Sanna Bull Tuhus

Hard to Stop Feeling: Expressive writing, affective engagement, and picture books in the EAL classroom

Master's thesis in Primary and Lower Secondary Teacher Education for Years 5-10
Supervisor: Tom Nurmi
May 2024

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Norwegian University of
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Abstract

The interdisciplinary topic "Health and life skills" in the English subject refers to the development of students' ability to "express themselves in writing […]. This forms the basis for being able to express their feelings, thoughts, experiences […] and […] can provide new perspectives on different ways of thinking […]" (The Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2020, p. 3). Considering that emotions are non-verbal by definition (Nikolajeva, 2012), teachers and scholars alike should take an interest in contemplating possible approaches to aid students in verbally expressing that which is rooted in bodily sensation. Thus, this MA thesis aspires to present picture books as a possible approach to help students achieve this curricular goal. On this account, I have collected and analysed 5th grade students' written responses to illustrations in the picture book *The Red Tree* (2001) by Shaun Tan. I have examined verbal representations of the students' emotional experiences encountering the picture book as informed by affect theory and cognitive narratology. This is to illuminate their affective and cognitive engagement with the narrative and its accompanying illustrations. Finally, I discuss some implications my findings may have in regard to students' development of conceptual and metaphorical knowledge through their capacity to express themselves in writing. Affect permeates all aspects of education, as all instances of expression are indeed "performances of affect" (Joy, 2021, p. 8). Thus, raising teachers' awareness of affect is essential to develop a pedagogical practice which acknowledges the entire student and the body's significance in relation to learning.

Keywords: Affect, emotion, cognitive narratology, affective and cognitive engagement with picture books, writing, the EAL classroom.

Sammendrag

Det tverrfaglige temaet "Folkehelse og livsmestring" i engelskfaget refererer til utviklingen av elevers evne til å "uttrykke seg skriftlig […] på engelsk. Dette legger grunnlag for å kunne gi uttrykk for egne følelser, tanker, erfaringer […] og […] kan gi nye perspektiver på ulike tenkesett […]" (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2020, s. 3). Lærere og forskere burde derfor vise en interesse for å utvikle mulige innfallsvinkler, for å hjelpe elever til å uttrykke det som er forankret i kroppslig sensasjon, sett i betraktning av at emosjoner er ikke-verbale av natur (Nikolajeva, 2012). Derfor presenterer denne masteroppgaven bildebøker, som en mulig innfallsvinkel for å hjelpe elever til å oppnå dette kompetansemålet. I den forbindelse har jeg innhentet og analysert 5. klasse elevers skriftlige responser til illustrasjoner fra bildeboka Det røde treet (2001) av Shaun Tan. Jeg har undersøkt de verbale representasjonene av elevenes følelsesmessige opplevelser i møtet med bildeboka, informert gjennom affekt teori og kognitiv narratologi. Dette er for å belyse deres affektive og kognitive involvering i bokas narrativ og illustrasjoner. Avslutningsvis diskuterer jeg implikasjonene som funnene mine kan ha for elevers utvikling av konseptuell og metaforisk kunnskap, gjennom deres evne til å uttrykke seg skriftlig. Affekt gjennomsyrer alle aspekter ved utdanningen, da alle former for uttrykk er "utførelser av affekt" [min oversettelse] (Joy, 2021, s. 8). Dermed er det viktig å øke læreres bevissthet rundt affekt, for å utvikle en pedagogisk praksis som anerkjenner hele eleven, og kroppens signifikans i forbindelse med læring.

Nøkkelord: Affekt, emosjon, kognitive narratologi, skriving, affektiv og kognitiv involvering i møte med bildebøker, EAL klasserommet.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to express my foremost gratitude to my supervisor, Tom Nurmi. I want to thank you for sharing your valuable knowledge with me, providing me with guidance and for showing patience with me in this challenging process. You have supported my vision for this project from the first day I set foot in your office, and I can say with certainty that without your encouragement, this thesis would never have found its way to the paper.

Additionally, I would like to thank my practice teacher and their students for their willingness to participate in my lessons and study, thus providing me with valuable data material to view in light of my theoretical framework.

Lastly, I want to thank my mom and dad for always answering my calls, and for listening to my moments of despair and of immense joy throughout this process.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you.

Preface

> "I am constantly trying to communicate something incommunicable, to explain something inexplicable, to tell about something I only feel in my bones and which can only be experienced in those bones".
>
>   – Franz Kafka. *Letters to Milena*. (1952)

     Early on in the process of writing this MA thesis, when I still struggled to grasp my intentions and hopes for this study, I came across a quote by author Franz Kafka. It struck me with such affective force that it left me momentarily stunned. Yet in its wake it gave me some much-needed words to verbalize that which I, at the moment, could not, and it summarizes that which I aim to illuminate in this MA thesis. Kafka's quote articulates the irony of humans' constant chase for the proper words to describe our felt experiences, that indeed words alone will never be sufficient to express accurately. However, we still conceptualize our existence in this world through the means of language. Thus, this quest to find new ways to verbally communicate "the incommunicable" will likely continue for centuries to come.

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1 Introduction

In this first section, I present the background and context out of which this thesis has emerged. I begin by elaborating on my personal reasons for choosing the selected topic at hand, and what drew me to the notion of affect in the first place. Further, I explain how this MA thesis may be viewed as a suggestion as to how to reach certain goals introduced in the interdisciplinary topic of "Health and life skills" in the national Norwegian curriculum (LK20) for the English subject. I introduce some aspects from my theoretical framework to justify my dual focus on both picture books and writing to establish an approach to aid students in developing their ability to express their feelings, thoughts, and experiences in writing. Additionally, I explain the title of this thesis before I present my research questions. Finally, the section provides the reader with an overview of the chapters present in the thesis.

