

EXPERIENTIAL IMAGINING IN ETHICAL EDUCATION AS PART OF A SYNTHESIS OF COGNITIVE THEORY OF EMOTION AND GESTALT PEDAGOGY

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The paper discusses the intersection between art, imagination, emotions, and ethical education from the perspective of an innovative synthesis of cognitive theory of emotion and Gestalt pedagogy. One of the elements of this synthesis is the cognitive theory of emotion as endorsed by Martha Nussbaum. Emotions are understood as evaluative judgments that are related to our perception of the world around us. Emotions are our attitudes, understandings, and assessments of the world from the perspective of our goals and projects. This proves an excellent starting point from which to address them as an essential part of ethics education. Next, art and imagination are considered as a vehicle by which to address emotions and other domains within ethics education. Here, I introduce the concept of “experiential imagining” and point to the methodologies that sustain it. I have developed this concept as part of my research on the overlap between Gestalt pedagogy, cognitive theory of emotion, and the art of life approaches to ethics. Next, I present the synthesis between cognitive theory of emotion and Gestalt pedagogy. I then illuminate the concept of experiential imagination, emphasise its role in ethics education, and conclude with some reflections on the art of life approach to ethics and ethics education.

Key words: *emotions, experiential imagination, art, cognitive theory of emotion, ethical education, Gestalt pedagogy, art of life*

1. Introduction

This paper discusses the intersection between art, imagination, emotions, and ethical education. One of the cornerstones of this intersection and of the synthesis that arises from it is the cognitive theory of emotion as endorsed by Martha Nussbaum. According to this view, emotions are evaluative judgments that are related to our perception of the world and the relationships that we form within it. Emotions are our outlooks, understandings, and assessments of the world around us from the perspective of our goals, projects, and anything else we attach a particular value to that determines the core of our notions of a good life. Nussbaum claims that the key idea in this respect is that this view enables one

“... to show that understanding emotions (their relation to judgement, their evaluative judgement) in this way raises definite groups of normative questions and problems, and also offers a set of recourses for their solution.” (Nussbaum, 2001, 15)

This proves a very good starting point for addressing emotions as an essential part of ethics education (section 3). Next, art and imagination are considered as a vehicle for by which to address emotions and other domains within ethics education (section 4). Through art and imagination, we can explore different aspects of our identity, reflect upon our reactions to different hypothetical situations, set goals for ourselves and envisage how to reach them, etc. In section 5, I introduce the concept of “experiential imagination” and point to the methodologies that embody it. I have developed this concept as part of my research on the overlap between Gestalt pedagogy, cognitive theory of emotion, and the art of life approaches to ethics. I illuminate this concept, emphasize its role in ethics education, and conclude with some reflections on the art of life approach to ethics and ethics education.

2. Nussbaum’s cognitive theory of emotion

The fundamental characteristics of cognitive theories of emotion is that cognition is a component part of all emotions; cognition in this respect is most often defined as evaluative judgment. Emotions are cognitive in the regard that they are akin to knowledge. They enable us to (properly) perceive and evaluate the world around us. The following is a good example of this kind of interpretation of Nussbaum’s thought:

“Nussbaum has a detailed description of anger as the following set of beliefs: ‘that there has been some damage to me or to something or someone close to me; that the damage is not trivial but significant; that it was done by someone; that it was done willingly; that it would be right for the perpetrator of the damage to be punished’ (...) Elaborating upon her example, Nussbaum points out how the different beliefs are related to the emotion. She notes that, ‘each element of this set of beliefs is necessary in order for anger to be present: if I should discover that not *x* but *y* had done the damage, or that it was not done willingly, or that it was not serious, we could expect my anger to modify itself accordingly or recede’ (...). Thus, a change in an individual’s beliefs – in his or her way of seeing the world – entails a different emotion, or none at all.” (Johnson, 2015)

Cognitive theory of emotion is one a broader type of emotion theories that are labelled as theories of the emotion process.

