam statistics can result in schools being 'stressful and alienating for many pupils' (Hilton, 2006: 308) - and teachers. In addition, emotional understanding can be impeded by 'overcrowded curriculum and school structures that fragment teachers' contacts with students, parents, and one another' (Hargreaves, 2003: 64). Treating others with respect, avoiding humiliation and discrimination involves understanding human problems and responsibilities (Nussbaum, 2010: 82), especially 'in areas in which our society has created sharp separations between groups' (Nussbaum, 2010: online source) - even, as I have witnessed, at micro levels between families from different villages or areas within one small region of the country. Cognizance of Capability 7, affiliation, should encourage teachers 'to comprehend the motives and choices of people different from ourselves' (Nussbaum, 1997: 85), whether that be colleagues, the young people we teach or local communities, and to open minds (our own and our pupils) to the detrimental effects of discrimination and narrow mindedness.

Teachers also need help to foster affiliation and to feel a sense of affiliation themselves. To that end, no teacher should be 'a lone figure with responsibility for their class or subject' (McCrone, 2001: 8); instead, each should be 'a contributing team member delivering a wide ranging curriculum tailored to the needs of every pupil' (McCrone, 2001: 8). Networking opportunities, collegiate events, visiting schools in other areas and sharing good practice are all valuable in developing teacher affiliation in twenty-first century Scotland. So too are participating in

focus groups and interdisciplinary learning which encourage teachers to raise their voices and exercise their agency. Rather than being engaged in ‘short term co-operative teams that disband when the pressure is off and the learning task is done’ (Hargreaves, 2003: 63), meaningful, lasting relationships with colleagues, families and the wider community as well as with pupils are crucial in order to ensure affiliation in Scotland’s schools.

As with the other capabilities, developing affiliation is no easy task but we cannot, as Reay (2006: 303) points out, ‘rely on serendipity, the fortuitous chance that teachers will educate themselves’. Respectful relationships between all stakeholders and taking action against insidious forms of discrimination – social background, misogyny, sexual orientation and disability – are vital and this seems to be recognised in several Scottish initiatives and policies, for example in *Curriculum for Excellence* and *The Standards for Registration* (2012). Other threats to affiliation such as the hierarchy of worth (judging some pupils as ‘better’ than others) and negative labelling of young people (or colleagues) are not to be underestimated. Important too and closely related is control over one’s environment (Capability 10), which will be discussed next.

5. 6 Control Over One’s Environment (Capability 10)¹³⁰

Teachers in Scotland’s schools also need control over their working environment if they are to be ‘teachers for excellence’¹³¹ and ensure equality of educational opportunity. Once again, this capability interweaves with the emotions and teacher health and wellbeing because lack of control and reward at work are ‘critical determinants of a variety of stress-related disorders’ (Marmot, 2010: 115). Although such disorders are said to be ‘more prevalent among lower occupational

¹³⁰ Capability 10 Control Over One’s Environment: (A) Political. Being able to participate effectively in political choices that govern one’s life; having the right of political participation, protections of free speech and association. (B) Material. Being able to hold property (both land and movable goods), and having property rights on an equal basis with others; having the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others; having the freedom from unwarranted search and seizure. In work, being able to work as a human being, exercising practical reason and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers. (Nussbaum, 2006: 77)

¹³¹ Education Scotland website: *Curriculum for Excellence* (What is Curriculum for Excellence?)

status groups' (Marmot, 2010: 115), the statistics provided earlier would suggest that teaching is no different - for example, out of 2 463 people working in schools, colleges and universities across the United Kingdom, 88% experienced stress¹³². Just as schools should enable all children and young people to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives, so too should teachers be enabled to have control over their working environment. Here, the school culture has a huge impact on both pupils and staff and demotivated or disaffected staff members can create 'a malaise within the profession' with a subsequent impact in the classroom (Forde et al., 2006: 13). However, it is not teachers alone who create the values of a school as local authority, government and societal expectations are also influential. In this section, I discuss the impact of the crisis discourse and the attainment agenda on control over the working environment. I then return to teacher autonomy but this time focus on threats to autonomy.

Teacher control over the working environment is affected by anxiety and this has been evident in Scotland in recent years due to the new curriculum and qualifications. Consequently, there is evidence of a form of crisis discourse that fuels the feeling that schools are in crisis and underperformance is widespread (Forde et al., 2006: 56), and does little to make teachers feel in control of their working environment. Closely aligned is the discourse of derision (Ball, 1990) which derides the teaching profession and is promulgated by the media with headlines such as 'Doubts about delivering a truly excellent curriculum'¹³³ and 'New curriculum will do nothing to improve standards'¹³⁴. The crisis discourse is thought by some to be 'engineered by governments' (Forde et al., 2006: 56) in a bid to raise attainment, creating doubts about teacher competence and a 'you're either with us or against us' threat vis-a-vis raising standards. Improvement is to be secured through conforming to nationally created good practice models in the form

¹³² From the *Job Satisfaction and Wellbeing Survey* (2014), available from the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) website.

¹³³ 'The Herald' newspaper, 20th May 2014

¹³⁴ 'The Scotsman' newspaper, 16th February 2014

of the *Journey to Excellence*¹³⁵ documentation. In place of professional trust, there seems to be an emphasis on measurable outcomes, targets and performance indicators (Reeves, 2008: 8), and far greater ‘oversight, control of and intervention into teachers’ work’ (Ball, 2008: 167). Teachers are tasked with raising educational standards despite the complexities of deep-rooted social deprivation (Forde et al., 2006: 63) and all that they do is open to public criticism (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2009: 158), in the form of league tables and inspection reports in Scotland. The crisis discourse seems to ignore wider socio-economic factors and it threatens all other capabilities by failing to treat teachers in a human way and ignoring all the many valuable, life enhancing activities and relationships that take place in schools. As a teacher, I sometimes feel that local authorities and the government are leaving schools to take full responsibility for tackling the impact of disadvantage on educational achievement and this can be demoralising. This does not always allow me to feel in control of my working environment. Rather than turning a blind eye to societal issues that impede young people, class analysis needs to be re-invigorated (Reay, 2006: 289).