1.1   Background and context

My emerging interest for the notion of affect began last year, as I had the pleasure to participate in a literature course lead by my supervisor Tom Nurmi. It was here that I was first properly introduced to the term *poetics*. In my own words, I understand poetics to be: the literary conventions and choices made by an author that make affect possible. Naturally, I had experienced to be affected by literature before. Some of my most prominent early memories are my deeply felt care and investment in the trio of Harry, Ron, and Hermoine in J.K. Rowling's books, my awe for Sally Rooney's ability to articulate her character's interiority, and my goose bumps as I read Rupi Kaur's poems for the first time. Yet this term poetics helped me gain awareness of that which is present in a literary piece, its carefully crafted composition, which functions to evoke these emotional experiences in me. It gave me a new lens through which to articulate and cast my past experiences of appreciation for literature and authors' written words in a different light.

Then, as preparation for my oral exam in the course, I was encouraged to think about the influence poetic and figurative language may have on students: in its capacity to convey difficult, overwhelming emotions and felt experiences through understanding them as something else, something more tangible. In fact, I still remember one of the examples I used: "No one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark" (Shire, 2019, p. 98). In my notes, I had accompanied the quote with a small drawing of a shark opening its mouth, revealing a set of white, sharp teeth. I introduced the idea of initiating conversations with students about figurative and poetic language accompanied by illustrations to scaffold students' understanding of verbal metaphoric expression. Then, when I was placed in two 5th grade classes during my last teaching practice, I began to develop this notion for my MA thesis: studying students' expressions of emotion in their own writing as provoked by their affective engagement with picture books.

As I read through LK20, to search for justification to initiate such a research study, I came across the following learning aims presented as part of the interdisciplinary topic "Health and life skills" in the English subject: "In the English subject, the interdisciplinary topic of health and life skills refers to developing the ability of the pupils to express themselves in writing […] in English. This forms the basis for being able to *express their*

feelings, thoughts, experiences, and opinions and can provide *new perspectives on different ways of thinking and communication patterns*, as well as on *the pupils' own way of life and that of others*" (my italics) (The Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2020, p. 3). As the quote implies, LK20 provides teachers with close to boundless margins for action in their English as an additional language (EAL) classrooms, yet little guidance as to how to help students obtain the particular goals. An opportunity revealed itself to design a MA thesis which could function as a suggestion for teachers in aiding students to develop their capacity to express feelings, thoughts, and experiences through writing in English, thus reaching the learning aims depicted in "Health and life skills".

Affect, then, may be understood as sudden forces or intensities accompanying an event: that is, some part of our surroundings sensed by one or more of our five senses, which as these intensities are registered by our bodies force us to "*to be(come) affected, to feel some-thing*" (Shaviro in Dernikos et al., 2020, p. 5). In the further development of this thesis, I found it intriguing to use reading of picture book illustrations as this "event" that prompts affect and individual emotional experiences in the students, which they in turn process and verbalize in writing. Indeed, Nikolajeva states that: "A visual image can potentially evoke a wide range of emotions circumventing the relative precision of words" (2014b, p. 96). Thus, one may presume that a visual image will evoke stronger emotions in young EAL learners, than in the case of reading written words. Unlike fictional characters in novels, who are often transparent to the reader in the author's depiction of their interiority, visually portrayed characters "are always opaque" (Nikolajeva, 2014b, p. 96). This forces an activation of a reader's cognitive functions while reading to interpret that which their eyes perceive and fill in the gaps of ambiguity. The visual narrative leaves much for the reader to complete. It also leaves space for students' own imagination. Arizpe emphasises that: "Empirical research confirms that children respond more strongly to visual emotion ekphrasis when it is not supported by words" (Arizpe in Nikolajeva, 2014b, p. 96). I chose to introduce the 5th grade students to writing prompts with picture book illustrations stripped of the verbal narrative to obtain the students' emotional written expressions. This was to avoid lack of language understanding as a hinderance to the students' following interpretations and written expressions of the emotions conveyed through the pictures, given that I at this point had no knowledge of the students' written language skills in English.

Moreover, Joy introduces the notion that a feeling or a personal emotional experience accompany thought (2021). Hence, emotional experience often occurs with thought, and according to Merleau-Ponty (2012) verbal language in turn *accomplishes* thought. It seems reasonable to consider affect, thought and language together when examining people's processing of and further understanding of sensory information. In regard to writing, thoughts and language develop interchangeably during the act of writing, thus carrying a thought forward and expanding it (Dryer & Russell, 2017). Within the context of this thesis, I use the term *expressive writing* to refer to acts of writing which focus on the conveying of thoughts, feelings and experiences in affective, creative and explorative ways.

To investigate these intertwining, yet different concepts I draw on cognitive narratology as a theoretical approach. Nikolajeva, who prefers the term cognitive criticism, states that this approach to literature is: "[…] not a homogeneous theory, but a broader theoretical framework connecting various directions of literary scholarship to human cognition, including such phenomena as perception, attention, empathy, memory,

reasoning, decision-making, language and learning" (2014b, p. 4). Cognitive narratology is a theoretical lens of which to regard interactions between readers and fiction and focuses on "why reading fiction might cause the brain to produce emotional and cognitive responses in readers […] even as readers recognize fiction as linguistic and/or pictorial representation of the real world" (Purcell, 2018, p. 358). From the analysis in this thesis of the students' emotional responses, the notion of figurative and metaphorical language to convey and express emotional experience in new and creative ways also emerged. Indeed, cognitive narratology argues that figurative language – presented through verbal, visual or multimodal means – may "paradoxically be a more precise way to represent a state of mind" (Nikolajeva, 2014b, p. 105). I further elaborate on this idea in the discussion.

This master's thesis draws on affect theory, cognitive narratology and Merleau-Ponty's notion of writing and thought as conceptual frameworks, through which I explore students' affective and cognitive engagement with picture book reading and, in turn, the way the texts shape their ability to express themselves in writing. Here, to be *affected* involves being prompted to feel something in one's encounter with fiction, and to be *engaged* or *engagement* refer to a student's "use of mental processes that have the potential to support new knowledge and understanding" (Purcell, 2018, p. 357). This thesis also includes 26 student texts, that are written reading responses to the picture book *The Red Tree* by Shaun Tan (2001), which have been collected from two 5th grade classes, in an attempt to seek to understand how these students have interacted affectively and cognitively with the illustrations. Thus, as the title of this MA thesis suggests – borrowed from one of the students present in the data material – it is indeed hard or in fact impossible to "stop feeling". The solution becomes to learn how to recognise emotions and how to manage them. I ultimately argue that this management may be accomplished through honing our capacities to express and reason feeling through language and writing.