“The cognitive theories contend that the early part of the emotion process includes the manipulation of information and so should be understood as a cognitive process. This is in contrast to theories that state that the generation of the emotion response is a direct and automatic result of perceiving the stimulus...” (Johnson, 2015)

This theory claims that the early part of the emotional process involves managing, guiding, and analysing the information received from stimuli and circumstances, and that it is therefore a cognitive process. In other words, a certain emotion appears on the basis of an individual’s evaluation of a given stimulus, which is the result of the comparison between coherence or inconsistency of the given stimulus with the individual’s goals and desires. This interpretation of the process of creating emotions enables us to identify and analyse factors that determine the formation of emotions, to direct them, and to influence the expression of feelings. Given this characterization, it is no surprise that this interpretation of emotion is highly relevant to education in general, and to ethical education in particular.

To set the stage a bit more, I will now take a closer look at the cognitive theory of emotion as advocated by Martha Nussbaum. In her book *Upheavals of Thought*, she puts forward an extensive and in-depth examination of cognitive theory of emotion, which builds upon the Stoic understanding of emotions. Nussbaum thus names the amended version of this theory a Neo-Stoic view on emotions. This theory allows us to understand emotions, to evaluate them, because emotions are understood as cognitions (evaluative judgments) them-

selves; this then gives us the opportunity to shape our moral lives with them. We can specifically focus on those aspects of the cognitive theory of emotion, which are important to the understanding of emotions as related to the art of life. Emotions as value judgments have a cognitive nature – we use them to identify and shape the value of the world around us. Emotions are our views of the world from the perspective of our goals, projects, and anything else we attach value to as part of a conception of what it is for us to live well (Nussbaum, 2001, 49). The correctness and relevance of emotion is therefore one of the foundations of the moral life of individuals, and thus a positive factor for attaining a good life.

In arguing for this view on emotions, Nussbaum analyses her own emotional experiences (using the introspective, phenomenological method), other philosophical theories and points of view as well as various research in the fields of psychology, cognitive science, sociology, etc. Another layer of complexity is added by her stressing the importance of art and aesthetic-cum-emotional experiences as part of the process of reflecting upon and attaining a good life. In order to provide a clearer illustration of her theory, I suggest the following division, which splits her interpretation of emotions and the process of emotion into three aspects:

- i. characteristics of emotions (e.g. urgency, motivational pull, tolerance, connection with *eudaimonia*, etc.),
- ii. experiential aspects of emotions (e.g. locality, intensity, imagination, etc.)
- iii. constituent parts of emotions (e.g. object, intentionality, belief, value dimension of the object).

Viewing the constituent parts and characteristics of the emotions that Nussbaum acknowledges, it is apparent that emotions are always about something. They have a certain object; emotions are about something or somebody. Emotions as mental states are directed at an object. For example, Nussbaum's book discusses the news she received during a lecture in 1992 in Dublin; her mother had developed a massive internal infection and fever after an operation, and her life was in serious jeopardy. In the days that followed, Nussbaum felt various emotions such as fear, hope, grief, and anger; all of these were about her mother, directed at her and her life. Nussbaum writes "my fear's identity as fear

depends on its having some such object: take that away and it becomes a mere trembling or heart leaping” (2001, 27).

Further, the object of an emotion is an intentional object. The objects that are embedded in our emotions are based on our perceptions, representations, beliefs, and interpretations of these objects. Emotions include active ways of seeing and interpreting. For example, in Nussbaum’s fear, she perceived her mother both as tremendously important and as threatened; through her grief, she saw her mother as valuable and as irrevocably cut off from her (Nussbaum, 2001, 27–28). This kind of perception does not necessarily have to contain an accurate view of the object.

As a further elaboration of these phenomena, we can also note e.g. that emotion does not only include ways of seeing these objects, but also beliefs about them. Nussbaum claims that beliefs are essential to the nature and recognition of emotions.

“What distinguishes fear from hope, fear from grief, love from hate – is not so much the identity of the object, which not might change, but the way in which the object is seen.” (Nussbaum, 2001, 28)

For example, merely feeling irritated or physically excited does not reveal to me whether I feel anxiety, grief, or even pity. It is only when we turn to thoughts as part of emotion that we can distinguish between them. At the same time, thoughts and beliefs are not understood merely as tools that reveal what we feel; rather, we must understand them as a fundamental part of the emotions themselves and include them in the definition of emotions.