The senior phase¹³⁶ of *Curriculum for Excellence* and the introduction of new qualifications have brought the attainment agenda to the fore. While National 4 courses have no examinations or grades (which is problematic in itself as explained in Chapter 4), the new National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher exam results cause anxiety and stress. Based on socio-economic and political imperatives, the school improvement or attainment agenda suggests a link between educational underachievement and the quality of teaching and learning (Forde et al., 2006: 122). The assumption seems to be that if ‘we can only make teachers good enough, equip them with sufficient skills and competencies then the wider social context of schooling is seen as unimportant’ (Reay, 2006: 291). Government imposed initiatives supposedly designed to enhance the quality of teacher work, and the concomitant impact this will have on young people, put teachers under constant

¹³⁵ *The Journey to Excellence* is a five part professional development resource created by school inspectors.

¹³⁶ The senior phase of *Curriculum for Excellence* is years four, five and six of secondary school.

pressure that corrodes ‘the quality both of their work and of their working lives’ (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2009: 159). Once again this has an impact on teachers’ emotional and physical wellbeing and does little to ensure that teachers are in control of their working environment. As with the crisis discourse, the relentless attainment agenda seems to disregard all the ‘other things’ that teachers do, such as act as role models; celebrate achievement; run after school clubs and residential trips; engage with parents and carers; introduce new courses. Many of these activities cannot be measured and, therefore, often appear not to be of importance. However, as discussed in previous chapters, such activities are extremely important in building the various forms of capital which young people from working class and disadvantaged homes often lack. Another irony is that these are examples of the types of activities that would appear to be the professional actions that reflect the professional values of *The Standards for Registration* mentioned earlier in this chapter: social justice, integrity, trust and respect and professional commitment.

The ability ‘to participate effectively in political choices that govern one’s life’ (Nussbaum, 2006: 77) demanded by this capability links back to teacher autonomy, ‘the right to negotiate, and to negotiate from a position of strength’ (Forde et al., 2006: 15). There is resonance here with *The McCrone Agreement* (2001) which states that teachers ‘have a right and an obligation to contribute to the processes by which national and local priorities are determined’ (McCrone, 2001: 29), and that ‘effective consultation arrangements at establishment level (should) ensure full participation by all staff in key decisions affecting their establishment’ (McCrone, 2001: 29). Participating in decisions, including and especially policy and curriculum decisions that affect education and teachers’ professional lives, contributes to aiding teachers to feel more in control of their working lives. In Scottish schools, ‘meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers’ (Nussbaum, 2006: 77) is provided by obligatory collegiate events, which was endorsed (some might say imposed) by *The McCrone Agreement* (2001), and this also promotes professional affiliation (as mentioned in the previous section). Teacher autonomy also seems to be encouraged in *Professional Update* (2014), a requirement for registration with the General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS).

Engagement in ongoing professional learning (previously known as Continuing Professional Development in Scotland) encourages teachers to develop areas of their own interest. However, in practice this is not as flexible as it might appear because most activities have to take place out with the working day (understandably, so as not to disrupt learning and teaching) and there seems to be little funding available. Unfortunately teachers, like young people, can actually be constrained by the school environment and this can restrict autonomy.

Another restriction to teacher control over the working environment is, in my mind, the flattened career structure brought about after *The McCrone Agreement* (2001). Although this took place over a decade ago, there continue to be reverberations as I will explain. One aim of *The McCrone Agreement* (2001) was to introduce 'simplified career structures' (Scottish Executive, 2001: 3) and this resulted in many schools moving to the faculty system with principal teachers having management and curriculum responsibility for clusters of subjects rather than a single subject department - although, contrary to popular belief, *The McCrone Agreement* (2001) did not actually dictate that specific step. This was an acrimonious time in many Scottish schools with some principal teachers of subjects losing their management duties after interview for these new positions - albeit retaining conserved salaries and their original (now effectively meaningless) titles. In reality, what this meant was that some principal teachers of subjects felt they had been effectively demoted and, understandably, the result was very low morale. At this time many teachers certainly did not feel that they were participating effectively in political choices or that they were 'able to work as a human being, exercising practical reason and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers' (Nussbaum, 2006: 77). Although newer entrants to the profession are probably oblivious to 'the restructuring', some of the principal teachers who were not granted the new posts are still working in schools today and continue to be affected. Another subsequent, and still very relevant criticism by some, is that principal teachers of subjects other than their own are ill equipped to offer professional subject advice to less experienced teachers and that subject specific staff are basically left to 'get on with it' - although this is obviously not true in all cases. These changes continue to affect teachers' working and personal lives.

The flattened career structure has reduced career opportunities by removing some promoted posts - from six possible promoted positions (Head Teacher, Depute Head Teacher, Assistant Head Teacher, Principal Teacher, Assistant Principal Teacher, Senior Teacher) to three (Head Teacher, Depute Head Teacher, Principal Teacher/Faculty Head). The position of Depute Head Teacher may also go in some authorities in order to meet budget cuts. One new avenue for career advancement was the Chartered Teacher¹³⁷ position introduced after *The McCrone Agreement* (2001) but it was discontinued after *The McCormac Report* (2011). The new simplified career structure was supposed to address the 'hierarchical nature of teacher culture in Scotland' (MacDonald, 2004: 414) and to offer 'a new set of management actions: more teamwork, less bureaucracy, better communications, opportunities for professional development and greater job satisfaction' (Powell, 2002: 55), but I cannot say that this has been the case in my experience. In reality, the reduction of promotion opportunities can (and does) have a demoralising impact on ambitious, talented teachers in addition to making the jump from subject teacher to Principal Teacher more demanding still.

In the absence of formal leadership opportunities, 'distributive leadership' has come to the fore. This involves unpromoted teachers volunteering to take responsibility for specific projects and/or duties - without status (in the form of a job title) or financial remuneration. Although this development has been embraced by some teachers, it has also caused contention because those teachers who already have large classes and heavy marking loads are hard pressed to volunteer for extra duties. The concomitant impact of this is that some teachers have fewer examples of leadership activities to cite when applying for the now fewer promoted posts. There are clear links between distributive leadership and hegemony with the creation of an attitude of 'it's what you need to do if you want promotion'. Of course it could be argued that distributive leadership opportunities

¹³⁷ The Chartered Teacher position was introduced to reward teachers at the top of the salary scale who chose to stay in the classroom (as opposed to applying for a middle management position) and to encourage them to engage in self-funded professional development. On completion of modules and a portfolio they would secure a salary increase.

allow teachers to take control over their working lives - but only if they can make the time to do so.

