A PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH TO EMOTIONS: UNDERSTANDING *LOVE'S KNOWLEDGE* THROUGH A FROG IN LOVE

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Abstract:
In this paper I offer a philosophical approach to the emotion 'love', as a response to more psychological approaches presupposed in 'emotional intelligence', 'emotional literacy' programmes, or how some Philosophy for Children practitioners interpret 'caring thinking'. Martha Nussbaum's philosophy of emotions expressed in her book Love's Knowledge, and the complex arguments contained within it have been given a narrative context: the picturebook Frog in Love by Max Velthuijs. The narrative contextualisation shows how literature can be used to explore the meaning of love philosophically, but also (and this is the main thrust of my paper) it is an illustration of how some works of literature can do justice to the complexity involved in understanding emotions. The paper starts with an exposition of one of the sources of a currently popular view of emotion by psychologists and educators. Originally conceptualised by Plato, emotions are regarded as mental states in need of mastery and control. As a result, some parents and educators argue that their age and experience puts them in an advantageous position to tame youngsters' wild 'sides' and to help them 'mature' into adults who understand and manage their emotions, and become so-called emotionally 'literate' or 'emotionally intelligent'. For educators it is an appealing promise of empowerment and achievement for all (Miller, 2009, p 222). One particular approach to teaching and learning called Philosophy with Children (P4C) is also increasingly promoted and adopted in schools as a vehicle for emotional 'intelligence' or emotional 'literacy' (see e.g. Lewis, 2007). The caring thinking it encourages is interpreted psychologically often without acknowledging its moral and political dimensions. After a brief introduction of P4C, I problematise a psychological understanding of emotion by focusing on one book in particular, Martha Nussbaum's Love's Knowledge. With the help of the picturebook Frog in Love I entangle some of her complex arguments about 'love', what it means, and how literature can provide insight. I argue against a behaviourist approach to emotions, and through phronesis, that is, a detailed exploration of 'love' in the context of Frog in Love I intend to show an alternative, philosophical approach to emotions that regards emotions as neither fixed entities, nor feelings 'inside' our 'selves' that need to be managed or controlled, but as complex judgments, as linguistic concepts. Psychological approaches to emotions often misunderstand the 'golden mean' principle to mean self-discipline and willpower, but for Aristotle self-control is not a virtue. Instead, I argue how emotions need to be regarded as informative expressions of and responses to dynamic social relationships and return at the end of the paper to the relevance of this point of view for the theory and practice of P4C as phronesis.

Key words: love; M. Nussbaum; philosophy for children; emotions; *phronesis*

Uma aproximação filosófica ao amor: entendendo *o Conhecimento do amor*, através de um Sapo apaixonado

Resumo:
Neste trabalho, eu apresento uma aproximação filosófica à emoção 'amor', como uma resposta a crescentes aproximações psicológicas pressupostas nos programas de "inteligência emocional", "letramento emocional", ou segundo interpretam alguns praticantes da Filosofia para Crianças, "pensamento cuidadoso". A filosofia das emoções de Martha Nussbaum, expressada no seu livro *Conhecimento do amor*, e os complexos argumentos ali presentes, têm recebido um contexto narrativo: o livro de imagens "Sapo apaixonado", de Max Velthuijs. A contextualização narrativa mostra como a literatura pode ser usada para investigar filosoficamente o sentido do amor, mas ela é também (e esse é o principal impulso do meu artigo) uma ilustração de como alguns trabalhos de literatura podem fazer justiça à complexidade envolvida na compreensão das emoções. Este artigo começa com uma exposição de uma das origens da visão popular corrente das emoções de acordo com psicólogos e educadores. Originalmente conceitualizadas por Platão, as emoções são consideradas como estados mentais que necessitam de domínio e controle. Conseqüentemente, alguns pais e educadores argumentam que suas idades e experiências os colocam em uma posição de vantagem para domar os aspectos selvagens dos jovens, e ajudá-los a 'amadurecer' como adultos, que entendam e controlem suas emoções, e se tornem os tão falados "emocionalmente letrados" ou "emocionalmente inteligentes". Para os educadores, essa é uma promessa atraente de empoderamento e realização para todos (Miller, 2009, p 222). Uma aproximação particular ao ensinar e aprender, chamada de Filosofia com Crianças (P4C), é também crescentemente estimulada e adotada nas escolas como um meio para a 'inteligência' emocional ou 'letramento' emocional (ver ex. Lewis, 2007).O pensamento cuidadoso que ela favorece muitas vezes é interpretado psicologicamente sem o reconhecimento de suas dimensões moral e política. Depois de uma breve introdução ao P4C, eu problematizo uma compreensão psicológica da emoção, focando em um livro em particular: Martha Nussbaum, *Conhecimento do amor*. Com a ajuda do livro de imagens *Sapo apaixonado*, eu enveredo por alguns dos complexos argumentos dela sobre o 'amor', o que isso significa e como a literatura pode favorecer sua compreensão. Argumento contra a aproximação behaviorista às emoções, e, através da *phronesis*, isso é, de uma detalhada investigação do 'amor' no contexto do *Sapo apaixonado,* tento mostrar uma alternativa, uma aproximação filosófica às emoções que não as considera como entidades fechadas, nem como sentimentos 'dentro' de nós 'mesmos' que precisam ser treinados ou controlados, mas um complexo de *julgamentos*, como conceitos lingüísticos.
As aproximações psicológicas às emoções às vezes interpretam mal o "princípio de moderação", entendendo-o como autodisciplina e vontade de poder, mas para Aristóteles o autocontrole não é uma virtude. Ao invés disso, argumento como as emoções precisam ser consideradas como expressões informativas de e respostas à dinâmica social das relações, e retorno no final do artigo à relevância desse ponto de vista para a teoria e a prática da P4C como *phronesis*.

