What Good is Love?

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Abstract:

The role of emotions in mental life is the subject of longstanding controversy, spanning the history of ethics, moral psychology, and educational theory. This paper defends an account of love's cognitive power. My starting point is Plato's dialogue, the Symposium*, in which we find the surprising claim that love aims at engendering moral virtue. I argue that this understanding affords love a crucial place in educational curricula, as engaging the emotions can motivate both cognitive achievement and moral development. I first outline the state of the challenge between dominant rival theories regarding emotions in learning. Next, I demonstrate how Platonic virtue ethics offers the most tenable prospect for an education of reason and emotion. Third, I sketch three practical ways educators might constructively engage emotions in the classroom. I conclude that love's virtue is its peerless power to motivate the creative and lateral thinking which leads to moral development.*

Introduction

Love can get us into all kinds of trouble—love of power, love of ourselves, love of what's harmful, not to mention unrequited love and limerence. Furthermore, the emotions in general are often taken to be at odds with reason, getting in the way of making informed decisions, and love is no exception to such criticism. This paper sets out to discuss whether love can ever fulfil its promise to make life better, by investigating a controversial suggestion of Platonic virtue ethics that it is *love* which really ought to be at the heart of creative thinking and moral decision-making.

Can the emotions be educated? Ought they? The past twenty years has witnessed a groundswell of academic interest in the emotions, with considerable attention being given to arguing and articulating their philosophical, political, and medical import.[1] Yet the role of emotions in moral education has seen an unfortunately neglectful polarisation, with as-yet unresolved tension pitting educating for rationality against educating for moral development of the total person. This is, of course, not a new debate. Accordingly, this interest has sparked something of a minor Renaissance of and academic focus on *historical* treatments of the emotions, particularly Aristotelian views on love and friendship, Stoic applications to psychological health, and pre-Socratic discussion of the emotions in the poetry of, for example, Hesiod and Empedocles.[2]

Plato is often portrayed as advocating an abandonment of such emotions as love and desire, in order for the philosopher to have access to the true objects of knowledge. Yet, in his dialogue, the *Symposium*, he writes that a life without love is not worth living, and that love is the best chance the philosopher has at true knowledge of beauty and virtue. In this paper, I argue that education by attraction to the beautiful motivates moral development through a unique form of self-creation. I will first outline the state of the challenge between a solely cognitive basis for education, and one that allows for affective or emotional considerations. Next, I will show how Platonic virtue ethics, specifically his theory of love in moral development, holds out the most tenable prospect for an education of reason and emotion, as the power of love carries with it a distinctly creative element: the

generation of virtue in the soul. Finally, I sketch three practical ways this creative love might be employed in the classroom. I conclude that love's virtue is its peerless power to impel one to develop and shape herself. Beauty incites creation of beauty, and the mechanism for that creation is love.

Emotions in Education

The instrumental and utilitarian trends that pervade significant areas of contemporary education are typified by the promotion of the value of school as being primarily or even solely in the service of economic benefit to state or student. In spite of such trends, there remains a sound argument for the view that education ought concern itself with a more comprehensive view of human development. Humans are undeniably emotional beings, and thus that personal development must take the emotions into serious consideration. The challenge is traditionally presented as between a strictly cognitive view of education, and one that seeks to shape the character through emotional development. A brief analysis of these two general views will provide insight into where a virtue ethical framework might be able to contribute a degree of reconciliation for moral educational curricula.

The former view is made prominent by Kohlberg's *cognitivist* understanding of moral development, which—stemming from Piagetian cognitive theory—takes that development to encompass only emotionally disinterested rational capabilities such as social cognition, problem solving, and perspective-taking without affect.[3] On the Kolhbergian educational program of study, moral development is seen as largely the province of cognitive development, relegating emotion to the sidelines as impeding the rationality which is its exclusive focus. On the other hand, two influential anti-Kolhbergian systems have also arisen in the literature: *character education*, as best exemplified in the works of Lickona and Kilpatrick,[4] and the *ethics of care* defended by Noddings, Gilligan, Chodorow, and Slote.[5] Proponents of character education "rally around the belief that the formation of moral dispositions is a vital part of moral education and ascribe to a comprehensive definition of character which views character as comprising dispositions of thought, action, and feeling."[6] The ethics of care take the emotion of caring to be "ontologically basic to human excellence" and that the aims of maintaining and enriching caring relationships must be the anchor of all educational activities and policies.[7] Both of these theories, especially character education, may be mistaken for a brand of virtue ethics, but they differ in at least one significant respect when it comes to educating for moral development: neither character education nor the ethics of care appear to offer a specific mechanism for incorporating reason into their praxis. As Carr laments of care ethics, "it seems in itself to be opposed to any very principled definition of moral association."[8]

Is there a view of moral educational theory that does not place attentiveness to the emotions over and above the development of rational capacities, nor sacrifice them for a quasi-Kantian view of education which all but ignores the emotive aspect of ethical development? In what follows, I want to focus on the emotion of love and its role in educating for virtue. With this as a focus, I hope to show we can find such an educational theory in Platonic virtue ethics, which I will set out in section two.