These intentionalities and beliefs associated with emotions are closely related to value of a particular kind and an individual’s aspect of evaluation, both of which are closely connected with our own flourishing. The object of emotion is seen as important (worthy) for my good life (the eudaimonistic character of emotions, which means their connection with human development, happiness, and a good life, or part of my *eudaimonia* [concerning my goals and projects]).

“They insist on the real importance of their object, but they also embody the person’s own commitment to the object as part of here scheme of ends.” (Nussbaum, 2001, 33)

According to Nussbaum, it is likewise important to note that emotions are simultaneously experientially accompanied by a sense of pas-

sivity, and consequently powerlessness, in conjunction with the fact that an individual cannot control the world to the extent that he can ensure, gain, repel, etc. a given subject of emotion, which is important (2001).

“Most of the time emotions links us to items that we regard as important for our well being, but not fully control. The emotion records that sense of vulnerability and imperfect control.” (Nussbaum, 2001, 43)

Emotions are furthermore understood as related to the central, important relationships or attachments that one forms or is embedded into throughout his or her life. Relationships are one of the most essential and resourceful environments for learning about our emotions. This is important if we want to sustain the image of human beings as relational beings, beings that are not merely autonomous and rational individuals, but also dependent relational beings (MacIntyre, 1999; Nussbaum, 2001). Human beings develop into independent, autonomous practical thinkers based on the experience of vulnerability and the accompanying experience of attachment and love, but this autonomy is always limited by the aforementioned dependence. The balance between these two perspectives is important. The virtues of dependent rationality are developed and cultivated as part of our social relations, relations of giving and receiving, or our recognition of the needs of others and our own dependence on others.

“Norms of giving and receiving are than to some large degree presupposed both by our affective ties and by our market relationships. Detach them from this background presupposition in social practice and each becomes a source of vice: on the one hand a romantic and sentimental overvaluation of feeling as such, on the other a reduction of human activity to economic activity.” (MacIntyre, 1999, 117–118)

3. An integrative approach to ethical education and the role of emotions in it

Ethical education includes all aspects of the process of education that either explicitly or implicitly relate to ethical dimensions of life, and which can be structured, guided, and monitored with appropriate educational methods and tools, or are embedded into the educational process (Strahovnik, 2016). Education as a process is inherently value-laden in terms of what is transferred (content) as well as in terms of the means (methods) and interactions that are formed in the educational space.

“Education implies that something worthwhile has been intentionally transmitted in a morally acceptable manner.” (Peters, 1970, 25)

Ethical education takes these internal or implicitly contained ethical dimensions, reflects upon them, and sets them as explicit aims.

Ethical education aims to do the following: promote ethical reflection, attentiveness, autonomy, and responsibility; to enable individuals to examine and understand important ethical principles, values, virtues, and ideals; to equip individuals with the intellectual and moral abilities (critical thinking, reflection, comprehension, appreciation, compassion, valuing, etc.) needed for responsible moral judgment, decision-making, and action; to guide the exploration of different values based on different viewpoints and delve into different moral justifications on the basis of these values; to orient one’s focus towards a commitment to recognised basic values; to enhance self-esteem and feelings of self-worth; to enable one to overcome any possible prejudices, biases, discrimination, and other unethical attitudes and practices (Strahovnik, 2014); to simultaneously help individuals create an appropriate, respectful attitude towards themselves, others around them, society, and the environment; to promote cooperative, collaborative behaviour and to deepen motivation for creating a group, class, or school environment as a genuine ethical community; to build character (with intellectual and moral virtues) in a way that will enable individuals to flourish and to achieve a morally acceptable, personally satisfying good life (the ancient ideal of *eudaimonia*) (Strahovnik, 2016).

This integrative approach to ethical education aims to establish a balance between individual and societal aspects. This idea can be traced all the way back to Socrates and the conception of ethical inquiry as a collaborative matter, and not merely something that one can do in isolation. This is then reflected in approaches used in the classroom. Developing ethics in an educational setting fosters this kind of collaborative perspective and enables individuals to gain several different and comprehensive perspectives on ethical issues.