Palavras-chave: M. Nussbaum; filosofia para crianças; emoções; *phronesis*

Una aproximación filosófica al amor

Resumen:
En este trabajo ofrezco una aproximación filosófica a la emoción "amor", como una respuesta a estudios más psicológicos presupuestos en "inteligencia emocional", "letramiento emocional" o en el modo en que practicantes interpretan el "pensamiento cuidadoso" en filosofía para niños. La filosofía de las emociones de Martha Nussbaum, expresada en su libro *Love's knowledge*, y los complejos argumentos allí contenidos, han recibido un contexto narrativo: el libro de imágenes *Sapo enamorado*, de Max Velthuijis. La contextualización narrativa muestra cómo la literatura puede ser usada para explorar el significado del amor filosóficamente, pero también (y este es el principal objetivo de mi trabajo) es una ilustración de cómo algunos trabajos de literatura pueden hacer justicia a la complejidad envuelta en entender las emociones. Este trabajo comienza con una exposición de una de las fuentes de la actualmente popular concepción de la emoción que tienen psicólogos y educadores. Originariamente conceptualizadas por Platón, las emociones son consideradas como estados mentales qe necesitan dominio y control. Como resultado, algunos padres y educadores argumentan que su edad y experiencia los coloca en una posición ventajosa para apaciguar los "costados" salvajes de los jóvenes y para, consecuentemente, ayudarlos a "madurar" como adultos que entienden y administran sus emociones, de modo a llegar a ser emocionalmente "letrados" o "emocionalmente inteligentes". Para los educadores es una promesa atractiva de empoderamiento y realización para todos (Miller, 2009, p. 222). Una aproximación específica de la enseñanza y el aprendizaje, llamada filosofía para niños (P4C), se difunde crecientemente en escuelas como un vehículo para la "inteligencia" emocional o el "letramento" emocional (ver, por ejemplo, Lewis, 2007). El pensamiento cuidadoso que estimula es interpretado *psicológicamente*, a menudo sin reconocer sus dimensiones moral y política. Después de una breve introducción a P4C, problematizo la comprensión psicológica de la emoción, atendiendo a un libro en particular, *Love's Knowledge*, de Martha Nussbaum. Con la ayuda del libro de imágenes, *Sapo enamorado*, esbozo algunos de sus complejos argumentos acerca del "amor": lo que significa, y cómo la literatura puede iluminarlo. Argumento contra una aproximación conductista de las emociones y, a través de la *phronesis*, esto es, de una detallada exploración del "amor" en el contexto del *Sapo enamorado*, intento mostrar una aproximación filosófica a las emociones alternativa que no considera a las emociones como entidades fijas ni como sentimientos "internos" a nuestros "yo" que necesitan sr administrados o controlados, sino como *juicios* complejos, como *conceptos* lingüísticos. Las aproximaciones psicológicas las emociones a menudo malinterpretan el principio del "justo medio" como si significase auto-disciplina y voluntad de poder; con todo, para Aristóteles, el auto-control no es una virtud. Al contrario, argumento cómo las emociones necesitan ser consideradas como expresiones informativas de y respuestas a las relaciones sociales dinámicas y vuelvo, al final del trabajo, a la relevancia de este punto de vista para la teoría y la práctica de P4C como *phronesis*.

Palabras clave: M. Nussbaum; filosofia para niños; emociones; *phronesis*

A PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH TO EMOTIONS: UNDERSTANDING *LOVE'S KNOWLEDGE* THROUGH A FROG IN LOVE

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Philosophy with Children

American philosopher Matthew Lipman pioneered the teaching of philosophy to children as a response to his concerns that children do not think as well as they are capable of, or as is necessary for a well functioning truly democratic society. He speculated that early intervention through a logically sequenced, specially-written curriculum would tap into children's original curiosity, sense of wonder and enthusiasm for intellectual enquiry, and strengthen their philosophical thinking. In collaboration with colleagues at the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC) at Montclair State University (USA), he developed the Philosophy for Children Program consisting of seven philosophical novels and accompanying teacher manuals specially designed for primary and secondary education. Lipman's pioneering work reaches beyond the mere introduction of just another subject in the curriculum—philosophy. It profoundly questions how schools regard knowledge and how subjects are taught. One of philosophy's educational aims is that every student should become, or continue to remain, an enquirer. It requires facilitators to be like 'stingrays', 'to numb' and 'be numbed' at the very same time as a result of deep perplexity about the issues discussed (Murris, 2009). Learning philosophy is best achieved through engagement in philosophical practice as a form of life "that gives expression to the deepest purposes of education" (Cam, 2000, p 10) and includes "the strengths of thinking, often linked to children's forms of life and capacity for play" (Haynes, 2008, p. 59).

P4C reaches far beyond teaching a set of generic thinking skills. Thinking skills, Lipman insists, should always be taught in the context of a humanistic discipline, such as philosophy—a discipline that is 'representative of the heritage of human thought' (Lipman, 1988, p. 40; 1991, pp. 29, 30). *How* we think in a

'community of enquiry' (the pedagogy of P4C) is as important as *what* we think. Moral responsibility for the 'how' and the 'what' comes with the democratic and meta-cognitive processes of P4C. Philosophical enquiries involve many intuitive decisions, and reaches far beyond the mechanical application of a philosophical toolbox. It requires complex, practical judgments balancing critical, creative, caring and collaborative thinking as well as exercising social intellectual virtues, such as courage, modesty, honesty, respect, patience, awareness and constructiveness in giving and receiving critical challenge (Quinn, 1997, Chapter 9).