Virtue ethics can be argued to hold out more over its adversary moral theories since its focus takes into account the human soul as a *whole*—specifically including emotions such as love, but also fear, shame, and the more contentious feelings of Schadenfreude, pride, anger, and maudlin.[9] I identify three reasons for virtue ethics to be the primary candidate for a social scientific educational theory of moral development. First, virtue ethics is fundamentally about a particular ordering of the emotions so as to be compatible with reason. Plato's discussion of the properly ordered soul in his dialogue, the *Phaedrus*, depicts reason as a charioteer harnessing the motivational force of an angry but righteous horse on the one hand, and the wily but chaotic and desiderative

horse on the other. The account is famously set out in an educational context in Book IV of his *Republic*, where the virtuous individual is one whose rational, spirited, and erotic capacities are established "in a relation of mastering, and being mastered by, one another that is according to nature."[10] That relation is artfully expressed by Lewis in his short treatise on emotion and morality in education, *The Abolition of Man*, as the condition in which "the head rules the belly through the chest."[11] Rather than deny, ignore, or suppress the emotions, or relegate them to extra-curricular training, virtue ethics fully acknowledges the potential conflicts between reason and emotion and sets out a structure which accounts for their role in the virtuous life. The major benefit of this accommodation is that it allows for movement in the direction of a possible reconciliation with moral educational theories which focus more on training for rationality.

Second, that virtue ethics is a satisfactorily principled cognitive system ought to go some way in warning off the threat of emotions taking over and destroying the work of reason when faced with a personal moral dilemma. For virtue ethics, especially contemporary virtue ethics as set out in Geach and Hursthouse, does hold that some actions or activities are absolutely wrong.[12] The difference between virtue ethics and consequentialist theories here, however, turns on those situations when an ostensibly morally bad act is required in the face of a more damaging alternative. Whereas the consequentialist would see the act as morally neutral or even positive in its achievement of the best outcome, the virtue ethicist would still be committed to the principle that the act itself was, in fact, wrong.[13]

A third reason virtue ethics is our best candidate for an account of moral education that facilitates the interaction between reason and emotion is that it affords a positive role for reflection in emotive development. Aristotle's "doctrine of the mean"—according to which the virtuous action is the mean between two extremes of character; for example, cowardice and recklessness—requires cognitive reflection in order to *locate* that mean, or, in the case of his supreme virtue, magnanimity, to be able to identify the particular pitch and balance magnanimous action requires in a given situation.[14]

That virtue ethics is conducive to emotions in education is perhaps not surprising. The vocation-focussed or economically-impactful curricula referenced at the beginning of this section share a common trajectory with deontological or utilitarian ethical systems in their emphases on satisfying objective lists or calculating consequences and benefits. If the underlying strength of virtue ethics is its ability to account for the entire human complex—messy emotions and all—a virtue ethical pedagogy of moral development would, at least in theory, be primed to avoid those perhaps negative priorities. In the next section, I focus specifically on how one particular virtue ethical system puts *love* at the heart of not only cognitive motivation, but moral development in tandem.

Love's Virtue in Platonic Ethics

It was the dinner party that went down in history. Decades afterwards, the eager curious desperately gossiped to get a taste of what brought together the beautiful and powerful in one night of intoxicating conversation: Love. In the *Symposium*, Socrates shocks his interlocutors by proclaiming that Erôs, "god of love", is, in fact, not a god at all. Rather, Love is a dæmon, intermediary between gods and men. As he describes the activity and purpose of the dæmon class, it begins to become clear the importance that Plato attributes to this emotion. He writes:

> *For Erôs is in the middle of both gods and men and fills up the interval so that the whole cosmos itself has been bound together by it. For a god does not mingle with a human being; but through Erôs occurs the whole connection and conversation of gods with men.*[15]

Love's power is to bind together the ethical absolutes of virtue, and what approximates it in the individual person. How can love bind together such different realms, the human and the divine? As I interpret Plato, love does this by having as its object the *creation of beauty and virtue*. Love quickens the curiosity we have about the beautiful objects and art forms we encounter in the world, which inspire us and move us to come to know them better, and to learn about what beauty itself really is.

1. Love is oriented to knowledge

Stendhal's famous maxim that beauty is "the promise of happiness" could well be said to be true of the sort of beauty Plato has in mind in the *Symposium*: we can define Plato's love as a belief about the beloved that one's life would be better if that beloved were a part of it.[16] The beauty one experiences in the world constantly beckons her forward to get to know it more intimately. It is sometimes difficult to tell, however, in what way an attachment to the object will impact her. It is for this reason that she is led to study and come to know the object, so as to know whether time spent with it will leave her better or worse. Plato here presents a compelling view regarding the interrelation of all beautiful things in the world and their role in the philosophic life. As one becomes attracted to a beautiful particular, and pursues it with natural curiosity to learn more about it—Where does it come from? Why does it work the way it does? What makes it different to others of its kind?—she will find herself pursuing other beautiful particulars in ever-expanding circles of beauty. As one is beckoned forward by beauty to come to know one work or object, she will find she must learn about another, its context, its language, its history, and other similar beauties. As Nehamas asserts,

> *To love something is always in part to try to understand what makes it beautiful, what drew me—and, as long as I love it—continues to draw me toward it. To understand what it is and to see how it will affect me and to see what it will be able to give me. The more I try to understand a particular object, the more I need to learn about the world in general. The deep and the broad are just facets of one another.*[17]

This is the account of love and beauty we find in the famous "ascent passage" of the *Symposium* (209e-212a). In this passage, the lover is depicted as being led from one beauty by a desire to know more about it, to come to see the beauty in other similar things, and the culture and laws which allow such beauty to flourish, and finally to glimpse that absolute beauty that is the source of all beauty experienced in the world: the beholding of which turns out to be the best life imaginable.