“On this view, philosophical inquiry provides a model of the inquiring community: one that is engaged in thoughtful deliberation and decision making, is driven by a desire to make advance through cooperation and dialogue, and values the kinds of regard and reciprocity that grow under its influence.” (Cam, 2014, 1208)

Another reason for this integrative view on ethical education is to place an emphasis on the community, starting from the “community of inquiry” as promulgated by the philosophy with children approach and followed by other forms of a community, as this methodology is embedded with values. This complements the ancient focus on the “life well lived” with that of “living together”. The central aim of striving to cultivate an autonomous, responsible, and caring individual is a worthy task.

“If our world is to be a decent world in the future, we must acknowledge right now that we are citizens of one interdependent world, held together by mutual fellowship as well as the pursuit of mutual advantage, by compassion as well as self-interest, by a love of human dignity in all people, even when there is nothing we have to gain from cooperating with them. Or rather, even when what we have to gain is the biggest thing of all: participation in a just and morally decent world.” (Nussbaum, 2006, 324; cf. Strahovnik 2015)

Next, we can consider the central role of emotions in education and the educational process. It is readily apparent that emotions must be considered when discussing personal growth and development. We shape our social network and mental life based on emotions. Through emotions, we choose who or what we like, what we are afraid of, what is dangerous for us, what motivates and attracts us, etc. We may sometimes perceive emotions as disturbances when they are too intense and thus make it more difficult to take decisions, or we may perceive them as obstacles that disempower us. Either way, it is still better to address them and not to ignore them. This way, emotions can be used as tools, guides, and learning resources. This paper lists some of the main reasons why it is important to learn about emotions and understand them and why it is important to include emotional aspects in ethical education. Emotions are shaped by cognitive processing, thus students can learn to critically and creatively think and speak about their emotions. This allows emotions to motivate cognitive achievements.

When students feel unpleasant emotions e.g. envy, they can inspect and analyse their beliefs that empower this emotion. Based on this analysis and a critical examination of emotion-beliefs, students can better understand their emotions and emotionality and can understand themselves better; this also serves as a good resource for their moral development and self-transformation. Emotions motivate creative thinking.

In addition to this, desired behaviour often can be controlled through emotional regulation tools and techniques. It is also important to add that learning about emotions and emotionality is as important for students as it is for teachers. Ware, for example, claims that

“... educators can engage the emotion of love through bringing beauty into the classroom. The ‘vast, open sea of beauty’, to appropriate Plato’s description of the lover’s vision, is diverse and limitless. Depending on the level of schooling, a range of examples in art and literature (conceived broadly to include as well drama, music, dance, design, and more) can be creatively incorporated into lessons with the specific aim of grabbing the emotions, which in turn compel further investigation (in the classroom, in extra-curricular activities, and in personal free pursuit), and indicate future lines of discussion. There exist in the literature a number of compelling arguments that engaging the emotions of, for example, compassion, sympathy, and empathy—through materials and stories—is the *sine qua non* of the ability to formulate moral assessments. Educating through love and attraction to the beautiful, however, offers a uniquely powerful capacity to harness the motivational aspects of the emotion.” (Ware, 2014, 62–63)

What remains undefined is the exact type and set of methodologies by which to include and address emotions in the educational process. Next, I will consider art and experiential imagining in particular as one of these methodologies.

4. Art as a vehicle by which to address emotions

One way to address and learn about emotions is through imagination stimulated by art (music, drawing, literature, singing, etc.).

“The emotions typically have a connection to imagination and to the concrete picturing of events in imagination, that differentiate from other, more abstract judgemental states. E.g. if I am thinking of a distant sorrow, let us say the death of many people in an earthquake in China a thousand years ago, then I think it’s likely that I won’t have a grief, unless and until I can make that event vivid to myself through imagination.” (Nussbaum, 2001, 65)

As individuals, we are different in our initial disposition or ability to “use imagination” without a specific activation process. Because of its versatility, art is a great way to stimulate imagination. Nussbaum also ascribes art a vital role in cultivating the power of (sympathetic) imagination. Art cultivates capacities of judgment and sensitivity that can and should be reflected in the choices a person makes.