Characteristic of teaching philosophy in a community of enquiry[1] is the critical and collaborative reflection on the everyday language we use. When analysing the meaning of words, philosophers 'spiral together' into a deeper understanding of the language they use when they talk, think, or think about thinking (Murris & Haynes, 2000). Philosophical concepts, such as 'beauty', 'fair', 'good', 'poor', 'stranger', 'knowledge', 'clever', 'rubbish', are explored, deconstructed and reconstructed in enquiries, aided by knowledge of the history of philosophical ideas. These concepts are *common* to all English language users, *central* to the way we think about ourselves and others, but also *contestable*. Their meanings are 'fuzzy at the edges', because of their generality.

In order to investigate philosophically what 'love', for example, means; we need to *connect* with our own loving experiences and we will notice that other concepts such as 'commitment', feelings', 'like', 'lust' and perhaps even 'hate' help in our search for a better understanding. These four characteristics of philosophical concepts are sometimes called the four 'Cs' of P4C (Splitter and Sharp, 1995).

[1] For an excellent introduction to the community of enquiry pedagogy and Philosophy for Children, see: Joanna Haynes. *Children as Philosophers*, London, RoutledgeFalmer, 2002.

The shepherd and his dog

In his complex dialogue *Phaedrus*, Plato describes the efforts of a person to be a philosopher. He makes an analogy between passion for philosophical enquiry and falling in love with someone. Out of all of his dialogues, this is the only one in which Socrates leaves the city of Athens (the embodiment of reason) and travels to the countryside to engage in philosophical conversation. It may be no coincidence that the topic explored by Socrates and his partner-in-dialogue, Glaucon, is love and that the journey can be characterised by his discovery of "monsters that come from *within*" (Plato, 1995, pp ix, x; my emphasis). For Plato the self[2] consists of three distinct drives: the lowest are the appetites (e.g. various bodily needs) and the highest is reason (e.g. curiosity to solve a mathematical puzzle). In between those two, are what we call the passions or emotions, which are clearly distinct from appetite and reason. They are irrational and clearly not expressions of physiological needs. The self is likened to a winged two-horse chariot driven by a charioteer (reason), who has difficulty with one of the horses, a wild, disobedient animal (Plato, 1995, 246a-d).

Plato's moral theory focuses on the struggle 'inside' an individual. The wider context, such as the social or political, is not involved in understanding the emotions. Plato seems to assume a distinct 'within' and 'without', 'inner' and 'outer', although it has been argued that the ontological status of the three 'elements' of the self vary in the dialogues. In the *Phaedrus* he speaks of distinct 'parts' of self. In the *Symposium*, however, he regards it as 'a single stream of mental energy'. A translator and commentator of *The Republic*, Desmond Lee, reminds his reader that Plato's intent is not to speak "with scientific precision, but rather on the level of ordinary conversation" and that he is more concerned about ethics than psychology; about motives of self and its impulses to action. Lee is convinced that

[2] *Psyche* is often translated as 'soul', but following Jones in W. T Jones *The Classical Mind*; 2nd ed. New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970, I prefer 'self' as Plato's *psyche* is not a theological, supernatural notion, but natural. I also prefer it to 'mind', which is often used in contrast to the body.

much of Plato's language when he speaks of 'parts' or 'elements' or 'faculties' of self is metaphorical (Plato, 1987, p 207). Plato's concern is to describe the conflicts people encounter within when making decisions to act. In dialogue with Glaucon, Socrates explains[3]:

> 'The mind of the thirsty man, therefore, in so far as he is thirsty, simply wants to drink, and it is to that end that its energies are directed.'
> 'Clearly.'
> 'If therefore there is something in it that resists its thirst, it must be something in it other than the thirsty impulse which is dragging it like a wild animal to drink. For we have agreed that the same thing cannot act in opposite ways with the same part of itself towards the same object.'
> 'That is impossible.'
> 'For instance, it is not fair to say that an archer's hands are pulling and pushing the bow at the same time, but that one hand is pushing it, the other pulling.'
> 'Certainly.'
> 'Now, can we say that men are sometimes unwilling to drink even though they are thirsty?'
> 'Oh yes; that is often true of many people', he said.
> 'Then how are we to describe such cases?' I asked. 'Must we not say that there is one element in their minds which bids them drink, and a second which prevents them and masters the first?'
> 'So it seems.'
> 'And isn't the element of prevention, when present, due to our reason, while the urges and impulses are due to our feelings and unhealthy cravings.' (Plato, 1987, 439b-e)

Socrates continues to define the nature of the third 'part' of self. He wonders what happens when a person believes he has been wronged. He explains to Glaucon:

> 'And what if he thinks he's been wronged? Then his indignation boils over and fights obstinately for what he thinks right, persevering and winning through hunger, cold and all similar trials. It won't give up the struggle till death or

[3] In this translation, *psyche* is translated as 'mind'.

> victory, or till reason calls it back to heel and calms it, like a shepherd calls his dog.' (Plato, 1987, 440d,e)

The influence of Plato's moral philosophy on the history of ideas has been truly remarkable. But in contemporary philosophy, radically different ontologies have emerged that have rendered as misleading the simile of mastery, that of a 'shepherd' (reason) in control of his 'dog' (emotion). For example, Neo-Aristotelian philosopher Martha Nussbaum explores emotions as part of an intricate web of the aesthetic, the social, the ethical and the political. She offers an intriguing philosophy of emotions to which I will now turn.