Once more, the crucial point is that if Scotland's teachers are to address inequality as I advocate, then they themselves need certain capabilities (those I mention) and an awareness of the significance of developing their pupils' capabilities. All of the capabilities are inextricably intertwined as are the obstacles that could prevent them from being realised. Until these obstacles are addressed, teacher control over their working environment remains limited.

5.6 Chapter Conclusion

In this 'increasingly complex and demanding' profession (Donaldson, 2011: 12) teachers' roles have become broader and, consequently, *Curriculum for Excellence* teachers need enhanced qualities to ensure equal access to educational opportunity for all young people. Reports such as *Teaching Scotland's Future* (Donaldson, 2011) and *Continuing to Build Excellence in Schools* (Scottish Government, 2011) acknowledge the need for a collective effort to ensure the centrality of excellence in Scottish education - although 'excellence' seems to have become a semantically bleached word in schools. In Scotland there is clear commitment to enhancing teachers' skills and recognition of the 'urgent need to challenge the narrow interpretations of a teacher's role' (Donaldson, 2011: 2). Nussbaum seems to provide some further answers about what our twenty-first century teachers should do and be if they are to ensure the human flourishing of all young people. They should be Socratic critical thinkers who are self-critical and recognise the importance of the emotions. They should be able to see themselves as members of a heterogeneous nation. They should be praxis-oriented and realise that the examined life is just as important in twenty-first century Scotland as it was in fourth century BC Greece. Despite our much changed and changing world, the philosophy of Socrates still has its place in aiding us to develop democratic citizens who can 'flourish in life, learning and work'¹³⁸. In order to be and do all

¹³⁸ Education Scotland website: *Curriculum for Excellence* (Understanding the curriculum)

these things, teachers' capabilities should be supported and enabled by colleagues, school management teams, local authorities and the government.

The Capabilities Approach illuminates what teachers should be and do to ensure equality of educational opportunity. Teachers and governments that are attuned to the Capabilities Approach might just be 'the right people' (Donaldson, 2010) who can take 'right actions at the right time' (Gilligan, 2000: 18). Teaching is an ethical endeavour that should be 'a career for grown-up intellectuals... a social mission' not 'a low-level system of technical delivery... an exhausting job that should be handled mainly by the young and energetic before they move on to something else' (Hargreaves, 2003: 66). Our teachers have an instrumental role in the capability expansion of young people but they also need to be treated in a truly human way because, as I said, they cannot be 'the everything, the heavyweight champion of the world' (Kelman, 1999: 276). Twenty-first century teaching takes place 'under intense social and political circumstances' (Fullan, 2001: 133), and there are barriers that restrict what teachers are able to do and to be: the crisis discourse; challenges to teacher autonomy; the attainment agenda. These obstacles need to be more fully acknowledged in order to break the links between 'childhood difficulties and adult adversity' (Gilligan, 2000: 18), and to ensure equality of educational opportunity for all young people in Scotland's schools.

Chapter 6: Towards a Conclusion

6.1 Chapter Introduction

Through the dissertation process I set out to contribute a fresh perspective on inequality of educational opportunity, ‘consciously geared towards improving policy and practice’ (Whitty, 2006: 173) - English Faculty policy as well as, perhaps, that of the school and the local authority in which I work and, of course, my own practice. Equality of educational opportunity would ensure that this is ‘a world worth living in’ (Nussbaum, 2010: online source) for more young people regardless of where they live or their family background because education is a fertile functioning ‘of the highest importance in addressing disadvantage and inequality’ (Nussbaum, 2011: 152). By encouraging us to ask questions about what education enables us to do and to be, the Capabilities Approach reminds the government, local authorities and teachers that it is about much more than attainment alone. The dissertation’s literary characters highlighted the multiple challenges facing young people from a range of what could be construed as disadvantaged backgrounds. Equality of educational opportunity for these young people and others could (and I suggest should) be aided by the Capabilities Approach. Throughout the dissertation chapters I highlighted that the Capabilities Approach shows which capabilities promote education and what education needs if it is to develop the capabilities of pupils and of teachers.

I discussed some of the laudable education policies in Scotland such as *Getting it Right for Every Child* and *Curriculum for Education* - most notably in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. I highlighted selected criticisms of these policies as well as their resonance with the Capabilities Approach. I was also insistent that despite the multitude of disadvantages faced by young people, teachers in Scotland’s schools can (and do) make a difference to young people’s lives. I suggested that these teachers could make an even greater difference if the Capabilities Approach was embedded in Scottish education. However, despite these worthy policies and their apparent affinity to the Capabilities Approach, unequal access to educational opportunity is still prevalent in Scotland: the gap between young people from affluent homes and their less affluent peers is not closing. I asserted that the Capabilities Approach can deepen our understanding of these policies and add a

new layer of explanation about the purpose of education. Despite this, we need still more if we are to achieve educational equity for all our young people.

The continuing inequality in Scottish education appears to be due to lack of acknowledgement and understanding of the impact of restrictive societal structures; the uneven distribution of the various forms of capital; the attainment agenda; the deficit ideology; austerity and precarity. These issues make realising the capabilities more difficult; they thwart opportunities to work towards greater educational equality; they blight young people's lives. Until these societal constraints are addressed, I fear that inequality of educational opportunity for all young people remains unrealistically utopian. I have come to realise that we still have a long way to go before we can honestly say of our young people that 'all are equally placed in the education process, and all are equally supported' (Nussbaum, 2009: 342-3). I return to all of these issues in this final chapter. First of all I provide a summary of each chapter highlighting the most important points as well as returning to each of the characters. Then I address the research implications pulling these together into broad areas. Thereafter, evidence of my changed perspectives, practices and professional commitments comes to the fore when I discuss the personal and professional impact of the dissertation.

6.2 Summing Up

In this section I summarise each of the dissertation chapters. I also return to each of the chapter characters who remind me of pupils I have known, currently know and hope to know in the future.