Yet the lover's interest in what is beautiful does not stop there—with a solely cognitive achievement. Instead, the lover aims to come to behold the beautiful as closely as she can, which leads her to create beauty, both in herself and in the wider world. Whilst love leads the lover to come to know and experience greater and wider realms of beauty in the world, the activity of love is further constituted by the *creation* of beauty.

2. Love's object is moral self-creation

The framing characteristic of love, Socrates asserts, is that it is "of something"—just as a father is father of a child so too love is of something, and it "desires that something".[18] Plato's focus on the object of love reveals the complex relational quality essential to it. For love to have an object is simply part of its grounding logic, and the identification of this object is thus fundamental to any attempt to define and understand love. In contemporary moral psychology, this object of love serves as the "intentional object" which is said to be "'about' objects and

states of affairs quite external to the agent."[19] My account of love's object in the *Symposium*, however, locates this object within the individual as her own moral development.

It is commonly claimed in the scholarly literature that the object of love, in the *Symposium* dialogue, is beauty.[20] However, I argue against this view and assert that love's object is the creative activity of "bringing to birth in beauty"—to translate precisely the Platonic text. For Plato writes at line 206e that this object of love is decidedly not *beauty*, but rather the creative process of *generating* beauty, both in the individual and in the wider world. What we witness in Socrates' speech is Plato challenging the received wisdom of his day. Upon seeing beauty in the world, the lover is led to make herself more like that beauty. In so doing, she brings into being further beauty by making herself more beautiful. Thus, love is not purely relational, as emotional intentionality is standardly analysed, but *teleological*—seeking its end. The highest form of love, for Plato, is an instrument of creation. He sees in the human soul a *self-generation principle:* a compass of self-design, externally triggered by beauty. Crucially, however, instead of turning to point towards beauty, the compass turns to point to itself, to design and craft itself. Time spent in pursuit of beauty provides a way for the lover to become beautiful: shaped by the course of her life. Plato thus establishes that the lover will have an inwardly-directed motivation to find ways to achieve this end.

Is the cognitive nature of love Plato has in mind here strong enough to ground such generative activity? I argue that as love regarding the beautiful has led to knowledge, so does knowing about the beautiful lead to assimilation. Such a tendency finds comparison in the *Republic*, where training in dialectic leads the young philosopher-kings to becoming morally virtuous and hence to being able to lead well and produce a good city. In the *Symposium*, cognition and contemplation of the beautiful similarly lead to association and assimilation, and hence to being able to produce beauty on earth.

In the course of his educational exposition in Book VII of the *Republic*, Socrates reveals how an understanding of the truth is more than a displacement of ignorance for knowledge, but is intimately tied to bringing about a moral change in the student. The study of dialectic enables one "to attain to each thing itself that *is*…[to] grasp the reason for the being of each thing",[21] with the result that one will be able to separate decisively the Form of absolute goodness from the many particular instances which bear a relation to it. Thus grounded in truth, the philosophers will be in the best position to produce good things—in themselves and in the city. Socrates asserts, "Once they see the good itself, they must be compelled, each in his own turn, to use it as a pattern for ordering the city, private men, and themselves for the rest of their lives."[22] These ruling men are pronounced thoroughly beautiful,[23] and can become "authors of the greatest good" by bringing into being the "well-governed city".[24] But is witnessing the Forms, in whatever way mortals might be able to do, enough to initiate moral change? I argue it is.

The method by which the philosopher-king shapes and creates the beautiful city and beautiful citizens (including herself) is described by Socrates as that of the inspired artist:

> *I suppose that in filling out their work they would look away frequently in both directions, towards the just, beautiful, and moderate by nature and everything of the sort, and again, towards what is in human beings; and thus, mixing and blending the practices as ingredients…taking hints from exactly the phenomenon in human beings which Homer too called god-like and the image of god…And I suppose they would rub out one thing and draw in another again, until they made human dispositions as dear to the gods as they admit of being.*[25]

This concept is repeated in Plato's *Timaeus* dialogue as well, where Socrates asserts:

> *Now everything that becomes or is created must of necessity be created by some cause, for without a cause nothing can be created. The work of the creator, whenever he looks to the unchangeable and fashions the form and nature of his work after an unchangeable pattern, must necessarily be made beautiful and virtuous…*[26]

Time spent in contemplation of the Forms of beauty and goodness provides a way for the philosopher to become like them, through imitation and assimilation. Socrates concludes, "Then it is the philosopher, keeping company with the divine and the orderly who himself becomes orderly and divine, in the measure permitted to man."[27] What we have here is an account that considering the Form, and comparing it to what is in humans, compels one to change and rub things out in the attempt to make what is only qualifiedly virtuous more like the unqualifiedly virtuous. There is good in the philosopher, because of her knowledge of and assimilation with the Form, and as a result of this togetherness, she is the best able to produce good things in the city and in the individual citizen. The object of love is therefore its greatest virtue: impelling the lover to shape herself in the image of virtue, and bringing about new virtue in the soul.