Phronesis

Nussbaum in her book *Love's Knowledge* (1990) challenges philosophers to write differently and the form of this paper has been influenced by it. *Love's Knowledge* is an expression of truth 'dictated by the heart'. The method of practical philosophy she uses is *phronesis* (practical reason) and requires a practice of attending to particulars, respect for emotions and a "non-dogmatic attitude to the bewildering multiplicities of life" (Nussbaum, 1990, p 27). This highly influential notion from Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* requires a kind of reason that is personal and experiential, flexible and not formulable (Dunne, 2001, p 9). Practical reasoning is not just something we *do*, but necessarily involves a certain *character* of the reasoner, according to some philosophers of education, including Joseph Dunne and Shirley Pendlebury (Dunne & Pendlebury, 2003, p 206). For them, practical reason leads to wise actions only if the thinker exercises various virtues, such as reciprocity, mutual respect, openness, a willingness to give reasons and to listen to others. The common thread is willingness to give-and-take. They understand *phronesis* as characterised by a habit of "salient focusing". Taken from Amelie Rorty's work, Dunne and Pendlebury explain that a habit of salient focusing involves:

> …the ability to see fine detail and nuance and the ability to discern the differences between this situation and others that to the inexperienced eye might seem as the same (Dunne & Pendlebury, 2003, p 207)

Salient focusing is partly constituted by cognitive dispositions, such as a person's perceptions of and emotional responses to situations (Dunne & Pendlebury, 2003, p 208). That emotions are involved in the perception (*aisthesis*) of the necessary details of a particular situation is now clear, but what can we learn through *phronesis* about emotions and their intelligence?

A philosophical enquiry into the meaning of an emotion such as love would first involve an investigation into the everyday usage of the word 'love' in particular, concrete contexts. Nussbaum acknowledges the influence of Wittgenstein on her thinking: grammar misleads us into thinking that we need to access the abstract through the abstract. But in her view a search for the universal meaning of the concept 'love' in 'love of nature', or chocolate, or God, or one's unborn baby would lead into darkness. Narratives, on the other hand, provide the context to explore "that strange unmanageable phenomenon or form of life, source at once of illumination and confusion, agony and beauty" (Nussbaum, 1990, p 4).

In order to make sense of Nussbaum's *Love's Knowledge* (1990) I have found the story *Frog in Love* a helpful narrative. The picturebook contextualises her beautiful, but complex and abstract writing. The story *Frog in Love* has, what Dunne and Pendlebury call, "epiphanic power", in that it discloses exemplary significance in its particular setting and has the capability of illuminating other settings (Dunne & Pendlebury, 2003, p 203). There is no need for "rerouting through abstract generalities": literature moves and instructs the reader through the depiction of individual cases and characters. Literary art reveals a universal theme such as love, without necessarily stating or explaining what love is (Dunne & Pendlebury, 2003, p 204). It will become clear how such a wonderful piece of literature can serve to explore the meaning of love *philosophically*, and in doing so, illustrates how

literature can do justice to the complexity involved in understanding emotions – an overlooked, but essential feature in learning about them[4].

Frog in Love

In *Frog in Love* (1989), written and illustrated by Max Velthuijs, the main character Frog notices that he does not know whether he is happy or sad. He just feels odd. He has been walking about in a dream all week, he feels like laughing and crying at the same time, turns sometimes cold, sometimes hot and (pointing at his chest) there is "something going thump-thump inside me". After having been 'diagnosed' by the 'doctor' Hare as being in love, Frog realises that he doesn't know *who* he is in love with. When he finally finds out that he is in love with Duck, Piglet comments: "A frog can't be in love with a duck. You're green and she is white", but Frog is not bothered about that and he declares his love to Duck. Young pupils have raised questions such as "Can you be in love without knowing it?", "Can a doctor indeed make such a diagnosis?", "Is it possible to be in love without knowing who you are in love with?" And, "Can you be mistaken in thinking you are in love?".

In this picturebook, text and image are interdependent[5], provoking further questioning, and opening up opportunities to sympathise and empathise. Frog's experiences are like our own, or maybe not, or just a little bit. We need to find out by drawing on our own concrete experiences of loving relationships. Hare's chair and his raised hand tell us something about their unequal relationship, a powerful portrayal of doctors' status in our society. There is nothing about that

[4] The comparison between *Love's Knowledge* and *Frog in Love* I have used in another piece of writing with a different purpose: to show how the ambiguity and complexity of children's literature renders picturebooks an obvious choice for the teaching of philosophy. See: Karin Murris. Autonomous and Authentic Thinking through Philosophy with Picturebooks, in: M. Hand & C. Winstanley (eds). *Philosophy in Schools* . London, Continuum, in press.

[5] This interdependence is expressed in my spelling of 'picturebook', over and above the more common 'picture book'.

in the text. Frog's body (e.g. shoulders, face) suggests that he feels uncomfortable standing there – the kind of self-consciousness one can experience when visiting a doctor (see figure 1).

Figure 1.

On a previous page, we read that he doesn't know whether he is "happy or sad" (see figure 2).

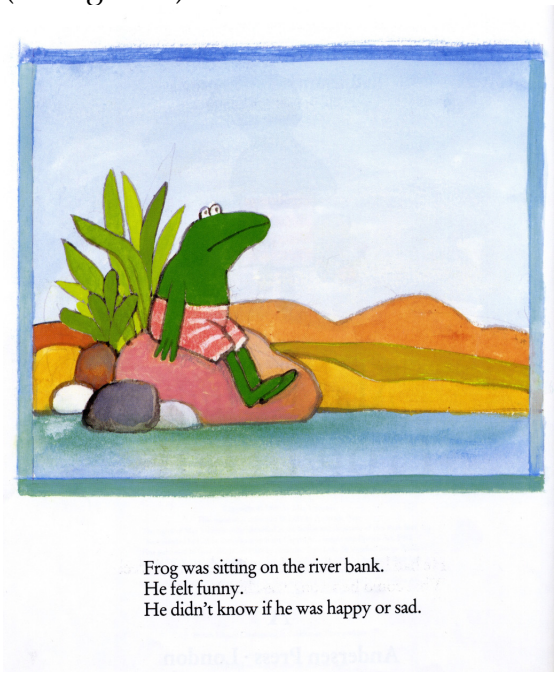

Figure 2.