In the first chapter I tackled four main areas. First of all I set the scene with a brief description of my career trajectory followed by an informative chronology of Scottish education. Next I outlined the dissertation focus and approach explaining why I had chosen to use both philosophy and sociology. I wanted to understand 'personal troubles' as well as 'public issues' (Mills, 1959: 8) and hoped that drawing on two contrasting approaches would recognise both people and power structures. In the third section of the first chapter I introduced the ideas of Sen,

Nussbaum, Wolff and de-Shalit and their differing perspectives on capabilities. A dominant theme throughout this first chapter was a sense of social justice and its importance in my professional and personal life. With education at its heart, the Capabilities Approach seemed like a natural and obvious path for me to tread in my attempts to highlight a new conceptual direction for comprehensive schools in Scotland that could address inequality of educational opportunity. The fourth section of this chapter was an explanation of the purpose of the literary thread to bind together the dissertation - characters from texts taught in Scottish schools revealing a great deal about the multiple challenges facing young people from a range of what could be construed as disadvantaged backgrounds.

Alec from Alan Spence's play 'Sailmaker' and Jamie (a contrasting character of my own creation) featured in Chapter 2. Alec is a good example of a young person who faces difficulties (in his case poverty and grief over the death of his mother) but who realises the value of education and works hard to gain a place at university. Alec and Jamie represent different attitudes to education: Alec chooses to embrace education despite the challenges of his circumstances while Jamie chooses to eschew educational opportunity although he would appear to have sufficient material and non-material resources to support him. In this chapter I highlighted the difference between capabilities and functionings and elaborated on the different perspectives of Sen, Nussbaum, Wolff and de-Shalit. I introduced Bourdieu's notion of the various forms of capital which can be advantageous to upper and middle class families but disadvantageous to working class and disadvantaged families. I also brought in Wolff and de-Shalit's notion of fertile functionings and corrosive disadvantages, education being (potentially) an example of both. Alec helped to illustrate Sen's sources of variation: personal heterogeneities; physical environment; the social climate; and differences in relational perspectives. These sources of variation have an impact on access to educational opportunity but young people have no control over them. I discussed the clustering and counterfactuality of disadvantages in this chapter, explaining that a young person might experience poor housing coupled with lack of parental support, for example, both of which have an impact on education. The risk to and sustainability of capabilities also featured in this chapter and Alec's father (Davie) was useful to show how insecure employment can put other functionings at risk:

being made redundant (as Davie is several times) has an impact on health and wellbeing and leads to planning blight due to insecure finances. These factors all have an emotional and physical impact on young people too. I stated that the Capabilities Approach can be a helpful tool to enable educational stakeholders to see how well pupils are doing. Davie tells his son Alec ‘Get yerself a good education. Get a decent job’¹³⁹. In this chapter, I explained that disadvantage can make this easier said than done for many of Scotland’s young people.

In Chapter 3 I introduced Liz and Mary from Liz Lochhead’s poem ‘The Choosing’. These two characters highlighted how young people with similar academic ability can end up on quite different paths - in the girls’ cases due, I suspect, to family background. In this chapter I discussed agency and societal structures which can disempower young people from certain backgrounds. In the section about educational attitudes and aspirations, Bourdieu’s forms of capital, which can compound advantage and disadvantage, were relevant once again. When discussing school programmes designed to open Higher Education doors for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, I described the LEAPS programme. I then moved to transgenerational disadvantages and adaptive preferences and explained how some young people adapt their choices in accordance with what they think is appropriate for them - if, for example, a young person comes from a family in which no-one has gone to university, she might convince herself that such a choice is not open to her. I highlighted how Bourdieu’s notion of habitus is helpful in understanding transgenerational disadvantages and adaptive preferences which involve the inherited reproduction of social conditions. Throughout this chapter I drew on the examples of Liz and Mary to emphasise that education in twenty-first century Scotland should enable young people to have adult lives of their own choosing.

In the fourth chapter I introduced two more characters: an unnamed, disaffected youth who is depressed and jobless from Carol Ann Duffy’s poem ‘Education for Leisure’; and a young Janice Galloway from her memoir ‘All Made Up’. Duffy’s

¹³⁹ Spence, A. (2008 [1988]) ‘Sailmaker’, p. 34

character and Janice are again contrasting characters who (like Mary and Liz) take different paths. Duffy's character seems to have no hope of a better future while Janice, like Alec in Chapter 2, embraces the educational opportunities on offer to her and goes to university despite her challenging family circumstances. In this chapter I analysed *Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)* and *Curriculum for Excellence*, two major Scottish educational policies. I showed the resonance of these policies with five of Nussbaum's capabilities (senses, imagination and thought; emotions; practical reason; affiliation; control over one's environment). Interwoven throughout this chapter were some of the barriers to equal educational opportunity: unequal class structures and possession of the various forms of capital; austerity; precarity; the attainment agenda and the deficit ideology. I highlighted that despite the many merits of the Scottish educational policies and their resonance with the Capabilities Approach, these barriers stand in the way of equal access to educational opportunity for some young people. Like Duffy's character and Janice, many pupils in Scottish schools experience a variety of these barriers to equality of educational opportunity and each responds differently.

In Chapter 5 I brought all of the characters together and shifted the focus from pupils to teachers who, I believe, can and do make a difference in young people's lives. Here I asserted that the Capabilities Approach can show teachers, school management teams, local authorities and the government what we need our practitioners to do and to be to work towards educational equality in twenty-first century Scotland. With a similar approach to the first part of Chapter 4, I used the same five capabilities to highlight what teachers need to do and to be to ensure that they and their pupils have lives of human flourishing. I also reiterated that although many Scottish policies and reports resonate with the Capabilities Approach there remain obstacles in the way of achieving equality of educational opportunity. Running through my discussion of the capabilities were some of the hurdles facing teachers: challenges to autonomy; hegemony; crisis discourse and the attainment agenda. All of these can threaten teacher affiliation to the school, pupils and local communities, not to mention control over the working environment. I highlighted the inextricable links between pupil and teacher wellbeing and discussed the importance of the emotions as well as shining light on the importance of critical thinking for teachers, praxis and positive teacher/pupil

relationships. If twenty-first century Alec and Jamie, Mary and Liz, Duffy's character and Janice are to fare better, then all these obstacles need to be addressed. I now distil the key points from the chapters to provide some recommendations.