1.2 Research questions

This thesis addresses the following two research questions:

1) How may expressive writing and affective engagement with fiction help students develop the ability to express their feelings, thoughts and experiences through writing, as presented in the interdisciplinary topic "Health and life skills" in the 5th grade EAL classroom?

2) How do visual aspects of the picture book *The Red Tree* (2001) by Shaun Tan provoke affect and thought – demonstrated in students' written responses – that suggest learning pathways between the illustrations in the picture book and 5th grade EAL student writing?

1.3 Thesis Overview

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Following the introductory chapter, the second chapter presents the theoretical frameworks that has informed this study. This chapter provides the reader with a detailed description of the different theoretical frameworks and justifies their relevance to the sections on research methodology, analysis and discussion. The third chapter introduces the methodology and methods which have been applied to collect and further analyse the data material. The thesis' validity and reliability, and in turn positioning and ethical considerations, are also discussed in this chapter. Further, Chapter Four contains an analysis of the students' written responses

and Tan's painted illustrations. In Chapter Five, some of the findings from chapter four are discussed alongside more advanced student examples to argue for their potential in developing a pedagogical approach focusing on affective and cognitive engagement with fiction and expressive writing (drawing on the theoretical frameworks presented in Chapter Two). Chapter Six concludes the entire thesis and provides the reader with some final remarks. Suggestions for further research are also presented in this chapter.

2 Theoretical frameworks

The following section presents the theoretical frameworks applied to this study, which are utilized as lenses through which I perceive and analyse the picture book *The Red Tree* and the students' written reading responses. Firstly, I draw from the field of affect studies to define and elaborate on the notion of *affect*. Thereafter, I introduce the relation between affect and literature, and explain that which allow us to care about fiction and literary characters in the first place. Cognitive narratology is presented as one of the study's main theoretical frameworks, including an elaboration on cognitive functions that are engaged through reading multimodal narratives. Moreover, the section presents Merleau-Ponty's notion of language and thought, which is further connected to the act of expression and writing. At last, the notions of affect, expression and writing are combined to introduce the idea of the student as an embodied writer.

2.1 Affect, emotion, feelings, or mood: What difference does it make?

The affective and cognitive turn in children's literature studies centres on the significance of the term *affect*. However, in its wake, other related terms have also surfaced in scholarly works, such as *emotion*, *feelings* and *mood*. These terms may appear to some as merely synonyms, yet scholars who draw from affect theory, neuroscience and psychology suggest that there are notable differences to be detected (Bullen, Moruzi & Smith, 2017; Evans, 2003). For the purpose of this thesis, which aims to use affect as a theoretical lens to study visual and verbal representations of emotional states, as a means to illuminate parts of students' processes of affective engagement with picturebooks, I believe that it is of relevance to provide some insight to the field's definitions of these terms.

In scholarly papers within the academic field, the term *affect* appears to be difficult for authors to provide a clear and consensual definition. Indeed, Joy (2021) states that affect scholars "[…] have taken pains precisely to distinguish affect from rather than as "feeling" or "emotion", […] because affect acquires its significance as that which eludes conscious definition or straightforward articulation" (p. 7). Dernikos et al. (2020) address this inconsistency within the field by stating that some contemporary affect scholars do utilize affect as a term, which includes *emotion* and *feelings* with little regard to their possible differences. On the other hand, Dernikos et al. (2020), similar to other scholars within the field, view affect as different to emotion, and they define *affect* in the following manner: "[…] affects are the forces (intensities, energies, flows, etc.) that register on/with-in/across bodies to produce and shape personal/emotional experiences" (p. 5). They further elaborate with the help of Shaviro: "In other words, affect is not what you feel, as much as it is an event that forces you *to be(come) affected, to feel some-thing*" (Shaviro in Dernikos et al. 2020, p. 5). Affect may therefore be understood as energies that we register through bodily sensation and produce emotion. *Emotion* may be defined as "intensity owned and recognized" (Massumi in Bullen et al., 2017, p. 4). Thus, it is first when one becomes aware of the triggered affect – as it coassembles with an individual's personal memory of previous experiences – that it becomes an emotional

experience or conscious emotional state (Dernikos et al., 2020; Nathanson in Bullen et al., 2017).

Furthermore, *feeling* is used "to describe our awareness that an affect has been triggered" (Nathanson in Bullen et al., 2017, p. 3). Hence, *feelings* may be understood as the moment affect is registered by our consciousness. This may be further understood as being connected to the notion of embodiment, as recognized affect often manifests in bodily sensation, which may be said to commonly be associated with the verb *to feel* something or someone with one's body. Bullen et al. (2017) manage to capture the distinction between these seemingly similar terms by stating that: "The distinction between affect, feelings, and emotion clearly suggest a continuum from subliminal to conscious sensation" (p. 3). One becomes exposed to major amount of affect throughout a day which does not surpass our subconsciousness, but the sensations which do become registered by our consciousness influence our emotional state in a way which we are aware of. Bullen et al. emphasize that affects include reflexive physiological changes to our bodies' heart rate, oxygen intake, and blood flow, and that only parts of an affective experience move from a subliminal to a conscious state through one's recognition of an emotion (2017). In regard to language, one may suggest that the number of words available to an individual in the moment affect becomes detected and personalized influence the individual's ability to make sense of and handle the emotional state which follows.

Moreover, it is also worth mentioning that Evans (2003) in his work *Emotion: A Very Short Introduction*, refers to affect as *basic emotions* and describes them as "instant responses to stimuli which only last seconds" (p. 5). He distinguishes between basic emotions and *moods*, which he understands as emotional states lasting from minutes to several hours, and work "in the background by raising and lowering our susceptibility to emotional stimuli" (Evans, 2003, p. 77). Thus, according to Evans, one's current mood, for example happiness or sadness, will influence an individual's vulnerability to further affective experiences. Evans defines the following examples as basic emotions: "joy, distress, anger, fear, surprise and disgust" (2003, p. 5). These are similar to Tomkins' nine basic types of affect, which he categories as positive, neutral or negative: "The positive are interest-excitement and enjoyment-joy. The neutral is startle-surprise. The negative are distress-anguish, anger-rage, fear-terror, shame-humiliation, disgust, and dissmell, sometimes referred to as contempt" (Tomkins in Bullen et al., 2017, p. 3). Finally, Evans (2003) also refers to *higher cognitive emotions* as being different from basic emotions in that they are "fundamentally *social*" in a manner that basic emotions are not (p. 20). Higher cognitive emotions may be love, loneliness, alienation, guilt, embarrassment, and shame, for example.