Beauty in the Classroom

This idea of creative thinking led by love, I argue, was a key feature of Plato's educational theory and derives from insightful analysis of the human powers of motivation. You cannot navigate with merely a highly polished rudder—you must start with the motor before navigation even begins. Once we have engaged the emotions, *then* we can deliver the directional standards of a particular curriculum.

The hypothesis we are presented with in the *Symposium* is that every contact with beauty (from perceptual and sense-based contact, to emotional and cognitive contact) gives rise to erotic desire to generate in beauty. This generation, as I have argued above, manifests in an assimilation with beauty itself. Love unites the Form with the particular lover, binding them together, thus enabling the production of any and all particular beauty. If Plato is right about this, his message to posterity is that *teachers should teach by beauty,* and by *engaging the emotions*. Philosophy, the love of wisdom, has a responsibility not to sit alone in the study or retreat to the ivory tower—building edifices of purely rational construction—but to connect with the world of art and culture to generate the virtue that those in pursuit of it have come to love and to know.

Kristjánsson divides moral education of emotion projects into three inter-related areas of inquiry: (1) are emotions appropriate objects of education; (2) ought, and if so, how, can emotions be shaped within education; and (3) what specific activities or techniques can teachers employ in the classroom?[28] As the above discussion has emphasised, the debate on educating the emotions tends to focus on the first two questions—understandably, of course, as we are philosophers. Precious little, however, is available to educators seeking practical, straight-to-the-classroom application of the results of all this research. Indeed, Maxwell and Reichenbach even go so far as to say that "not a single intervention programme or identifiable body of educational practices or strategies grounded in a major theoretical perspective in contemporary social psychology exists which specifically and explicitly targets moral emotions."[29] In what follows, I would like to outline, briefly, some of the positive ways the virtue of love—being the internal motivation to seek not only knowledge of the attracting object, but the activity of shaping oneself and generating virtue in the soul—may be encouraged in the contemporary classroom.

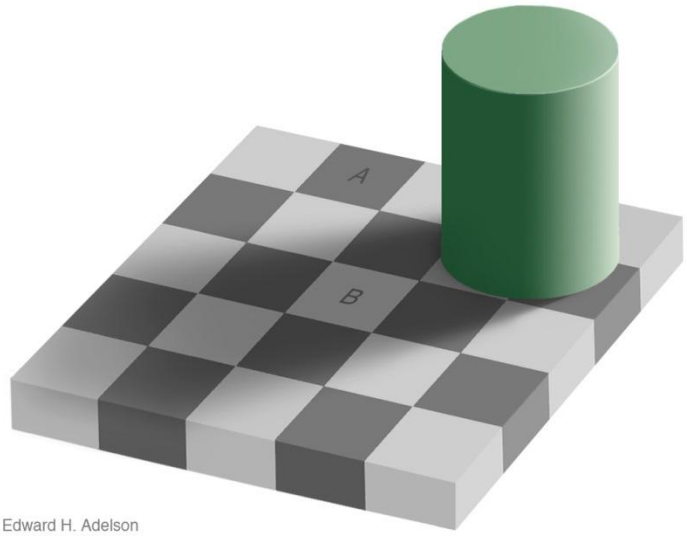
First, educators can engage the emotion of love through *bringing beauty into the classroom*. The "vast, open sea of beauty", to appropriate Plato's description of the lover's vision, is diverse and limitless.[30] Depending on the level

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".[31] Educating through love and attraction to the beautiful, however, offers a uniquely powerful capacity to harness the *motivational* aspects of the emotion. For it is the initial pangs of love, read as the desire to know, which first present as curiosity and develop into a commitment to finding out more, and a passion for the subject. Bringing beauty into the classroom—*all* classrooms, not just the art studio—can launch this motivation in new and exciting ways.

The beauty of great literature and compelling art has a further special role to play in developing imagination, particularly in the consideration of multiple perspectives which arouse emotion. Such subjects are often exceptionally concerned in depicting or commenting on the complex interplay of human emotions in moral situations. Indeed, Wordsworth defined poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings."[32] By presenting material that prompts an emotional response, students can be inwardly led to appreciate certain aspects of a case they may not otherwise have acknowledged. I should emphasise here that bringing beauty into the classroom ought to go beyond art appreciation courses as one among other (subtly more "serious", "academic") subjects. The beauty of art and literature should instead be seen as a powerful impetus to moral development and so afforded a place in any and all subjects.