6.3 Research Implications

In this section I highlight research implications that have arisen from the dissertation process. These are varied and idealistic because we need to 'think creatively about what justice can be' (Nussbaum, 2006: 415). First of all I stress the need for recognition of the multiplicity of disadvantage. Secondly I return to the many merits of the Capabilities Approach in education. Thirdly, I assert that there also needs to be greater recognition of the impact of class structures in order to work towards educational equality. This has implications for our teacher training institutions, our existing teachers and our educational policies. By pulling together a multitude of strands into these three broad components (the multiplicity of disadvantage; the merits of the adoption of the Capabilities Approach in education; recognition of the impact of class structures on educational opportunity), I do not seek to understate the complicated nature of education and trying to ensure equal educational opportunity for all young people. Teaching in the twenty-first century is far from straightforward and so is working towards equality of educational opportunity.

What it is to be disadvantaged cannot be simply defined. Inequality of educational opportunity exists for a whole range of reasons, many of which are outside the school environment and disadvantage is clearly a key factor. Both disadvantage and inequality of educational opportunity are multidimensional; both blight young people's lives and prevent human flourishing. As I stated throughout the dissertation, the recommendation that we look at 'impoverished lives' not simply at 'depleted wallets' (Sen, 2000: 3) is very useful guidance to bear in mind. The key to ensuring that young people's future lives are not impoverished or disadvantaged seems to lie in improving educational opportunity for all. To do so we must recognise the multiplicity of disadvantage and move beyond a narrow

perspective of what it is: not every disadvantaged young person is poorly turned out and lacking in nutrients; not every well turned out young person is advantaged. The dissertation characters are extremely useful in exemplifying different types of disadvantage in our society. Alec highlights grief and the impact of a parent's unstable employment; Mary shows how parents' negative attitudes to education can prevent their children from making their own choices and fulfilling their academic potential; Duffy's character shines light on disaffection and mental health issues illustrating that some young people leave school ill prepared for adult life; Janice illuminates the struggles of living in a dysfunctional household. All are impoverished or disadvantaged in some way. They all show the effects of Sen's sources of variation: personal heterogeneities; physical environment; the social climate; and differences in relational perspectives. The clustering of disadvantages is also prevalent in these young people's lives. However, some still manage to embrace education and to exercise agency. In twenty-first century schools there are also young people whose disadvantage is quite different from the fictional characters described here. Some of today's young people have parents whose working lives prohibit them from spending 'quality time' as a family (to use a now hackneyed phrase); some young people might be constrained by 'helicopter parents'¹⁴⁰ and 'tiger mums'¹⁴¹. Our technological world can also be restrictive: with 'cyber bullying' in various forms; celebrity obsession; widespread accessibility of pornography; constant media attention to terrorist acts, and so on. In the most extreme cases, these might be construed as twenty-first century forms of disadvantage faced by young people. Whatever the perspective, it is clear that contemporary impoverishment continues to take many forms and depleted wallets are not the only source of disadvantage.

There is, of course, no simple solution to inequality of educational opportunity but the Capabilities Approach is extremely helpful in evaluating how people are doing. With its roots in philosophy, the Capabilities Approach is thoroughly worked out

¹⁴⁰ Helicopter parents is a term that connotes parents who constantly 'hover' around their children, displaying an overprotective attitude that can discourage independence.

¹⁴¹ Tiger mums are those who have a strict, highly demanding approach to parenting, pushing their children to high levels of attainment.

and far from arbitrary. It ‘attaches great importance to agency and to genuine reflective choice’ (Walker and Unterhalter, 2007: 179). Starting with ‘a commitment to the equal dignity of all human beings, whatever their class, religion, caste, race or gender’ (Nussbaum, 2011: 187), the Capabilities Approach is a counter theory that challenges ‘entrenched but misguided theories’ and moves policy in a more egalitarian direction (Nussbaum, 2011: xi - xii). It demands that policy makers ‘construct meaningful interventions that show respect for and empower real people, rather than reflecting biases of intellectual elites’ (Nussbaum, 2011: xi). In the current economic and political climate, we need ‘a measure that drives government action, not statistical debates’ (Oakley and Tinsley, 2013: 100). The Capabilities Approach might be this measure. It highlights how young people and teachers are faring and provides educators with ‘a useful vocabulary’ to discuss issues of educational inequality. (Walker and Unterhalter, 2007: 8). The Capabilities Approach states that we ‘cannot simply evaluate resources and inputs (such as teachers, or years of schooling)’ (Unterhalter et al., 2007: 2) because looking at ‘inputs’ alone would suggest that every young person in the class or school has access to equal amounts of resources. This, of course, is true on one level because each young person in a school has access to the same teachers, facilities, extra-curricular activities and so on. However, when we look at whether or not each young person can actually convert these resources into capabilities then ‘it is evident that there are considerable inequalities that standard evaluation methodologies tend to overlook’ (Unterhalter et al., 2007: 2) and there is an array of reasons for this - which I reiterate shortly. Honest consideration of the Capabilities Approach would involve all young people in Scotland having agency and the same choices, opportunities and experiences regardless of socio-economic status or family background.

However, in addition to the Capabilities Approach further recognition of restrictive societal structures is vital if inequality of educational opportunity is to be addressed. The impact of class, that it is instrumental in reproducing inequality and perpetuates the existing social pattern (Bourdieu, 1974: 32), is barely acknowledged in Scottish policies. Perhaps this is due to naive egalitarianism (Causey et al., 1999: 34), the assumption that treating all people the same will ensure equity. Until we accept it as a central educational concern, ‘social class

will remain the troublesome un-dead' (Reay, 2006: 289) of the education system, 'a potential monster that grows in proportion to its neglect' (Reay, 2006: 289). Neglected too in the education system is the importance of capital and its subtypes (Bourdieu, 1986). Young people's 'academic fate' (Bourdieu, 1999: 423) can be sealed by possession or lack of capital, with far reaching consequences in later life.

Recognition of the impact of societal structures must be addressed in Scottish educational programmes and intervention approaches. Despite a variety of commendable policies in Scotland that are supportive of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, such as *GIRFEC* and *Curriculum for Excellence*, so far there has been little impact on educational inequality: 'in relation to social class the more things change the more they stay the same' (Reay, 2006: 304). Perhaps this is because educational policies and schools often concentrate on raising the aspirations of young people rather than on addressing class barriers. As I state in Chapter 3, aspirations can actually be high amongst working class young people, contrary to popular belief. It seems, therefore, that if there is a poverty of aspiration in our society it 'lies not in the working classes but in our political elites' (Reay, 2012: online source). Educational policies seem to consolidate class divisions through the curriculum, the constant drive to improve attainment and failure to consider the impact of lack of possession of the forms of capital on the whole educational experience. Some school initiatives concentrate on raising the attainment of the most able young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to enable them to attend university. I see merit in such initiatives (like the LEAPS programme discussed in Chapter 3). However, apart from a small number of alternative route programmes (also described in Chapter 3), there seem to be few attempts to promote vocational routes or whole groups of young people irrespective of ability (Perry and Francis, 2010). A range of inclusive programmes (vocational and academic) is important to avoid the pejorative, divisive labelling mentioned several times throughout the dissertation. Important too is engaging all young people in the education process regardless of social background. The responsibility here lies with government: 'the state needs to take action if traditionally marginalized groups are to be treated fairly' (Nussbaum, 2006: 288).