Art stimulates and cultivates the imagination:

“Imagination cultivated through art fosters and stimulates a sense of wonder and curiosity. Even simple nursery rhyme such as ‘Twinkle, twinkle little star, how I wonder what you are’ leads children to feel wonder – a sense of mystery that mingles curiosity with awe. Children wonder about a little star. In doing so they learn to imagine that mere shape of the heavens has inner world, in some ways mysterious, in some ways like their own. They learn to attribute life, emotion, and thought to a form whose insides are hidden. As time goes on, they do this in an increasingly sophisticated way, learning to hear and tell stories about animals and humans. These stories interact with their own attempts to explain the world and their own actions within it.” (Nussbaum, 1997, 89)

Imagination then enables the individual to comprehend motivations and choices. Imagination helps us understand and learn about compassion (the concept of compassionate imagination, and alongside this, responsibility for ourselves, others, the environment). Art challenges conventional wisdom, world views, and values. It presents us with a various array of ways in which to perceive and think about the world around us. It leads us to contemplate about our place in this world. Art is first and foremost about emotions, and it thus addresses our emotions. Art encourages and stimulates critical and creative thinking. It shows us different ways to think ‘outside the box’. Art illuminates our sense of identity, and it also enables us to express it. It establishes a sense of other and community. These are just some aspects of art that make it a good means by which to foster a holistic approach to (ethics) education.

5. Gestalt pedagogy, emotions, and experiential imagination

To transfer these roles that art can play in the educational process into more specific, workable methodologies, I have borrowed from the approach of Gestalt pedagogy and combined them into what I call the *experiential imagining approach*. Before I lay it out in greater detail, I will briefly tackle the main foundational points of Gestalt pedagogy.

The main principles of pedagogy based on a Gestalt approach are a common position of growth through the process of experiential learning. In this, both Gestalt pedagogues and Gestalt psychologists and

therapists view the individual as being constituted from a multitude of dimensions; however, the whole is always formed such that it counter-influences each of these dimensions (these include emotions and emotionality). Gestalt pedagogy is focused on pedagogical aspects in the broadest sense, wherein the educational and development aspects of the individual are in the forefront. It is based on the assumption that learning is a lifelong, holistic, and creative process involving a whole person who responds to their environment, especially to relationships, and thus establishes the boundaries of his or her personality; and it is difficult to confine it solely to individual aspects (Centa, 2017).

“Gestalt therapy is an existential and phenomenological approach, emphasizing the principles of present-centered awareness and immediate experience. To discover how one blocks one’s flow of awareness and aliveness, the individual in therapy is directed to fully experience current thoughts, feelings, and body sensations.” (Glass, 2004, 402)

The methods used by the Gestalt approach are therefore always sensitive to the holistic character of human beings, always viewing them as completely unique individuals. The central aim of the pedagogical process is education as the holistic growth of a variety of talents and capabilities that an individual has such that this individual can also understand and experience them.

In the context of these principles, the Gestalt approach perceives individuals as wholes with integrity of body, soul, and spirit, as well as integrity of the past, present, and future (the importance of biography and biographical learning). Furthermore, it perceives man as a person, a subject, and an individual. In this context, the Gestalt approach perceives the person as a dynamic organism in a relationship with the environment that is maintained through every new contact with reality. This enables us to form our identity and use it as a guiding idea in our lives.

“Moral identity encompasses a person’s moral character, values, principles and attitudes connected through ideals and ends in a meaningful, persistent and relatively stable notion of the moral self, all this being expressed in its actions and projects one pursues in life. Moral identity, understood in such a way, clearly has some bearing on one’s moral judgments, actions and decisions, either by shaping the space of alternatives that the agent sees as relevant, permissible or worthy to be pursued (limit on our choices) or by preferring a chosen alternative over the other.” (Strahovnik, 2011, 70)

The Gestalt approach perceives a person as living in a system of (interpersonal) relations and in a relationship with his or her surroundings, wherein all of these factors are interdependent and interact with one another. As is apparent, the Gestalt approach already incorporates ethical dimensions, specifically the aspects of evaluation, dialogue, and the direction of personal growth. Emotions are also often tools either for recognising or cultivating ethical attitudes and establishing an ethical orientation towards an ethical ideal.