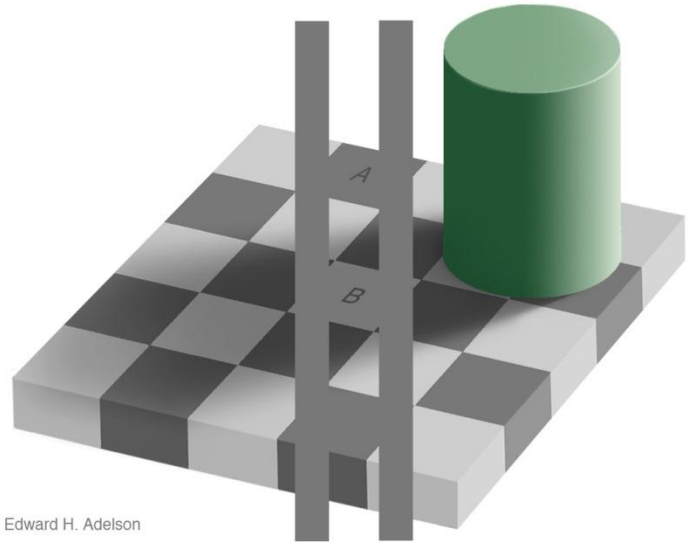
What engaging the emotions can contribute to educational and cognitive development is what Schwartz and Clore term "affect as information".[33] According to this theory, internal emotional experiences supply individuals with information about their external environment. This information can then be harnessed in creative ways as it influences the individual's evaluations, decisions, concerns, and further courses of action. Educators can consider how facilitating students' attending to their emotional response to material may enhance the learning experience and understanding of course content. Take, for example, the following classroom exercises:

- Upon the presentation of visual illusions such as Adelson's Checkershadow Illusion, below, the mind is primed to accept that the squares marked A and B are of different colours.



Edward H. Adelson

In fact, they are the same colour, and this can be confirmed by the educator using the proof image:



When the illusion is experienced for the first time, students often respond with a range of emotions including bafflement, awe, amusement, and incredulity—the latter of which leads naturally to further questioning and explanation. In my undergraduate philosophy classes, I use this illusion to introduce Descartes' radical doubt: how much can we trust our senses if they can be so wildly taken in by illusion? The emotional response, however, can be harnessed for motivating the intellectual virtues of curiosity and care towards a host of subjects. For example, such virtues can serve to widen appreciation for suspending judgement on controversial figures in a History class until the motivations for actions can be carefully considered; or for precision and caution in a Science lab.

- Literature, poetry, and other story-telling media can also stimulate the emotions to enhance achievement outside of English and Literature classes. Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* is often featured in American History class readings lists, but its ability to generate powerful emotions of shock and disgust at the conditions of the meat-packing industry in the early 20th-century can function to initiate discussions and projects across the educational spectrum. Despair at the working conditions the novel presents is a unique way to contribute to lessons on trade unions and class poverty in Economics; and revulsion at unsanitary factory farming practices can initiate a personal dimension to considerations of vegetarianism and veganism in a Physical Education or Health class, or of animal welfare and organic farming in Government and Business classes.

What is important to focus on in such exercises is that the students attend consciously to their emotions in response to the subject matter of the lesson: drawing out what it is the experienced emotion *tracks*, and considering that aspect of the content as *information* which can be explored further in discussions or assignments.

Second, educators can use *Gadfly questions* to engage the emotions in response to an apparent wrong. In the *Apology*, Socrates refers to himself as a gadfly which bites the sluggish horse in order to arouse him to action: he put this into practice by acting the rogue street philosopher, constantly questioning his contemporaries in such a way that they would feel compelled either to defend their premises or realise further thought and refinement of

those premises was needed.[34] Plato acknowledges that children possess the ability to love the beautiful, and blame and hate the ugly, even before they are capable of rational speech.[35] By pressing intuitively controversial points, challenging assumptions, or playing *advocatus diaboli*, educators can stir up instinctive defences of what is, or is at least thought to be, true.

Gadfly questions can be directed towards the course content and students' answers to questions, in addition to their emotional responses to that course content. Facilitators may take cues from Socrates' own method as to what kinds of questioning best get at the heart of the interlocutor's statements, probing responses to ferret out analytic distinctions as well as to elicit commitment to a view by proposing a radical alternative. The use of the Socratic Method in education has long been championed for its ability to aid students in clarifying and justifying their thoughts on the topic under question.[36] Of specific relevance to our topic of engaging the emotions in education, is to direct gadfly questions towards the students' own emotional responses to material (and perhaps especially towards unexpected emotional responses), which can be indicators of a further question or line of reasoning. Examples of such gadfly questions towards emotions may include:

- *Do you think all parties (or characters) involved in the event felt the same way in response? Why or why not?*
- *Why do you think you like X more than Y?*
- *Is there a difference between our society and the society under discussion that might make the situation look different to you?*
- *What element of the lesson would you be most (or least) likely to remember?*
- *What element of the lesson makes you the most surprised (or angry, or curious)? Why?*

The task in employing gadfly questions specifically, within the broader teaching style of the Socratic Method, is to harness the motivational power of the emotions and direct it towards identifying new ways of thinking about course content. By attending to their emotions in this reflective manner, students can link their own affective responses to the subject of a lesson and find in that link a personal reason to defend and articulate their thoughts.