As this section has established, affect, emotion, feelings and mood are difficult terms to define, as they all refer to overlapping stages in the forming of an emotional experience, and there is not one consensual use of these terms among scholars in affect related studies. However, in a Norwegian context, one may argue that the terms *emotion* and *feeling* are to a large degree used as synonyms in everyday speech. In the Norwegian language, feelings may be translated into *følelser*, which is present to a larger degree in everyday speech than the word emotion which would be *emosjon* in Norwegian. The word mood may be translated into *humør* in Norwegian and is also less formal than *emosjon*. Yet, to establish a clear distinction between *affect*, *emotion*, *mood* and *feeling* should be considered unnecessary and restrictive to learning in an educational setting in a 5th grade Norwegian EAL classroom. From my perspective, it is

not important to differentiate between these terms in an educational setting encompassed of 10-year-old students with English as their additional language. Therefore, during the lessons conducted for this study, I chose to use the word *feeling(s)*, which included all of the terms above, so as not to confuse the students unnecessarily. The word *feelings* is also consistently used in the Norwegian curriculum in English and the core curriculum, and is frequently found in relation to the use of the verb *to feel* (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017, 2020).

This MA thesis aspires to identify and explore visual and verbal representations of emotional states as present in the picture book *The Red Tree* and in the students' writing, to illuminate parts of the students' affective and cognitive engagement with the Tan's narrative and illustrations. My main source of indexing the students' affective engagement with the illustrations is their writing, which suggests that I will analyse verbal representations of the students' emotional experiences in their encounter with the picture book, and not their actual affective and emotional experiences. Thus, the students' verbal representations of their emotional states constitute merely the parts of their emotional experience, which they at the time had the vocabulary to make sense of and express. To uphold a clear distinction between the terms, *affect*, *emotion*, *feelings*, and *mood* throughout this thesis is thus difficult and counterproductive to its overall purpose. Therefore, in my methodology, analysis, and discussion, and in particular when discussing the student texts, I will try to separate affect from emotion, but elsewhere I will use emotion, feelings and/or mood interchangeably to refer to verbal or visual representations of emotion, and to different aspects of the students' affective engagement with the visual in *The Red Tree.*

2.2   Why do readers care about fictional characters and their non-existing emotions?

This master's thesis rests upon the assumption that fictional literature can affect readers emotionally and cognitively, and thus fictional encounters and literary characters can teach us something about people in real life, including ourselves. It further argues that emotional competence developed through engagement with fictional literature is beneficial and valuable, and thus engagement with fictional narratives become important practice grounds for developing emotional competence for young students. However, such an assumption warrants the addressing of the crucial question: What allows us to care about fictional characters? How is it possible for readers to affectively engage with fictional characters and their fictional, non-existing lives and emotions? It is not my intention nor within my academic reach to explain the exact science behind the cognitive processes that take place in the brain upon a reader's encounter with a fictional text. This will have to be left for cognitive scientists to explain. However, it is relevant for my argument to present the readers of this MA thesis with a brief and highly simplified account of some evidence from neuroscience, as mainly provided by cognitive literary theory scholars, which connects readers' emotional and cognitive engagement with texts to cognitive processes in the brain (Nikolajeva, 2014b).

According to Nikolajeva, there is a broad consensus amongst cognitive literary scholars that we simply care about fictional characters because human beings exhibit a natural curiosity towards others and ourselves; this is because we want or need to understand the ways other people and ourselves feel, think and act, as it is in our best interests on the account of survival (Nikolajeva, 2014b). However, our curiosity towards and need to understand ourselves and others does not provide an answer for what

exactly it is that allows from affective engagement in the interaction between reader and text. Thus, Nikolajeva further elaborates: "[…] we engage with literary characters' emotions because our brains can, through mirror neurons, simulate other people's goals in the same manner as it can simulate our own goal, irrespective of whether these "others" are real or fictional" (Nikolajeva, 2014b, p. 83). When Nikolajeva refers to goals, she does so in relation to the notion that basic emotions, in a highly simplistic manner, can be thought of as "responses to goal-oriented systems in our brains" (Nikolajeva, 2014b, p. 83). Emotions thus occur in response to the achievement or failure of different goals, for example characters failure to obtain their goals may result in anger, frustration, distress (Nikolajeva, 2014b; Stockwell, 2002).

Our ability to replicate fictional characters' goals and thus engage and empathize with their resulting emotional outcomes is based in the mirror neurons or neural systems of imitation in our brains (Iacoboni, 2002). Iacoboni provides an explanation to these cognitive processes by introducing the 'mirror neuron hypothesis of empathy'. He explains: "our mirror neurons fire when we see others expressing their emotions, as if we were making those facial expressions ourselves. By means of this firing [or activation], the neurons also send signals to our emotional brain centers in the limbic system to make us feel what other people feel" (Iacoboni, 2002, p. 119). These cognitive processes of inner imitation enable readers to affectively respond to fictional character's emotions as conveyed through a narrative, as if they were real people.

Cognitive literary theory claims that it is the relations between the mediated experience of the text and the reader's emotional memories stored in the brain that allow readers to engage with fictional characters (Nikolajeva, 2012). Readers experience an emotional state when affect from sensation become personalized through its connection to our memories of previous emotional encounters, which further allows one to feel emphatic towards a fictional character's emotional state. Nikolajeva continues: "Visually represented happiness or sadness also evokes a memory in the brain that simulates the experience of happiness or sadness" (Nikolajeva, 2012, p. 277). Visual sensation is crucial to reading multimodal narratives' affect on readers and thereby evokes an individual's memories in the brain of a previous experience associated with the same emotion. This further provides the reader with an opportunity to share the feelings of a fictional character and enables them to read a character's mind and predict their goals.