How easy is it to distinguish between 'being happy' and 'being sad', or any emotions for that matter? How accurate a portrayal of love is it? Such invitations to question the things we perhaps normally take for granted are characteristic of Velthuijs' dialogues. The difference between feeling happy and sad is far from straightforward and deserves further exploration. The ambiguous and open-ended nature of his narratives, provoke speculation of a hypothetical nature – there are no right or wrong answers in text or drawings.

Frog's contradictory emotions and mad behaviour in the text, images and the 'gaps' in between (e.g. his effort to make the biggest jump in history to impress duck despite the health risks involved) set up a dialectical relationship with the reader. The reader needs to consult the characteristics of his or her own concrete experiences of loving relationships to respond to the narrative. It is in this way that Marcel Proust thought that readers become "the readers of their own selves" (Proust quoted in Nussbaum, 1990, p 39). The literary text is an "optical instrument" through which the reader becomes a reader of his or her own heart" (Proust quoted in Nussbaum, 1990, p 47) and acquires self-knowledge.

Intelligence of emotions

Not only in philosophy, but also in psychological theories, emotion is the "Cinderella of cognitive development" (Meadows, 2006, p 435). Traditionally emotions are seen as subjective, inner mental states, and it is only very recently that the interface between social relationships, emotional well-being and cognitive models of the world is starting to be explored (*ibid*), pp 435, 6). British psychologist Margaret Donaldson indicates that emotions are "value feelings", that is, they "...mark importance: we experience emotion only in regard to *that which matters*" (Donaldson, 1993, p. 12). It is now more generally accepted that developing sensitivity of emotional response can lead to achieving "…wider and more refined appraisals of situations…" (Bonnett, 1994, p 16). However, educating the emotions

through, for example, emotional literacy programmes has a psychological base and still dichotimises thought and feeling. There seems to be an assumption that many people are confused about their feelings and emotions and that talking about them will 'fix' this and restore certainty.

'Emotional intelligence' has been immensely popularised by Daniel Goleman. He describes it as "the capacity for recognising our own feelings and those of others for motivating ourselves, and for **managing** emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships" (Goleman, 1996; my emphasis). As is the case in Plato's moral theory, there seems to be an assumption here that understanding our emotions (e.g. through brain research) helps to control and *manage* them and probably avoids their 'spillage' into an otherwise more objective reasoning process. In a specially written resource for schools, Michael Brearley explains 'emotional intelligence' as "the ability to control and use our emotions to enhance our success in all aspects of our lives" (Brearley, 2000, p v) and schools can achieve this by making pupils aware of how they feel and *giving them the tools* to change them. Feelings should be modified, so he says, to support pupils' learning and not hinder it (Brearley, 2000, p v). The resource is saturated with metaphors of 'mastery', 'fixing' and instrumental rationality. Similarly, Goleman talks about the importance of controlling impulses and to regulate one's moods. Distress should be kept from "swamping the ability to think" (Goleman, 1995, p 34).

Howard Gardner is critical of Goleman's use of the phrase 'emotional intelligence', preferring to call it 'emotional sensitivity' (Gardner, 1999, p 206). Emotions, he claims, are not 'contents' to be processed, but they accompany cognition in such a way that they cannot be separated. The phrase 'emotional intelligence suggests that 'other' intelligences are not, and that, according to Gardner, "flies in the face of experience and empirical data" (*ibid*). Moreover, he is concerned about the confusion of linking 'being emotionally intelligent' with 'being a good person':

> Goleman singles out as "emotionally intelligent" people who use their understanding of emotions to make others feel better, solve conflicts, or cooperate in home or work situations. I certainly cherish such people, but we cannot assume that being emotionally intelligent means those skills will be used for socially desirable ends…someone who is sensitive to others' emotions may still manipulate, deceive, or create hatred"(*ibid*, pp 206,7).

The idea that emotions should be managed and controlled is not new. In a sense, the Stoics too thought that negative emotions need to be managed, and preferably removed, through cognitive adjustments as the judgements they are based on appear to be false. We get angry (e.g. because the train is late), because our expectations are irrational (after all, trains are often late). If we change our expectations, we can change our emotional response to people and events. Although this may be true and desirable at times, Nussbaum reminds us that life itself is finite and full of events outside our control. In that sense, the Stoic idea of a self-sufficient agent can itself be seen as irrational.

Nussbaum is more interested in the *intelligence of emotions*, than in *emotional intelligence*. I understand this distinction as a difference between the idea of educating our emotions, and the idea that we can learn from our emotions and that emotions can teach us, that is, can point us at truths that are otherwise not available. Love is a kind of understanding not available to non-lovers (Nussbaum, 1990, p 41). Emotions are means to express thoughts. During the past thirty years or so, much psychological and philosophical literature has agreed that emotions are forms of cognition, sometimes called 'appraisals'. They involve evaluative judgements about something 'in the world' (Schleifer & McCormick, 2006, p 17). We get angry, or jealous, or sad on the basis of beliefs of about how things are and what is important to us.

Our moral values express themselves through our emotions. They can be *subtle* and *sophisticated* responses to others and events. Anger, for example, can *tell*

us, that is, make us think about a situation in a different way. We may have been wronged or damaged – information otherwise not available.