To tackle Reay's 'monster' (2006: 289) mentioned above, a good starting point must be initial teacher education (ITE) selection procedures and courses. Because 'high quality people achieve high quality outcomes for children' (Donaldson, 2011: 2), then clearly the selection process for those wishing to participate in initial teacher education programmes needs to be robust. This would involve breaking the myth that the most able students make the best teachers and concentrating on finding the right people to be career-long teachers (Sahlberg, 2011: online source), Donaldson's 'right people in the right numbers' (2010). Initial teacher education programmes seldom address social class issues (Reay, 2006: 289) and this would be a welcome addition if prospective teachers are to have knowledge and awareness of restrictive societal structures that prohibit equality of educational opportunity in Scotland's schools. This knowledge and awareness could be gained through professional dialogue about the pathologisation of the working class (Reay, 2006; Gewirtz and Cribb, 2009), 'discursively constituted as an unknowing uncritical tasteless mass' (Reay, 2006: 293), and by exploring divisive, destructive images of certain groups of people. Without recognition of aspects of contemporary educational management that 'literally fix failure in the working classes, while simultaneously fixing them in devalued educational spaces' (Reay, 2006: 298), we can do little to address inequality of educational opportunity. Opening the minds of prospective teachers to the dangers of hegemony and insisting on the importance of critical thinking would also be steps in the right direction.

Teachers currently working in Scotland's schools would also benefit from better understanding of social class issues and how societal structures bear down on and perpetuate inequality. There is acceptance that undertaking professional development activities should be 'a path towards greater professional integrity and human growth' rather than 'a slick, self-managed portfolio of certificates and achievements' (Hargreaves, 2003: 63). However, awareness of the detrimental impact of the pathologisation of working class young people and their families does not seem to be a key recommendation in any of the documentation. Perhaps this is because:

class is seen as everywhere and nowhere, denied yet continually enacted, infusing the minutiae of everyday interactions while the privileged, for the

most part, continue to either deny or ignore its relevance to lived experience (Reay, 2006: 290).

To deny class issues is to deny working class people equal educational opportunity. Instead of deficit assumptions, acknowledging young people's identities and values and working towards real inclusion of all young people in the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities is of great importance (as opposed to the physical inclusion I describe in Chapter 4). *Professional Update* (2014)¹⁴² aims at 'system-wide impact and improvement' for 'the learners of today and tomorrow'¹⁴³. I suggest that awareness of societal structures needs to feature in this improvement to ensure equality of educational opportunity. However, again I assert that teachers need support to improve the lives of young people and this must come from the government first of all.

The Finnish education system teaches us that educational change takes time. There are certainly aspects of the Scottish system that seem to accord with the Finnish approach - such as attempts at professionalising teachers' work, developing good leadership and enhancing trust in teachers. Interdisciplinary teaching has had great success in Finland (Sahlberg, 2012) but has yet to be fully achieved here. Any policy process will be the result of consideration of political and educational ideologies, 'of a micropolitical process and "muddling through"' (Trowler, 2003: 98). What we can learn from Finland is that 'a consistent focus on equity and shared responsibility - not choice and competition - can lead to an education system where all children learn better than they did before' (Sahlberg, 2012: 27), and that 'successful change and good educational performance often require improvements in social, employment, and economic sectors' (Sahlberg, 2012: 28). Although there are undoubtedly lessons to be learned from Finland, we have to forge our own path because 'importing' specific aspects of another country's education system is probably of little value (Sahlberg, 2012: 27). Perhaps in Scotland we have to be patient. However, this is difficult when our systems and

¹⁴² *Professional Update* is a component in Scottish education reform and aims to develop skills and capacities.

¹⁴³ From the General Teaching Council, 'Teaching Scotland' publication, Spring 2014, Issue 54.

structures are affecting young people on a daily basis and currently there is ‘very little research or evaluation evidence about which initiatives have made a significant difference to children’s learning in Scotland, or which children they have made a difference to, and how’ (Sosa and Ellis, 2014: 40).

In this ‘messy, puzzling and complicated world’ (Nussbaum, 1997: 35) there is no simple solution to inequality of educational opportunity. However, raising awareness about related issues is a good initial step. Disadvantage is multi-faceted and complex. It is about much more than finances and money alone does not solve it. The Capabilities Approach can help us to understand this by promoting the capabilities of all people to realise valued functionings. However, we need another layer of understanding and this is about our restrictive societal structures and the polarising effect of treating some people or group of people as inferior to others. An understanding of the impact of the various forms of capital on young people’s educational experiences is also vital.

As I stated in Chapter 3, if we want to ensure that the ‘prizes’ of education are really there ‘for the taking’ (Lochhead, 1984) for all young people then our education authorities would be well advised to embrace the Capabilities Approach. Throughout the dissertation chapters I highlighted the resonance of Scottish education policies such as *Getting it Right for Every Child* and *Curriculum for Excellence* with the Capabilities Approach. I asserted that embracing the Capabilities Approach more fully and systematically would ensure an even greater understanding of how our young people and teachers are faring. For this purpose, Nussbaum’s list is useful because it details what each and every person is entitled to for a life a human flourishing and highlights that each and every capability is crucial - a partial account of the Capabilities Approach would denote a partially flourishing life. However, we need more than this because a true capabilities pedagogy would require acceptance of working class experiences as ‘an important knowledge resource’ (Walker, 2003: 175) and this would involve changing societal and educational views and practices. Until we accept that our societal structures limit young people then we cannot move forward. From these dissertation implications, I now narrow the focus to the impact of the dissertation on my personal and professional life.