In fictional literature, we are prompted to enter other people's minds and mental and emotional states through authors' use of various narrative techniques to represent a fictional character's interiority (Nikolajeva, 2014b). Nikolajeva coins the term *emotion ekphrasis* to refer to representations of emotions by verbal, visual or multimodal means in fiction (Nikolajeva, 2014a). Picturebooks especially should be considered important in the study of readers' affective engagement with fiction and its implications for readers' employment of emotional competence in their real lives. Picturebooks, as multimodal texts, are unique in their dependence on visual (often accompanied by verbal) emotion ekphrasis to convey emotions, and reading visual emotion ekphrasis is similar to the ways we read and empathise with people in real life (Nikolajeva, 2014b). In this regard, more complex picture books, in which the verbal narrative provides little help in reading a character's emotions, are of particular interest considering that they depend on the readers to be able to interpret emotions conveyed through the visual ekpharsis alone (Nikolajeva, 2012). Picturebooks, especially those which differ by inhabiting a higher grade of complexity in their use of metaphorical, multimedial emotion ekpharsis, should thus be considered as of particular relevance in the study of readers' cognitive ability to

care for fictional characters and affectively engage with their emotions. This establishes the further implications these reader-text-interactions may have for readers' development and practice of emotional competence in real life.

2.3 Cognitive narratology

Cognitive narratology merges aspects of cognitive science, narratology and reader-response theory to provide critics of children's and adolescents' fictional literature with a theoretical framework to investigate the intricate interactions that find place between readers and texts (Trites, 2017). Considering that cognitive literary theory is a somewhat new branch of literary criticism, it is of significance to mention that children's literature scholars have not fully adopted it (Nikolajeva, 2014b). Nikolajeva (2014b) emphasises that cognitive criticism, as she labels it, "pays substantial attention to representations of interiority and to readers' affective response to fiction" (p. 76). Thus, cognitive narratology, with an emphasis on affective and cognitive aspects of the interactions between text and reader, appears as a relevant conceptual frame for this thesis. As scholars have applied cognitive theory to the study of literature, this theoretical approach has become known as cognitive literary criticism, cognitive poetics, cognitive narratology and cognitive literary theory (Purell, 2018). Yet, I prefer the term "cognitive narratology" and I will therefore refer to it as such in the following sections. Although the students in this study have responded to single illustrations from *The Red Tree* and not to the narrative as a whole, in fact each double-spread tells its own narrative. Therefore, I believe that it is accurate for me to refer to cognitive narratology, considering that these illustrations seem to trigger students to verbalize that which is left unsaid in the illustrations, thus creating a narrative for each illustration that goes beyond what is being conveyed through the visual elements alone.

Cognitive narratology, as the name suggests, utilizes research findings from cognitive science – which may be described as an interdisciplinary field drawing from neuroscience, psychology, anthropology and linguistics – and applies it to the study of literature to illuminate the relationship between text and reader (Trites, 2017). According to Nikolajeva (2014b), cognitive narratology is "less interested in readers as such, but in what texts of fiction offer to readers through various narrative devices" (p. 11). Thus, in her research, Nikolajeva (2012) emphasises that her cognitive approach to children's literature is solely theoretical, and when she refers to "reader responses" she signifies potential reactions provoked by a literary piece and she is therefore not interested in the 'actual' reader (p. 275). My research is also purely theoretically based, as the conclusions I draw from my empiricism rely on cognitive processes involved in reading and meaning making mainly informed by cognitive narratology.

However, in contrast, my research is interested in the real readers of children's literature, who within my study's didactical context are 5th grade students with English as their additional language. Therefore, this study draws on aspects from reader-response theory, as it examines real students' responses to the picture book *The Red Tree*. Arizpe (2018) states that to date there are nearly no empirical research studies with picture books that apply cognitive theory, and that most studies which investigate "the interaction between children and picturebooks examine responses obtained after the actual reading moment in a specific context and focus on particular aspects such as art and aesthetics, postmodern elements or controversial themes" (p. 126). Although the student responses in this study were obtained with the aim to capture parts of the students' initial affective responses and following reflections to the picture book

illustrations, it still examines written responses obtained after the students' actual moments of reading the text. Therefore, this thesis does not aspire to be an empirical study which apply cognitive theory to research student's cognitive and affective processes upon reading. Instead, it seeks to investigate verbal representations of emotional states as present in the students' writing to illuminate parts of the students' affective and cognitive engagement with the picture book *The Red Tree*.

Given their significance to cognitive narratology, the difference between the terms *response* and *engagement* should be addressed. According to Nikolajeva (2014b), "response, whether verbal or not, refers to readers' reaction toward provoked or unintentional encounter with the text; a signal that the reader has received the message" (p. 2). The written student responses which constitute parts of my data material may be partly understood as the type of response Nikolajeva here refers to.

The students were asked to verbalize their immediate reactions and felt emotions as prompted by the presented picture book illustrations. However, they were also asked to elaborate on what about the illustrations made them feel the way they felt, through the use of an example sentence ("The image make me feel…, because…"), which forced the students to somewhat reflect on the textual features that triggered their emotional experiences. Nikolajeva (2014b) states that readers' cognitive and affective engagement with fiction includes both the question of what they acquire from a text and how this is gained, plus how readers "extract aesthetic pleasure and acquire more […] knowledge" (p. 2). To access and identify cognitive and affective engagement among readers is significantly more difficult, considering that it is problematic to trace readers' reading processes to answer exactly *how* something is gained or acquired. Yet, students' written responses may nevertheless provide valuable insight to parts of their cognitive and affective engagement with picture book illustrations and the narrative in *The Red Tree*. Cognitive narratology may illuminate the potential which is embedded in the responses.