In Nussbaum's work, there is an intricate link between the intelligence of emotions and literature. Authors' artistic ability to display life's uncontrolled events as they happen to their characters makes the reader care about the events. Emotions are not just the 'hook' to 'catch' the reader into the cognitive work required from a philosopher in enquiry. It is the emotional itself that provides understanding. When Frog in *Frog in Love* makes the highest jump in history to impress the duck he has fallen in love with (see figure 3), the careful description of the unexpected event that follows makes us care about Frog's bumpy ride 'back to earth', and illuminates love's painful trials:

> At thirteen minutes past two on Friday morning, things went wrong. Frog was doing his highest jump in history when he lost his balance and fell to the ground. Duck, who happened to be passing at the time, came hurrying up to help him (Velthuijs, 1989).

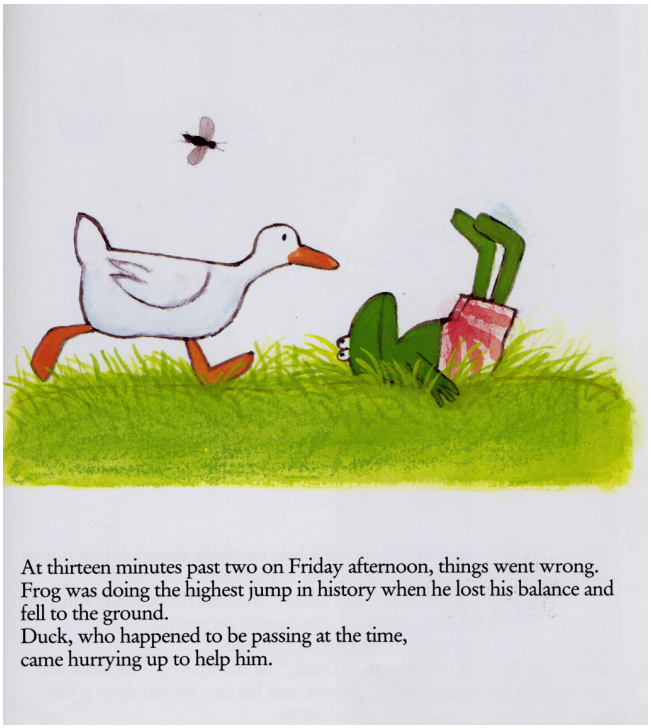

Figure 3

This is a key moment in the story - a sudden reversal in circumstances, or what Aristotle calls *peripeteia* (Bruner, 2002, p 5), and the specificity of the timing of the accident draws the reader even more into Frog's predicament.

We see here an intricate link between the 'community of enquiry' pedagogy (the pedagogy of Philosophy for Children) and the use of literature in Aristotelian conceptions of learning and teaching. Nussbaum writes:

> A large part of learning takes place in the experience of the concrete. This experiential learning, in turn, requires the cultivation of perception and responsiveness: the ability to read a situation, singling out what is relevant for thought and action. This active task is not a technique; one learns it by guidance rather than by a formula (Nussbaum, 1990, p 44).

Novels indeed can "*exemplify and offer such learning*". The dialogical relationship between narrative and reader is extended to a similarly dialogical relationship among members of a community of enquirers. This also includes the facilitator who acts as a guide in "the cultivation of perception" through connections with abstract concepts. We learn about the meaning of the abstract notion of love through our dwelling on and dialogical responsiveness to Frog's particular predicament. It is the unexpectedness of the 'twists and turns' in literature that surprises and compels the reader. Emotions are not used as 'hooks' to 'catch' students' attention and commitment to construction of new ideas, but it is the emotional dimension of a narrative that provides insight into its meanings - meanings that are as ambiguous as life itself: finite and full of events outside our control.

Frog is not alone in not knowing who he is in love with. Nussbaum expresses the complexity involved beautifully:

> We deceive ourselves about love - about who; and how; and when; and whether. We also discover and correct our self-deceptions. The forces making for both deception and unmasking here are various and powerful: the

> unsurpassed danger, the urgent need for protection and self-sufficiency, the opposite and equal need for joy and communication and connection. Any of these can serve either truth or falsity, as the occasion demands. The difficulty then becomes: how in the midst of this confusion (and delight and pain) do we know what view of ourselves, what parts of ourselves, to trust? Which stories about the condition of the heart are the reliable ones and which the self-deceiving fictions? We find ourselves asking where, in this plurality of discordant voices with which we address ourselves on this topic of perennial self-interest, is the criterion of truth? (And what does it mean to look for a criterion here? Could that demand itself be a tool of self-deception?) (*ibid*, p 261)

Although she finds Proust's answer attractive that "knowledge of the heart comes from the heart" (*ibid*, p 262), she prefers a more radical solution, that is also non-scientific. A scientific solution could be symbolised through the character Hare, carefully attending with precision and certainty to Frog's symptoms, analysing and categorising, unifying and generalising.

Frog's predicament poses fascinating questions about the nature of love and how we do indeed *know* we are in love. To what extent are we passive victims in our love for others? Does our love reveal itself, as it does for Frog, through our inability to eat or sleep, and through self-conscious embarrassment when in the company of our loved one? Do we have a choice in our desire to express love through art and extraordinary deeds to impress our sweetheart? Most importantly, to what extent can we deceive ourselves that we do indeed love someone?

Nussbaum critiques Proust's certainty that self-deception is impossible in the case of love. For Proust, Frog *knows* he is in love, *because of* his suffering – the suffering itself is a piece of self-knowing. Attention to the details of our concrete experiences reveals some part of reality itself. Nussbaum describes Proust's take on emotions as follows:

> Knowledge of our heart's condition is given to us and through certain powerful impressions that come from the

> reality itself of our condition and could not possibly come from anything else but that reality (Nussbaum, 1990, p 266).