A third practical application of Plato's theory of love's virtue is to use *beauty as a tool for cognitive appraisal and reflection*. Art and literature can present vastly different beauties, which the student can then evaluate in relation to other beauties presented in the course, and in relation to other types of beauties she experiences in her wider world. This is the basis of Plato's metaphysical theory of Forms, according to which one learns about, for example, abstract, absolute beauty by reflecting on what each of these particular beauties perceived and experienced have in common. Identifying what is essential to each of a beautiful work of art, a beautiful scientific equation, a beautiful soul, and a beautifully accomplished action or performance is at once, then, a cognitive-emotional-aesthetic (not to mention interdisciplinary) exercise. Encouraging students to ask, and reflect on, what it is they think that makes each of the different beauties they encounter beautiful can culminate in synthesisation assignments which aim at articulating and defending an account of what the terms beauty, art, or justice actually can mean. Methods for employing this concept in the classroom could include the following exercises:

- Having students each curate an ongoing journal focusing on a key concept of the course (e.g., citizenship, tragedy, respect, or abuses of power). Journals can be written in a notebook or—to

introduce technology where appropriate to the level of the course—created online, as on a Tumblr microblog or Pinterest board. Students add examples of the concept they identify in art, current affairs, or the media and are asked to reflect on each entry asking what it is they think makes the particular example fall under the concept heading: what it is that makes the piece of work beautiful, or the court ruling unjust. The task here is to allow the emotions first to locate the particular examples, which can then become the subject of appraisal and reflection. This reflection aims at developing creative or *lateral thinking*, which draws connections between disparate instances of a concept.

- Incorporating music created in a particular culture or era into a World Civilisations, History, or Foreign Language class. This can be done at intervals throughout the term, with students instructed to choose a song or music style they liked best at the end; or as a one-off project for a particular time period. Students are to reason about what in the period might have inspired or influenced the artists. Rather than making this a research exercise, it can be done as in-class writing, to facilitate lateral thinking between their emotional response to the music and the historical-cultural facts presented in the course content.

My aim in highlighting this third kind of exercise is to draw attention to the particularly creative impetus beauty in art can have on the emotions, which—when attended to with cognitive reflection—can draw the mind to identify causal relationships between material previously unnoticed. The development of the ability to draw such relationships is a key feature of the kind of lateral and creative thinking which marks original thought.

I may at this point anticipate the objection regarding Plato's infamous "banishment" of the poets from the ideal city in Book X of his *Republic*, on the basis that they morally corrupt an audience. To argue that this demonstrates a rejection of art as an educational tool, however, would be to miss the point. A significant part of Plato's critique was that certain works of art present falsehood as truth, with the effect that the student may come to think justice involves what is actually unjust, thereby obscuring what being just "looks like." However, the fact that Plato's dialogues are positively littered with myths, similes, dramatic characters, and other poetic devices, coupled with the fact that the *Symposium* dialogue itself lists the work of Homer and Hesiod as highly praised creations of beauty, reveals that Plato openly acknowledged the positive benefit of poetry.[37]

The above exercises may already be carried out in the classroom for a host of other reasons, for example to integrate technology, to make connections to other classes, or to practice writing across the curriculum. What I wish to emphasise here is that they can also be used as starting points to hook students with the aim of facilitating a uniquely powerful and generative connection between student and subject. It may, however, be argued that these three types of classroom exercises take beauty in art for moral purposes in such a way which places the theory squarely in that instrumental view of education lamented above: merely substituting moral or emotional development for economic benefit as an educational aim. I argue against this. The Platonic virtue ethics set out in section two holds as a fundamental tenet that it is because the lover values the beautiful *for its own sake* that she strives to become like it by creating beauty in herself. The lover in the *Symposium* does not perceive beauty and think of all the great benefit she can gain by attaining it, but rather self-creation is an emotive-creative *response of the soul* to the beauty present to her. Love in relation to the beautiful leads to the creation of new beauty.

Conclusion

Curiosity is ultimately driven by desire: the desire to know. Accordingly, we can find in Plato's theory of love an understanding of how education in the beautiful—a generative process led by love—results in the lover becoming virtuous through the self-creation of beauty and virtue in the soul. This theory connects Plato's ordering agents of the universe (the conceptual ideas of absolute goodness and beauty) with that which orders individual persons. It is an education by attraction. We can take away from Plato's *Symposium* dialogue the following hypothesis: if education is to be truly transformative—making us into responsible citizens, rational problem-solvers, creative thinkers—it must begin with *honing desire*, employing those mechanisms which attract and which motivate a commitment to discovering more. What's exciting, and challenging, is that you never know where such journeys might lead.

Endnotes

[1] Bruce Maxwell and Roland Reichenbach, "Educating moral emotions: a praxiological analysis," *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 26 (2007): 148.