6.4 Personal and Professional Impact

I continue to love teaching and, in many ways, this has been enhanced by participating in the Ed. D. course and specifically in the dissertation process. My efforts to intervene positively and respectfully in other people's lives (Freire, 1994: 65) and to promote the life changing possibilities of education for young people - regardless of socio-economic status - are now better informed. My awareness that literature can disrupt young people's expectations (Kidd and Castano, 2013: 378) and reveal other ways of being and doing that young people might not have experienced or considered is now more finely tuned. My recognition of 'issues of power and control' (Brookfield, 1995: 39) is now backed by theory. In this section I evaluate the impact of the research process on my professional practice and pedagogy. First of all I highlight what I gained from the dissertation reading. Then, I discuss the benefits of being a student among students. Finally, I discuss my opportunities to influence others and to further enhance my professional practice.

In reading widely, my ideas about social justice have been simultaneously broadened and fine-tuned. Nussbaum, Sen and Wolff and de-Shalit have opened up new thinking for me. These luminaries show that philosophy can contribute 'not only to understanding the world but to changing it, and changing it for the better' (Shrader-Frechette, 2008: online source). For me, such reading had epiphanic power. Nussbaum's urge that we lead a Socratically 'examined life', her revulsion to a world full of 'technically trained people who don't know how to criticize authority' and her plea to avoid Tagore's 'suicide of the soul' (2010: online source) appealed to me a great deal - and continue to do so. The Capabilities Approach in its varied versions has life changing potential and in studying it, I have a clearer idea of what a socially just education system in Scotland might look like, as I have explained in this chapter. From philosophy I then moved to sociological reading. This opened up my thinking further still. Previously I had only scant knowledge about sociological issues such as the pernicious effects of entrenched societal structures and the impact of the various forms of capital on young people's lives. The sociological reading convinced me that 'to understand the changes of many personal milieux we are required to look beyond them' (Mills, 1959: 10). I was

forced to cast my glance much further than I previously had and to develop my sociological imagination - 'a truly fierce drive to make sense of the world' (Mills, 1959: 211). This insight into sociology allowed me to add another enriching layer to the dissertation. More familiar reading arose in the search for literary characters to exemplify the dissertation's central messages. These characters are not purely fiction to me. They represent real pupils in my classroom, young people who are entitled to equality of educational opportunity and lives of human flourishing.

As an English teacher, I was already aware of the power of literature and this awareness has increased. In my classroom, young people discuss attitudes to education and social class in a 'safe environment' when studying 'Sailmaker'. It does not always have to be about us (teachers and pupils); it can be about 'them' - the characters in the play. 'The Choosing' allows us to talk about choices - and even to introduce notions such as adaptive preferences and transgenerational disadvantages. 'Education for Leisure' fosters discussions about what has 'gone wrong' for the speaker, this potential genius who is bored and unfulfilled. Most young people appreciate the truth and can have conversations about 'difficult topics'. Literature provides a stimulus to do so. What continues to be challenging in my professional context is encouraging young people to engage with literature: to read. However, the redefinition of texts for the twenty-first century¹⁴⁴ makes this easier for teachers. We are not restricted to traditional books in print form: we can use films and audio-versions; we can download; upload; use social media to promote literature and to introduce young people to different ways of being and doing. I will continue to seek new means to make literature meaningful and engaging for young people. I will also search out further opportunities for Literacy Across Learning which is one of the 'responsibility for all' areas of *Curriculum for Excellence*, denoting that all practitioners should contribute to developing and reinforcing young people's literacy skills. Literacy Across Learning need not be restricted to a cross-curricular marking code or subject specific word banks. There are valuable opportunities in every school subject to build on cultural and linguistic capital that might be missing in a young person's home and this is

¹⁴⁴ *Curriculum for Excellence* redefined 'texts' to encompass not only texts in the traditional print form but also a variety of electronic versions including film.

important because 'the lack of capital intensifies the feeling of finitude: it chains one to place' (Bourdieu, 1999: 127).

Being 'a student among students' (Freire, 1972) has had a huge impact on my daily practice. At the start of the Ed. D. course I was rendered 'frightened, embarrassed, and intimidated... in the learner role' (Brookfield, 1995: 51). These feelings did not dissipate fully as the dissertation process unfolded. However, I am now more comfortable with the discomfort and I have greater awareness that many of the young people I teach must feel frightened, embarrassed and/or intimidated during a 'normal' school day. This reminder of what it feels like to be a student has been very healthy for me, hopefully making my interactions with young people more empathetic. This extends to formal and informal feedback about their work and to conversations about their lives. My awareness of the power of the possession of various forms of capital and of our constraining societal structures has also been enhanced. This should also lead to better understanding of why some young people engage fully in education and others do not. I have been given a new vocabulary to discuss issues that are of great importance to me and been reminded of the power of linguistic capital in all our lives (pupils and teachers). Although I have now walked more recently in the shoes of a learner, I realise that I must continue to use my narrative imagination to understand the young people I teach. I did not experience disadvantage when I was growing up and I was encouraged to use my agency to make choices about who I wanted to be and how I wanted to live. However, I realise that many of the young people I teach are not so lucky. It can be difficult to imagine what it must feel like to suffer real disadvantage and then to come to school to have this compounded by curriculum and teacher attitudes. I also recognise the many other challenges that young people face nowadays: for example, the technological forms of bullying and the pressure of celebrity culture mentioned earlier. My notion of praxis - 'action that is morally-committed and oriented' (Kemmis and Smith, 2008: 3) - is now firmer, more solid, and less nebulous than it was. Modelling praxis in my professional context continues to be extremely important and integral to this is demonstrating that I too am a lifelong learner who has much to learn.

Participating in the dissertation process was never a means to an end for me. It was always about 'the doing' of the course, the intrinsic value of education I suppose. This is also an approach that I try to include in my own teaching - despite the 'terrors of performativity' discussed in Chapter 5. Of course I realise the importance of exam results - how could I not? However, I am also aware of the importance of the whole educational experience and of teacher/pupil relationships that really can change lives. Encouraging all young people to fulfil their potential and trying to dispel the 'not for the likes of me' attitude to education (mentioned in Chapter 5) remains essential. This can be extremely challenging when it goes against years of transgenerational disadvantages and adaptive preferences (discussed in Chapter 3). I continue to teach in a comprehensive secondary school in Scotland and to take great joy when young people break the mould of background and make their own choices about their lives (as Alec and Janice did) - whether they decide to continue with education or to go straight into employment. I also continue to worry about the young people who appear not to make informed decisions about what they want to do and be and end up feeling disaffected and unfulfilled like Duffy's genius. I am optimistic that the dissertation research has enabled me to better understand some of the reasons why young people disengage from education. I am more confident now that the dissertation will not be a purely 'paper exercise' because my practice has evolved and hopefully pupils will benefit from this.