In *Frog in Love*, Frog seems powerless in his love. He cannot help but love Duck and he certainly cannot deceive himself about his love. Nussbaum would have difficulty with this idea. Is Frog simply confused, or, for example, expressing egocentric needs? Her second concern with Proust's account is the most interesting. It centres on the notion of 'cataleptic impression'. From the Greek, *cataleptic*, meaning "firmly grasp" (Nussbaum, 1990, p 265, footnote 7), the metaphor highlights the power of the impression of 'being in touch' with reality and therefore not to be deceived, but she wonders:

> Can any feeling, taken in isolation from its context, its history, its relationship to other feelings and actions, really be cataleptic? Can't we be wrong about it and what it signifies? Emotions are not, nor does Proust believe they are, simply raw feelings, individuated by their felt quality alone. Then to be sure that this pain is love - and not, for example fear or grief or envy - we need to scrutinize the beliefs and circumstances that go with it, and their relation to our other beliefs and circumstances (*ibid*, pp 269, 270).

Related to the necessity to contextualise Frog in order to establish the truth or falsity of his love, is the circularity of Frog's knowledge that he is in love. Frog knows he is in love, because of his suffering: he cannot eat or sleep and cannot address duck directly. In this way, love is defined as the very things revealed to Frog in cataleptic impressions. But, importantly, the more interrelational features of love such as laughter, mutuality, well-wishing, or tenderness cannot be cataleptic impressions. What is real about love is defined as "that which produces a cataleptic impression' and a cataleptic impression is 'what is impressed by what is real" (*ibid*, p 270).

Frog's analysis of his 'condition' is a solitary affair; Duck is not in the vicinity. He does not know whether his love is reciprocated or not. Knowledge or trust in the feelings of the other, appear to be irrelevant for what love is.

Nussbaum would disagree. She would probably judge Frog as "*alone and self-sufficient in the world of knowledge*", and his love an interesting relation with himself, rather than "*a source of dangerous openness*" (*ibid*, p 272). At first sight Frog's gender may not be accidental (Frog's creator is also male). Nussbaum speculates that her discussions about love with undergraduate students confirm Carol Gilligan's related observations in her influential work *In A Different Voice*: the emphasis on autonomy and control in the education of males seems to make men more interested in views of love that promise self-sufficiency (*ibid*, p 276, footnotes 20,1). Women are more likely to agree with a conception of love as not a state or function of the solitary person, but "a complex way of being, feeling, and interacting with another person. To know one's love is to trust it, to allow oneself to be exposed" and "to fear being criticised, deceived and mocked". Above all, "it is to trust the other person" (*ibid*, pp 274,276, footnote 21).

For Nussbaum, love is a relationship. Frog's love is *about* Duck. This *aboutness* -how he sees and interprets her - is part of the emotion itself. His perception of her may change over time. He may start to perceive her as a threat or a source of embarrassment. He may start to hate or pity her. Frog's beliefs and judgments about Duck and the values he attaches to her are crucial to the identity of the emotion itself (Nussbaum, 2004, p 188,9).

Re-cognising love

Characters in literature transcend particularity: Frog helps us mediate between individual, concrete experiences of love and the abstract concept of love. He *is* a frog and at the same time, he is *not*; he is Frog, neither animal, nor human. Love's inter-relational nature and vulnerability are apparent throughout the text, especially when he finally plucks up the courage to admit to Duck his feelings for her. But more than anything else, it is the *pictures* that 'pull on the heartstrings' of young and old; his facial and bodily expressions re-mind us of love's delights and suffering, and help us re-cognise love.

What can we learn from Nussbaum's analysis of love and the way in which I have applied some of her ideas about emotions to the *Frog in Love* picture book? It seems that *defining* love by an analytic summing up of necessary and sufficient conditions is impossible. In doing so, we would miss what love *is*. Nussbaum, urges us to turn to stories, as "knowledge of love is a love story" (*ibid*, pp 274). Thought experiments or philosophical text books may miss the human contextualisation. We need to know much more about Frog to investigate, for example, whether he really is in love, or whether it is self-deception. Like cognition, emotions have no privileged place of trust, and their truth or falsity involves a continuous dialogical checking of relevance and consistency in picture, text, the temporal history of both author and narrative, and one's own complex history of emotions. This dialogical process can be enriched by verbalising thoughtful emotion and passionate thoughts in a community of others[6]. This is *not* the same as the idea that children need to "master" the vocabulary that exists with regards to the emotional life as Philosophy for Children proponent Ann Margaret Sharp proposes. She explains:

> I might experience a sensation, such as what seems a pain in my stomach, but if I cannot put a word to the sensation, e.g. jealousy or envy, there is a real sense in which I cannot reflect upon it. Just as there is a specific vocabulary identified with the cognitive life, so such a vocabulary exists with the emotional life. And somehow children must **master** this vocabulary (Sharp, 2007, p 255; my emphasis).

For Sharp, the educational aim of P4C is to bring about "emotional maturity" (another form of management) and significantly, it is the teacher's role to "refine their understanding" by providing opportunities to "identify the nouns, verbs and adjectives that describe emotions" (Sharp, 2007, p 255). The idea is that we can identify only complex emotions and think about them if we

[6] How picturebooks can be used for the teaching of philosophy is explained and exemplified in Karin Murris and Joanna Haynes. *Storywise: Thinking through Stories*. Newport, Dialogueworks, 2000 (www.dialogueworks.co.uk).

have learned the necessary language. Is it true that concepts are the 'tools' to 'uncover' the existence of various emotions; and are adults indeed in a better position to do so? How context specific is this language? Could young children offer unique perspectives relative to their 'form of life'? (see Murris, 1999).