[2] See, for example, the following newly-established research centres and projects: Les émotions au Moyen Âge, established in 2006 <http://emma.hypotheses.org/?lang=fr_FR>; Berlin's Languages of Emotion Institute, established in 2007 <http://www.loe.fu-berlin.de/>; the Max Plank Center for the History of Emotions, established in 2008 <http://www.mpib-berlin.mpg.de/en/research/history-of-emotions>; the Queen Mary Centre for the History of Emotions, established in 2008 <http://www.qmul.ac.uk/emotions/>; Oxford's The Social and Cultural Construction of Emotions: The Greek Paradigm, established in 2009 <http://www.classics.ox.ac.uk/emotions.html>; the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions, established in 2011 <http://www.historyofemotions.org.au>; and Project C2Learn on emotional reasoning at Edinburgh's EIDYN Centre for Epistemology, Mind, and Normativity, established in 2012 <http://eidyn.ppls.ed.ac.uk/c2learn>; as well as, to name but two recent examples, Elena Carrera's edited volume, *Emotions and Health: 1200-1700* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); and the forthcoming Palgrave Macmillan series: *Palgrave Studies in the History of Emotions*.

[3] Lawrence Kohlberg, *Essays on moral development, Volume I* (New York, NY: Harper Row, 1984). Recent advocates of his structural-cognitive framework include Jennifer Chalmers and Michael A.R. Townsend, "The effects of training in social perspective taking on socially maladjusted girls," *Child Development* 61 (1990): 178-190; Sigrun Adalbjarnardóttir, "Promoting children's social growth in schools: An intervention study," *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* 14 (1993): 461-484; Wolfgang Edelstein and Peter Fauser, *Demokratie lernen und leben: Materialen zur Bildungsplanung und zur Forschungsförderung* (Bonn: Bund-Länder-Kommission für Bildungsplanung und zur Forschungsförderung, 2001); and John Gibbs, *Moral development and reality: Beyond the theories of Kohlberg and Hoffmann* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003).

[4] Thomas Lickona, *Educating for character: how our schools can teach respect and responsibility* (New York, NY: Bantam Doubleday Dell, 1992); William Kilpatrick, *Why Johnny can't tell right from wrong* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1992). Different but related strands of character education can be identified in the work of, e.g., Terrence McLaughlin and J. Mark Halstead, "Education in character, virtue," in *Education in morality*, eds. Halstead and McLaughlin, 132-173 (London: Routledge, 1999); Jan Steutal and Ben Spiecker, "Cultivating sentimental dispositions through Aristotelian habituation," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 38:4 (2004): 531-549.

[5] Nel Noddings, *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics & Moral Education* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984) and *The Challenge to Care in Schools* (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 1990), esp. 171-202; Carol Gilligan, *In a different voice: psychological theory and women's development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982); Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of mothering: Psychoanalysis and the sociology of gender* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978); Michael Slote, *Moral Sentimentalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). Within sentimentalism, specific trends emerge championing one or the other of emotional understanding, emotional expression, emotional regulation, and empathy. See, e.g., Jonathan Cohen, ed., *Educating minds and hearts: Social and emotional learning and the passage into adolescence* (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 1999) and *Caring classrooms/intelligent school: The social emotional education of young children* (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 2001); Maurice J. Elias, et al., *Promoting social and emotional learning: guidelines for educators* (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1997); David C. Grossman, et al., "Effectiveness of a violence prevention curriculum among children in elementary school: A randomized controlled trial," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 277 (1997): 1605-1611; Susan D. McMahon, et al., "Violence Prevention: Program effects on urban preschool and kindergarten children," *Applied and Preventive Psychology* 9 (2000): 271-281; and Carolyn Webster-Stratton, *How to promote children's social and emotional competence* (London: Sage, 1999).

[6] Maxwell and Reichenbach, 158.

[7] Maxwell and Reichenbach, 155; Noddings, 1992.

[8] David Carr, "On the contribution of literature and the arts to the educational cultivation of moral virtue, feeling and emotion" ["Contribution"], *Journal of Moral Education* 34:2 (2005): 137-151, esp. 139; and "After Kohlberg: some implications of an ethics of virtue for the theory and practice of moral education," *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 15 (1996): 353-370.

[9] This paper focuses on love, but for an account of "nasty emotions" versus "nice emotions", see Ronald de Sousa, "Moral emotions," *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 4 (2001): 109-126; Aaron Ben Ze'ev, "Are envy, anger, and resentment moral emotions?," *Philosophical Explorations* 5:2 (2001): 148-154; and Kristján Kristjánsson, "Can we teach justified anger?," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 39:4 (2005): 671-689. Cf. Plato, *Republic*, 440c.

[10] Plato, *Phaedrus*, 246a-254e; *Republic*, 427e-444e, esp. 444b-e.

[11] C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2009), 24.

[12] Peter Thomas Geach, *The Virtues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Rosalind Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

[13] Carr ["Contribution "], 140.

[14] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1106a26-b28, with 1106a36-b7, 1122a18-1125a17.

[15] *Symposium*, 202e-203a.

[16] "La beauté n'est que la promesse du bonheur." Stendhal, *De l'Amour* (Boston, MA: Michel Levy Bros., 1857), 34, n. 1.

[17] Alexander Nehamas, "'Only in the Contemplation of Beauty is Human Life Worth Living' (Plato, *Symposium*, 211d)," (Katz Lecture in the Humanities, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington, 17th November, 2005).

[18] *Symposium*, 199c-200a.