In my middle management role, I am in a position from which I can influence other teachers. So far I have been reticent to share very much about the dissertation process for a variety of reasons. This is partly due to my awareness of the day-to-day pressures facing teachers in comprehensive secondary schools - I do not want to add to this. Indeed, this was partly my motivation for not carrying out a different type of research - as mentioned in Chapter 1. However, I realise too, that I am affected by what I consider to be a particularly Scottish characteristic of not wanting to appear immodest about what I have gained. As a mature adult and experienced practitioner this seems somewhat ironic and reminds me, once again, what teenagers must feel like in a classroom situation. I must continue to be aware of this. I must make more opportunities to share some of the rich educational

literature and research that I have so enjoyed and that has prompted me to think critically about my professional actions and motivations.

To say that the dissertation process has had a profound impact on me personally and professionally is not an exaggeration. For a long time I have been aware of the power of literature to reveal other ways of being and doing, to bring ‘pleasure and pain... delight and disgust’ (Kerfoot, 1916: 119) as I stated in Chapter 1. However, I had not fully considered that philosophical and sociological reading could do this too. Many of the texts and writers/researchers that I have discovered throughout the Ed. D. course will continue to be seminal reference points for me long after the dissertation process is over. I have also valued being a student among students more than I could ever have imagined and hope that I remember the discomfort and anxiety that it caused when I teach my classes and see pupils struggling with new concepts. I realise too that if I am serious about being a praxis oriented teacher who questions hegemony then I am duty bound to share some aspects of this valuable and much valued dissertation experience with colleagues and pupils - to attempt to open the doors to their imaginations too.

6.5 Concluding Comments

In the introductory chapter to this dissertation, I described my career trajectory and its literal and metaphorical turning points. I am still travelling and the dissertation process has enabled me to travel more wisely, I think. The impact of this is that I am better equipped to teach twenty-first century Alec and Janice who want to go to university but perhaps lack parental support to do so; that I can see more clearly if Liz is making important life choices about who she wants to be and how she wants to live, as opposed to being moulded by transgenerational disadvantages and adaptive preferences. I hope that I am also now more able to understand why a character like that described in Duffy’s poem ends up depressed and disaffected.

We have much to learn from the dissertation’s literary characters and from the non-fiction pupils in secondary schools in twenty-first century Scotland. Many develop agency and make informed decisions about how they want to lead their

lives, despite having limited possession of the various forms of capital that I have discussed. Greater cognizance of the Capabilities Approach in Scottish education might help teachers to support young people to have lives of human flourishing - as well as having such lives themselves. This 'scaffolding or design for just pedagogies which can be tested and adjusted empirically' (Walker, 2003: 176) is extremely useful in twenty-first century education. The Capabilities Approach also illuminates what is required of governments in order to ensure equal opportunity and what capabilities promote education. Teachers can and do make a difference in young people's lives but societal barriers remain intact (even heightened in terms of austerity) so our educators and potential educators need far greater awareness of issues that can restrict young people.

In the end, 'knowing that your fellow citizen has the same rights as you do humanises us all' (Standing, 2011: online source). True, too, is that 'reducing inequality would increase the wellbeing and quality of life for all of us' (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2010: 25). This is why, throughout the world, people fight for social justice. A more equal society would also ensure a more equal education system¹⁴⁵ - and the reverse might also be the case. Such a system would value the intrinsic worth of education and ensure equality of educational opportunity for all young people regardless of class, religion, race or gender. To borrow Nussbaum's words one last time, I think 'we have the opportunity to do better' (1997: 14) in Scotland and some of this dissertation's findings might help us to do so. Our twenty-first century Alecs, Marys, Liza and Janices deserve no less.

¹⁴⁵ Wilson and Pickett, 2009 cited by Ready, 2012: 8

Appendix 1: Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach

1. Life: being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length; not dying prematurely, or before one's life is so reduced as to be not worth living.
2. Bodily Health: being able to have good health, including reproductive health; to be adequately nourished; to have adequate shelter.
3. Bodily Integrity: being able to move freely from place to place; to be secure against violent assault, including sexual assault and domestic violence; having opportunities for sexual satisfaction and for choice in matters of reproduction.
4. Senses, Imagination and Thought: being able to use the senses, to imagine, think, and reason - and to do these things in a "truly human" way, a way informed and cultivated by an adequate education, including, but by no means limited to, literacy and basic mathematical and scientific training. Being able to use imagination and thought in connection with experiencing and producing works and events of one's own choice, religious, literary, musical, and so forth. Being able to use one's mind in ways protected by guarantees of freedom of expression with respect to both political and artistic speech, and freedom of religious exercise. Being able to have pleasurable experiences and to avoid nonbeneficial pain.
5. Emotions: being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves; to love those who love and care for us, to grieve at their absence; in general to love, to grieve, to experience longing, gratitude, and justified anger. Not having one's emotional development blighted by fear and anxiety. (Supporting this capability means supporting forms of human association that can be shown to be crucial in their development.)
6. Practical Reason: being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life. (This entails protection for the liberty of conscience and religious observance.)
7. Affiliation:
 - A. being able to live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction; to be able to

imagine the situation of another. (Protecting this capability means protecting institutions that constitute and nourish such forms of affiliation, and also protecting the freedom of assembly and freedom of speech.)

B. having the social bases of self-respect and nonhumiliation; being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others. This entails provisions of non-discrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, caste, religion, national origin.

8. Other Species: being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the world of nature.

9. Play: being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities.

10. Control Over One's Environment:

A. Political - being able to participate effectively in political choices that govern one's life; having the right of political participation, protections of free speech and association.

B. Material - being able to hold property (both land and movable goods), and having property rights on an equal basis with others; having the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others; having the freedom from unwarranted search and seizure. In work, being able to work as a human being, exercising practical reason and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers.

(Nussbaum, 2006: 76-77)

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