However, Gestalt pedagogy does not have its own developed theory of emotions. It interprets emotions more or less only as tools to be used as part of the aforementioned growth and learning process. Here are a few typical quotes from Perls, one of the founding fathers of this approach.

“An emotion is the integrative awareness of relation between the organism and the environment.” (Perls, 1998, 407)

“The emotions are means of cognition. Far from being obstacles to thought, they are unique deliverers of state of the organism/environment field and have no substitute; they are the way to become aware of appropriateness of our concerns: the way the world is for us.” (Perls, 1998, 409)

These quotes make apparent an attentiveness to the relational dimensions of emotions, as well as their evaluative dimensions, or at least their potential. However, the Gestalt approach does not have a full-fledged theory of emotion in place that would further elaborate and utilise this. This is why it is very fruitful to combine the Gestalt approach with the cognitive theory of emotion described above, while retaining some methodologies and practical activities for the classroom that it develops. They complement each other well and unify into a more integrative approach.

In ethical education, the synthesis of the Gestalt approach and cognitive theory of emotion allows us to do the following: gain a deeper understanding of emotions and emotionality, which gives us a pedagogical tool with which to address emotions in the first place; by addressing emotions, we can point to their relevance in students' lives, particularly in developing their self-image and in forming relationships with others; by utilising the notion of holistic growth and focusing on learning through experience, we can incorporate emotions in relation to values and ethics in this kind of experiential learning; the aforemen-

tioned synthesis provides us with a framework within which we can identify different ways in which emotions contribute to our good life; we can employ it to point to the relevance of all emotions, not just those we may find more acceptable or desirable; since the experiential approach embedded in Gestalt emphasises the importance of the body, we can interconnect various emotional (bodily) responses and feelings with their origins in the evaluative judgments we make.

One aspect of this synthesis is experiential imagining. Experiential imagining is an activity – a part of the educational process – the core of which is imagination. As part of the process, the imagination is stimulated and employed such that it includes many different experiential dimensions, e.g. scents, sounds, an awareness of our body and its movements, an awareness of space. It can be implemented within the process of mediation, but while more traditional forms of meditation are essentially forms that exclude various modalities of experiential attention, the process described here purposively employs as many dimensions of experience as possible, but in a mindful manner that enables the person to then reflect upon it and analyse it.

Emotional dimensions are inherent in the process. In imagining a certain person, event, or thing, we aim to stimulate these aspects and combine them in various ways.

“Work with fantasy is particularly necessary, because in school-teaching there is always the reason in the forefront in the development of man, rational thinking, cognitive side of a personality, and emotions and the spirit remains in the background.” (Chasanová, 2012, 38)

In the next step, experiential imagining can be used to connect with a current experience that also includes moral intuition and judgments or, more broadly, ethical attitudes that shape our lives. This allows one to “play out”, interconnect, and also understand his or her current experience or situation, as well as a life as a whole. Art is a very useful tool by which to employ this method of experiential imagination. In order to fully use this approach, one is best situated if we combine the holistic Gestalt approach that already includes integrative and biographical learning with insight from the cognitive theory of emotion, which helps us to connect emotions with evaluative moral judgments and ethics. What emerges is also an ethical reflection within a broad conception of ethics education that borders on the art of life approach to ethics.

6. Conclusion: The relevance of emotions to education and the art of life

Emotions are key to education, since they are an inevitable part of the process of learning and personal growth. One way to broaden the concept of education and to highlight its ethical dimensions is thus to discuss the art of life approach to ethics. Questions about the good life, how a worthwhile life should be lived, and about the pursuit of happiness lie at the core of this approach. In ethics, besides answering the questions of “what we should do” and “what sort of people we should be”, a further basic question is “how should we live in order for our lives to be good”. The philosophical endeavour of posing and answering this last question has been labelled “the art of life”; this is once again becoming an important part of moral philosophy. Under its auspices, the (narrowly) cognitive and emotional aspects of life are placed side by side.