[19] Carr ["Contribution"], 141. For an alternative account of the intentional object of love in Plato, see Gerasimos Santas, "Plato's Theory of Eros in the Symposium: Abstract," *Noûs* 13:1 (1979): 67-75, esp. 71-72.

[20] See, generally, F.C. White's survey, "According to many scholars, the central theme…is that the primary or ultimate object of love is the Form of Beauty. Thus among such scholars Beauty is variously described as: love's

primary object (Irwin); its *final object* (Cornford); its *final goal* (Grube); its *final 'why'* (Morgan); its *ultimate objective* (Raven); its *ultimate object* (Teloh); its *ultimate goal* (Grube). Or it is described more simply as *the* object of love (Hamilton); as *the* goal of Eros (Bury)...and so on", "Love and Beauty in Plato's *Symposium*," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* CIX (1989): 151. See also Suzanne Obdrzalek, "Moral Transformation and the Love of Beauty in Plato's *Symposium*," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 48:4 (2010): 416, 440; Nehamas, "Beauty of Body, Nobility of Soul: The Pursuit of Love in Plato's *Symposium*," in *Maieusis: Essays in Ancient Philosophy in Honour of Myles Burnyeat*, ed. Dominic Scott, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 123; Lloyd Gerson, "A Platonic Reading of Plato's *Symposium*," in *Plato's Symposium: Issues in Interpretation and Reception*, eds. James Lesher, Debra Nails, and Frisbee Sheffield (Washington, D.C.: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2006), 48, 64, 65; Radcliffe G. Edmonds, "Socrates the Beautiful: Role Reversal and Midwifery in Plato's *Symposium*," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 130 (2000): 266, 268-269; Michael Gagarin, "Socrates' Hubris and Alcibiades' Failure," *Phoenix* 31 (1997): 33, 27; E.E. Pender, "Spiritual Pregnancy in Plato's *Symposium*," *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series 42:1 (1992): 72, 77-78, 82, 86; Richard Patterson, "The Ascent in Plato's *Symposium*," in *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*, vol. VII, ed. John J. Cleary (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1993), 198, 207; David M. Halperin, "Platonic Erôs and What Men Call Love," *Ancient Philosophy* 5 (1985): 180; Halperin, "Plato and the metaphysics of desire," in *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium on Philosophy*, vol. V, ed. John Cleary and Daniel Shartin, (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1989), 34. Notable exceptions include Harry Neumann, "Diotima's Concept of Love," *The American Journal of Philology* 86: 1 (1965): 42-47; Christopher Rowe, *Plato: Symposium* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, Ltd., 1998), 184 ad loc 206e2-3, 5; White, "Virtue in Plato's *Symposium*," *The Classical Quarterly* New Series 54:2 (2004): 369-375; and Gregory Vlastos, "The individual as an object of love in Plato," in *Platonic Studies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 20-22, who argue that the object of love is not beauty but the possession of the good. While I disagree as well that *the good* is love's object, I will not go into any detail here. For an account of how love has as its object the generation of beauty in Plato's *Symposium*, see Lauren Ware, "Plato's Bond of Love: Erôs as Participation in Beauty" (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 2014), esp. Chapter 3, §III.

[21] *Republic*, 532a, 534b.

[22] *Republic*, 540a-b.

[23] *Republic*, 540c.

[24] *Republic*, 495c; cf. 499b, 520d, 521a.

[25] *Republic*, 501b.

[26] *Timaeus*, 28a-b.

[27] *Republic*, 500c-d.

[28] Kristjánsson, 671-689.

[29] Maxwell and Reichenbach, 148.

[30] *Symposium*, 210d.

[31] Maxwell and Reichenbach, 154; Max Scheler, *The nature of sympathy*, trans. Peter Heath (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954); Lawrence A. Blum, *Friendship, altruism and morality* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980); Arne Johan Vetlesen, *Perception, empathy, and judgement: An inquiry into the preconditions of moral performance* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994).

[32] David Nichol Smith, *Wordsworth: poetry and prose* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921), 171.

[33] Norbert Schwartz, "Feelings as information: Informational and motivational functions of affective states," in *Handbook of motivation and cognition: Foundations of social behavior* Vol. 2, eds. E. Tory Higgins and Richard M.

Sorrentino (New York, NY: Guilford Press, 1990); Norbert Schwartz and Gerald L. Clore, "Mood, misattribution, and judgments of well-being: Informative and directive functions of affective states," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 45 (1983).

[34] *Apology*, 30e.

[35] *Republic*, 401e-402a.

[36] Pete Boghossian, "How Socratic Pedagogy Works," *Informal Logic* 23:2, Teaching Supplement #8 (2003); Richard Garlikov, "The Socratic Method: Teaching by Asking Instead of by Telling," last modified 2001, http://www.garlikov.com/Soc_Meth.html; James L. Golden, "Plato Revisited: A Theory of Discourse for All Seasons," in *Essays on Classical Rhetoric and Modern Discourse*, eds. Robert J. Connors, Lisa Ede, and Andrea Lunsford (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984); and Robert D. Whipple, *Socratic Method and Writing Instruction* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1997).

[37] *Symposium*, 209a-e.

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