Ultimately, cognitive narratology is inquisitive of the memories, feelings, emotions and knowledge which readers bring to textual encounters similar to reader-response theory, and shares with narrative theory a curiosity for textual features that drive a narrative forward (Hogan in Nikolajeva, 2014b; Trites, 2017). Additionally, cognitive narratology differs from these other theories, or rather pushes them in new directions, as it displays a particular interest in cognitive processes that occur as a reader experiences a narrative (Trites, 2017). Trites concludes: "Specifically, critics of children's literature employ cognitive narratology when they analyse how textual encodings trigger cognitive processes in an embodied mind" (2017, p. 108).

2.3.1 Cognitive functions engaged by reading Multimodal Narratives

Multimodal fictional narratives are uniquely dependent on the visual to convey meaning and provoke affect and emotion. Thus, the reader also needs to be thought of as a perceiver of visual elements, which compose a double-spread page within a picture book. The illustrations in *The Red Tree* are overflowing with textual elements with metaphorical meaning attached to them, and the reader therefore relies, among other competences, on their ability to "slow down their perception" in order to access the meaning embedded in these illustrations (Eisner, 2004, p. 5). Our ability to perceive our surroundings and cognitive processes in our brains are intertwined. Trites (2017) states that: "Cognition includes perception, but perception is a response to environmental triggers. In the case of fiction, perceptual triggers are embedded in the text" (p. 106). Hence, when a reader reads a double-spread page within a picture book, they will

encounter perceptual triggers, visual or verbal textual elements which initiate their interpretation of sensory information. According to Trites (2017), reading therefore engages a number of cognitive functions, often at the same time: "categorisation, conceptualisation, mapping, Theory of Mind, perception (especially of temporality and others' emotions), self-experienced emotions […]" (p. 105). I will account for some of these functions in the remaining parts of this section.

Theory of mind and perception of others' emotions, or empathy, are two cognitive processes engaged by reading multimodal narratives that Nikolajeva studies in her research (2012, 2014a, 2014b). In accordance with Nikolajeva (2014a), in the reading context, theory of mind may be understood as the reader's capacity to understand how fictional characters that are presented in a narrative think. Empathy or narrative empathy, on the other hand, respectively refers to the reader's capacity to understand how fictional characters' feel (Nikolajeva, 2014a, p. 712). Keen (2007) defines empathy in the following manner: "a vicarious, spontaneous sharing of affect [that] can be provoked by witnessing another's emotional state, by hearing about another's condition, or even by reading" (p. 353). Both concepts originate in cognitive psychology, and they are here applied to a literary context. Neither theory of mind nor empathy are cognitive functions which we are born with, and thus an individual's capacity to perform these skills derives from their development through interpersonal interactions in real life (Nikolajeva, 2014b). However, as has been outlined in previous sections, this MA thesis rests upon the assumption that reading multimodal narratives provides its readers with valuable knowledge about interpersonal interactions, which in turn may be applied in real life situations.

On the other hand, Trites (2017) illuminates *conceptualisation* and *categorisation* as cognitive functions that are fundamental to the meaning-making process during reading. For meaning-making to occur, one has to have developed an understanding of different categories and the concepts that they include, as well as verbal or visual representations as they are presented in a fictional narrative. Trites quotes Murphy to explain that: "[o]ur concepts embody much of our knowledge of the world, telling us what things are and what properties they have […]" (Murphy in Trites, 2017, p. 105). One could say that it is through conceptualisation and categorisation that humans make sense of the overwhelmingly large amount of sensory information that they encounter throughout their lives, further represented and differentiated through verbal language labels.

Furthermore, the cognitive functions of *schemas* and *scripts* are closely intertwined with concepts and categories. Emmott and Alexander (2011) refer to *schema* in particular as "mental representations of objects, settings and situations" (p. 756). *Scripts* may be defined as "temporally-ordered" schemas, our knowledge of "well-learned scenarios describing structured situations on everyday life" (Emmott & Alexander, 2011, p. 756). Therefore, when a reader encounters a fictional text the relevant scripts are presumably activated to enable them to complete the story, by filling in the gaps in actions and sequences that are not explicitly stated and allowing meaning-making to happen (Gibbs, 1994). Trites (2017) elaborates on the concept of scripts by stating that they are "one of the brain's most efficient forms of memory" (p. 106), and Herman (1997) points to how the concept of stored, sequential scripts has been made to understand people's ability to perform complex interpretations of narratives based on few textual or discourse cues. Indeed, reading of all fictional narratives depends on the

activation of readers' relevant scripts so that every detail of every act does not need to be explicitly stated in the text (Trites).

Tan depends on his readers' capacity to activate relevant schemas and "attach significance and meaning to objects in order to access metaphorical meaning" from the picture book *The Red Tree* (Purcell, 2018, p. 361). The concept of *mapping* is at the heart of the creation of metaphoric expression and happens when one combines one's knowledge of two categories (Trites, 2017). Trites (2017) exemplifies mapping as the occurrence when a person expresses that "they 'see' something when they mean they 'understand it' […], which […] maps the concept of vision onto the concept of understanding" (p. 105). Understanding of metaphorical expression also entails categorisation and conceptualisation as cognitive processes, which are vital to interpretation of fictional narratives (Trites, 2017).

In fact, metaphors of growth are often included in children's fiction, functioning as textual encodings that generate cognitive processes (Trites, 2017). In The Red Tree, Tan specifically employs the conceptual metaphor "LIFE IS A JOURNEY," which is used to structure individual's understanding of the complex and abstract concept of life; "we map onto the domain of life the inferential structure associated with journeys" (Gibbs, 1994, p. 238). On this account, Purcell (2018) argues that conversations with children about metaphorical expression and visual metaphors in multimodal fiction "introduces them to a feature of language and thought that provides a conceptual frame for richer understanding and expression of ideas" (p. 356). This may especially be the case in expression of abstract and bodily situated concepts of emotion and thought.