“One of the most interesting accounts on the relation between cognitive and emotional components in moral ideas can be found in the written, and more extensive, version of Hågerström’s inaugural discourse (...) Here the Swedish philosopher claimed that, if axiological communication between individuals occurs, it is necessary to enter not only in the other party’s world of thought, but also to engage in his emotional life and volition. On one hand, without the principle of empathy (*sympathia*), it is not cognitively possible to understand moral arguments: (...) On the other hand, the more information we have about the world, the more will we be able to develop moral feelings, just like ‘in the aesthetical field, deeper knowledge opens the spirit for new aesthetical values.’ (Mindus, 2009, 99)

In my work, I propose a wider synthesis of the Gestalt approach and cognitive theory of emotion into a comprehensive model by which to achieve the good life in the context of the art of life. The aspects that are highlighted within the art of life model infused with a synthesis of Gestalt approach and cognitive theory of emotion are: (i) openness to genuine dialogue; (ii) the creation and establishment of stable, long-lasting, safe, loving relationships; (iii) the constancy or robustness of one’s identity; (iv) identifying and developing personal excellence; (v) developing and pursuing personal projects; (vi) a commitment to morality and morally acceptable actions and attitudes, and; (vii) striving for comprehensive intellectual and emotional rightness. This model effectively enables a deeper understanding of and the successful attain-

ment of the art of life. In each of these aspects, the dimension of emotions is indispensable.

“We must first realize that life is a work of art and that it can’t not be a work of art; every person is an artist of life, not by choice but by decree of the fate. But inside this framework of fate it is still our choices that co-determine our life and these choices must be made despite of uncertainty. Taking responsibility for the outcomes of our choices is at the end this ultimate choice that is central for the art of life and which we confront in our pursuit of happiness.” (Strahovnik, 2011, 75)

The approach of experiential imagination (as based on insight from cognitive theory of emotion, philosophy for children, Gestalt, and the art of life approach) thus combines cognitive and conative aspects to create a foundation upon which to cultivate both moral and intellectual virtues (Strahovnik, 2016b). It also fosters the inclusion of moral experience into ethical education. Iris Murdoch claims that moral experience is best characterized in perceptual and that we can understand moral differences as differences in vision:

“... moral differences look less like differences of choice, given the same facts, and more like differences of vision. In other words, a moral concept seems less like a movable and extensible ring laid down to cover a certain area of fact, and more like a total difference of Gestalt. We differ not only because we select different objects out of the same world but because we see different worlds.” (Murdoch, 1956, 40–41)

It fosters diverse strategies for communicating moral evaluation and a more holistic moral vision (e.g. new concepts, metaphors, stories, imagination, etc.), since “the task of moral philosophers has been to extend, as poets may extend, the limits of language, and enable it to illuminate regions of reality which were formerly dark” (Murdoch, 1956, 49). Ethical educators share this task with philosophers.¹

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ISKUSTVENA IMAGINACIJA U ETIČKOM OBRAZOVANJU KAO DIO SINTEZE KOGNITIVNE TEORIJE EMOCIJA I GESTALT PEDAGOGIJE

Mateja Centa

Ovaj rad bavi se presjekom umjetnosti, imaginacije, emocija i etičkog obrazovanja iz perspektive inovativne sinteze kognitivne teorije emocija i Gestalt pedagogije. Jedan od elemenata ove sinteze kognitivna je teorija emocija kakvu podržava Martha Nussbaum. Emocije se shvaćaju kao procjene koje se odnose na percepciju svijeta oko nas. Emocije su naši stavovi, razumijevanja i evaluacije svijeta iz perspektive naših ciljeva i projekata. To se pokazalo kao odlična polazišna točka za proučavanje emocija i drugih domena unutar etike obrazovanja. U ovom radu uvodim pojam 'iskustvene imaginacije' i ukazujem na njezine metodologije koje smo razvili kao dio istraživanja preklapanja Gestalt pedagogije, kognitivne teorije emocija i pristupa etici iz perspektive umijeća življenja. Potom predstavljam sintezu kognitivne teorije emocija i Gestalt pedagogije, nakon čega razjašnjavam koncept iskustvene imaginacije, naglašavam njezinu ulogu u etičkom obrazovanju te zaključujem s nekolicinom osvrtu na pristup umijeća življenja etici i etičkom obrazovanju.

Ključne riječi: *emocije, iskustvena imaginacija, umjetnost, kognitivna teorija emocija, etičko obrazovanje, Gestalt pedagogija, umijeće življenja*