An alternative view is to understand our recognition of love and associated behaviours, as *products* of our own categorisations, that is, the language itself brings certain emotions into existence. By calling particular experiences 'love', certain socially, culturally and historically influenced patterns of behaviour are set in motion. Take, for example, Frog's lack of appetite, creative art-attacks and giving of flowers to Duck. Without Hare's 'diagnosis', would Frog have behaved in similar vein? Would he have felt the same 'thing'?

Adults' discomfort with uncertainty, however, tends to steer teachers into the direction of educational approaches that offer a scientific (but false) sense of security. Psychological approaches tend to look for *causes*, and the effect (e.g. disruptive behaviour) can be modified by changing the cause. In *Frog is Sad,* also by Max Velthuijs, a more complex picture emerges. In the story, Frog wakes up feeling sad. He feels like crying, but does not know why. He simply cannot be happy. His friends try to cheer him up, but all efforts are in vein. When Rat plays him a tune so beautiful that Frog begins to cry, Rat laughs and laughs until Frog's smile grows and grows until he is laughing and singing and dancing with Rat. All his sadness is gone. When Little Bear asks him: "*But why were you so sad in the first place?*" Frog responds "*I don't know…I just was*" (Velthuijs, 2003).

Contemporary philosopher of education, Kristjan Kristjansson, makes the case that Aristotle has been misunderstood by popular authors such as Daniel Goleman and Elliot Cohen, who talk about self-control, self-discipline and willpower as tools to keep emotions under the control of reason, and as such reintroduce the Platonic distinction between reason and passion, despite claiming to synthesise heart and head. In contrast, Aristotle does not regard self-control as a virtue. Kristjansson explains:

> Only the virtuous person has his emotions, as well as his actions, in a mean; he does not need to control them since he is a manifestation of his own properly felt emotions (Kristjansson, 2005, p 681)

For Aristotle, bringing intelligence to our emotions means *infusing* the emotions with intelligence, rather than *policing* them from above with intelligence (Kristjansson, 2005, p 680). Anger, for instance, is not like a horse that needs to be tamed by a charioteer, but can be virtuous if felt at the right time, and expressed towards "the right people, with the right motive, and in the right way" (Aristotle, 1973, p 378 [1106b]). In other words, the particular interpretation of the Aristotelian *golden mean* rule to which many (including Daniel Goleman) subscribe misunderstands Aristotle in a profound sense. According to this rule, the desirable middle is always between two extremes, one of excess and the other of deficiency. For someone like Michael Schleiffer this involves 'controlling', 'handling' and 'managing' one's emotions (Schleiffer, 2005), but for other Neo-Aristotelians it simply means that the extreme emotions simply will not be felt in that way.

In an oft quoted work on the roles of emotion in philosophy, Robert Solomon claims that emotions are not only *evaluative*, but also *constitutive* judgments. He argues that emotions do not just *find* interpretations and evaluations of the world, but they *construct* them. Emotions *supply* the standards by which we interpret our experiences and are meaningful to us (Solomon, 1993, pp 132-4). Facts are interpreted by a framework that give them meaning and purpose. According to Solomon, emotions are a judgment or set of judgments that embody our dynamic relationships and express the values, ideals, structures and mythologies, through which we experience and evaluate our lives (Solomon, 1993, p 126).

Emotions are not just 'props' or 'supports' for intelligence, but they are essential elements of human intelligence. After Proust, Nussbaum calls emotions "upheavals of thought", that is, like geological upheavals, they are part of the

same landscape of cognition, and as "thoughts about value and importance they make the mind project outward like a mountain range". Emotions are an awareness and response to the perception of value and importance (Nussbaum, 2004, pp 1, 3). Emotions arrest the intellect to pause and reflect and are part of mind's moral course. Importantly, the epistemological re-thinking of emotion's role in human intelligence has a profound impact on philosophy. Our intellect *includes* responses to parts of the world we are not fully in control of, and philosophers need "to acknowledge [their] own neediness and incompleteness", because emotions involve judgments about important things and they involve appraising an external object (including e.g. the health of our own bodies) as salient for our own well-being (*ibid*, pp 4,19).

Conclusion

If we accept that emotions are not fixed entities, not just feelings 'inside' our 'selves' that need to be managed or controlled, but are informative expressions of and responses to dynamic social relationships, the role philosophy could play in the education of emotions becomes visible. Identification of how and what we feel is far from straightforward and as Nussbaum suggests, we could even deceive ourselves about the love (we think) we feel for a person. Our emotions are constructed through our language, our morals, our history, our culture and our thinking, and they are in constant flux.

Exploring stories with others in an environment that actively nourishes and encourages talk about thinking and emotions helps students (and teachers) to construct more profound self-narratives and understanding of others. As participants in a community of enquiry listen to the diverse descriptions of what falls under umbrella terms such as 'love', 'anger' or 'jealousy', they become accustomed to the necessity of reflecting upon such descriptions. They will start to question the meaning of such words before such meanings become anchored

and solidified in self-narratives and narrative accounts of others. It is in this sense that psychological approaches to emotional literacy can be unhelpful. They present the vocabulary of emotions as straightforward: adults can explain and teach their meanings as if they are unambiguous. As if, all you need for complete understanding is to know the word. In contrast, participants in philosophical enquiry have the opportunity to embrace the uncertainty that comes with philosophical thinking.

Philosophical dialogues may increase children's and teachers' vocabulary, but more importantly they help to develop a critical, meta-cognitive stance towards the meaning of concepts and the role emotions play in thinking and everyday living.

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