2.4   Writing, language and thought

Additionally, this MA thesis aims to investigate the hypothesis that writing functions as a space for development of thought. In the very early stages of this thesis, I decided upon using writing as my method to obtain student's affective reading responses to the picture book *The Red Tree*. I knew that I wanted to investigate their written works because student writing excites me: to consider the words they do use and the ones they do not use to express themselves. From my perspective, student writing functions as a unique entrance into students' minds and may illuminate parts of their affective and cognitive processes in their encounters with fiction. For some students the production of written language might be experienced as instant, in a similar fashion to the production of oral language. However, to most students the production of written secondary language requires consideration, and as one written word leads to another, thoughts and language develop interchangeably. Indeed, Merleau-Ponty (2012) states that: "Language does not presuppose thought, it accomplishes thought" (p. 182). Merleau-Ponty argues against the notion that language merely translates a pre-existing thought and instead proposes a more complex and dynamic relationship between language and cognition, where language actively participates in the process of forming thought itself (Merleau-Ponty, 2012). Merleau-Ponty (2012) explains his notion of this relationship between thought and language in the following manner:

> "A thought, content to exist for itself outside the constraints of speech and communication, would fall into the unconscious the moment it appears, which amounts to saying that it would not even exist for itself. […] it is indeed an experience of thought, in the sense that we give our thought to ourselves through inner or outer speech. It certainly moves forward instantly, as if through flashes, but it subsequently remains for us to appropriate it, and it is through expression that thought becomes our own" (p. 183).

Hence, thoughts, similar to affect as mentioned earlier, are filtered into our subconsciousness the moment they emerge if they are not consciously recognised through language.

Consequently, it is through verbal expression that we recognize and personalize our thoughts as they become known to us through inner or outer speech. Dryer and Russell (2017) continue this notion of thought and language by directly applying it to the writing process. They state that reflection is not something that can be viewed in isolation from the writing process, but it is "integrated, moment by moment, into the process" (Dryer & Russell, 2017, p. 66). Thus, as the physical act of writing and the writing process progress so does the development of thought along with it. In terms of the processing of sensory information, individuals perceive and reply simultaneously as they engage with their surroundings (Downey in Dryer & Russell, 2017). According to Dryer and Russell (2017), individuals "perceive the world in order to respond to it, in writing as in any other way. But, crucially, we respond to the world in order to perceive it" (p. 64). This notion implies that the act of perceiving something may prompt an instinctive urge to respond to experienced sensory information. Said in other words, one responds to one's surroundings in order to illuminate them and perceive them in a new-found manner as developed through expression.

Therefore, as Merleau-Ponty (2012) argues, the greatest achievement of expression is not to verbalize some thoughts on a piece of paper that might otherwise disappear. In his words, successful expression, here accomplished through writing, does not merely function as a visual representation of the thinking subject in a particular context, but more importantly "it makes the signification exist as a thing at the very heart of the text, it brings it to life in an organism of words, it installs this signification in the writer or reader like a new sense of organ, and it opens a new field or a new dimension to our experience" (Merleau-Ponty, 2018, p. 188). As I understand him, Merleau-Ponty (2012) argues that the greatest accomplishment of expression is the cognitive processes that takes place during expression itself. The act of writing encompasses an intricate relationship between language and thought, which produces meaning that becomes integrated in the student's body and broadens the perspectives from which they perceive and understand the world. Although this thesis includes analysis of students' finished written products, it still seeks to direct its focus to the writing process itself and the importance of valuing insights made as a part of this process, though not necessarily visible in the actual finished written products.

Emotions in particular are "by definition non-verbal" (Nikolajeva, 2012, p. 277). The expression of emotions through language thus becomes paradoxical, given that language alone will never sufficiently communicate the lived experiences of the body. Still, as will be further discussed, Nikolajeva (2012) suggests that metaphors are a significant means to bypass this quandary. Despite this paradox of verbalisation of emotion, as individuals we still eagerly seek to name that which we sense. As Merleau-Ponty (2012) describes it: "[…] thought *or feeling* tends toward expression as if towards its completion […]" (p. 182, *my asterisks*). Language and writing therefore help individuals recognize and manage experienced emotions, and without the words to do so, one will be partly ignorant to the feelings of oneself and others. Evans (2001) explains emotion as something that happens spontaneously, and in its wake, leaves the individual reaching for words to express it. Everyone experiences emotions, but only some have the vocabulary to recognize and understand them (Evans, 2001).

2.4.1 The Student as an Embodied Writer

One of the main aims of this thesis is to explore how to help students become better at verbally articulating their feelings, which are rooted in bodily sensation and experience. On this account, it becomes necessary to consider the significance of the body itself, in thinking about students' writing and expression of emotion in this context. Dryer and Russell suggest for their readers to adopt a perspective upon writing that conceptualizes it as "much more than an "in-head" phenomenon", implying the equally important role which the body and its senses play in the writing process (2017, p. 69). Dryer and Russell remind their readers that even when a writer is physically alone, "[…] others' physical/sensory dimensions are present, and a writer's body responds, emotionally and physiologically […]" (Dryer & Russell, 2017, p. 69). Other people are present in the fictional encounters of the students in this particular context, and other dimensions such as external expectations of the teacher or society also affect the students bodies and in turn their writing process. However, given the proper time and space, writing in the EAL classroom may prove to become an act of consideration for and exploration of verbal language: a place where students dare to be more honest and vulnerable in their expression. Thus, "a full account of writing would acknowledge that we think with our bodies […]" (Dryer & Russell, 2017, p. 69).

Dryer and Russell (2017) introduce the notion of the student as an embodied writer. In adapting such a perspective, one acknowledges the student's body as situated within a given context, and thus its frequent affective encounters with its surroundings are highly influential to the writing act. Consequently, the learning of writing is understood as an embodied experience. As individuals experience the world, one's learning becomes shaped by these experiences and they are "above all incorporated through our body" (Alerby, 2009, p. 2). According to Alerby (2009), "'incorporate' as a concept is derived from the compound Latin word *incorporo* – meaning 'embody'" (p. 2). It is through our bodily senses that we see, hear, "grasp, caress and feel things" that which constitute our experience, which in succession are prerequisites for learning (Alerby, 2009, p. 2). The cognitive process of reflection as conveyed through oral, written or artistic expression is therefore that which have been perceived and recognised by the body (Tobin & Tisdell, 2018, p. 218). In Merleau-Ponty's words, the written text is "both an extension of and a part of the body", similar to an arm reaching out to touch and affect (Merleau-Ponty in Tobin & Tisdell, 2018, p. 218). And it is through the hand grasping the pencil or the fingers tracing the computer keyboard that one's body further extends itself into the world through these instruments, so as to enable writing and the learning that ensues (Alerby, 2009).

Especially in relation to the understanding of abstract concepts, like emotion and feelings, an embodied perspective emphasises that "body-based" metaphors are the predominant "means of abstract conceptualization and reasoning" (Johnson, 2018, p. 632). People conceptualize and understand abstract ideas through conceptual metaphors that are rooted in bodily situatedness. Nikolajeva connects this embodiment with reading fiction: "Our engagement with fiction is not transcendental; it is firmly anchored in the body, both within the body and in the body's position in space and time" (2014b, p. 10). The reading body and embodied mind need to be at centre of pedagogy when planning for and participating in fictional encounters and related writing activities, and, moreover, in all writing practices established in the EAL classroom. This attention does not dismiss the ever-present and strongly-influential affective engagement that occurs between student and text in regard to reading and writing.

3 Research methodology

In the following section, I present the methodology and methods which I have chosen to apply in the conduction of my research for this thesis. I have conducted a qualitative case study to answer my research questions, which are: 1) How may expressive writing and affective engagement with fiction help students develop the ability to express their feelings, thoughts and experiences through writing, as presented in the interdisciplinary topic "Health and life skills" in the 5th grade EAL classroom? 2) How do visual aspects of the picture book *The Red Tree (*2001) by Shaun Tan provoke affect and thought – demonstrated in students' written responses – that suggest learning pathways between the illustrations in the picture book and 5th grade EAL student writing?

Firstly, I introduce and justify the methodologies used to conduct my research, which includes qualitative research, particularly qualitative case study and critical visual methodology. Secondly, I present multimodal analysis as my chosen method of which has been applied to analyse the collected data material. This method draws on processes and key terms from critical visual theory, affect theory and cognitive narratology, and thus is defined as applied in this context as a theoretically informed method. Thereafter, a description of the data collection process is presented, followed by an introduction to the chosen material of the thesis, *The Red Tree* by Shaun Tan. I present the limitations of the thesis and their influence on the study's validity and reliability. Lastly, I reflect on my dual role of researcher and teacher in the conduction of the data material, and the ethical considerations in ensuring student anonymity throughout the data collection process.

3.1 Describing and defining methodology and methods

3.1.1 Qualitative research and qualitative case study

This thesis is informed by qualitative research as an approach and may in particular be defined as a qualitative case study. The main method that has been employed in conducting this qualitative case study is the collection of personal documents produced in a classroom setting. Qualitative research may be defined as "an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" and is further framed by using words, rather than numbers and establishing open-ended questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 51). In addition, Creswell and Creswell (2018) point to the significant role of the researcher in qualitative research studies, as their main objective is to make "interpretations of the meaning of the data" (p. 51). Thus, a qualitative research approach has been purposefully applied to design this thesis, given that it aims to provide EAL teachers with a suggestion as to how they may aid their students in developing their capacity to express their feelings, thoughts and experiences in writing.

This thesis may be defined as a qualitative case study, that is because the described characteristics of case studies align with the overall aims of this thesis. Crowe et al. (2011) describe a case study as "a research approach that is used to generate an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of a complex issue in its real-life context» (p. 1). In order to understand the complex issue of how to aid students to express themselves

in writing through affective and cognitive engagement with fiction, I found it to be necessary to conduct an in-depth case study of a single case to allow for depth and theorization of the data material. Thus, one lesson was conducted in two 5th grade classes from which 26 student texts were collected. Indeed, a case study is defined by being bounded by time and activity, thus this study is bounded by the timeframe of the two lessons conducted and by the writing activity introduced to the students (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

As part of my qualitative case study, I chose personal documents produced by the students in a classroom setting as my chosen method for the data collection. This method was chosen based on the thesis' aim to investigate students' expressions of emotion in writing. I decided against the inclusion of additional methods for data collection to scope the thesis and given that the gathered 26 student texts, all including six tasks, provided me with a satisfiable amount of material for the data analysis. Croswell and Croswell (2018) emphasise how the collection of documents or personal documents "enables a researcher to obtain the language and words of the participants, and […] represents data to which participants have given attention» (p. 303). Thus, the collection of personal documents as a method for data collection allows for identification and exploration of the words and language used by student to express and reveals the visual elements in the illustrations which they have ascribed significance.

3.1.2 Critical visual methodology

Critical visual methodology introduces the idea of visual images as sites of "absorption" (Moebius, 2021, p. 144), that is sites to be carefully considered and lingered upon in order to reveal their power to provoke affect and thought in their perceivers. Rose (2001) emphasizes the necessity of careful consideration of visual images and to take them seriously: "[…] It is important […] to consider very carefully the organization of the image, because that does have an effect on the spectator who sees it" (p. 25). Her statement implies that a visual image is a constructed representation of reality, which compositional elements are carefully considered to amplify affect in its spectator. This is connected to Rose's term *visuality*, which refers to the various ways our *vision* (that is the physiological capability of the eye to see) is culturally constructed in terms of both "what is seen and how it is seen" by us as spectators (2001, p. 6). The ways in which we see and are made to see our surroundings through visual representations of reality are therefore never neutral nor innocent (Rose, 2001).

Thus, Rose (2001) introduces a methodological framework for critical interpretation of visual images, in which she identifies three sites to focus on: the site of the production of the image, the site of the image itself, and the site where it is perceived by audiences. She further states that theoretically and methodologically, researchers who aim to investigate visual images need to decide which of the sites to focus on to best describe an image's effect (Rose, 2001). In the analysis, the focus is mainly on the site of the image itself, in which the site's compositional and social modalities are considered to account for its effect on its readers. Compositional and social modalities are aspects of a site, that here refers to the image's composition of visual elements and their effects, and "the social […] relations, institutions and practices that surround an image and through which it is seen and used" (Rose, 2001, p. 17). Thus, the students written responses has been analysed in regard to the educational setting in which their written reading responses were made. Hence, the site of audiencing is relevant to consider, in that it refers to the process of spectators' renegotiation, or sometimes rejection, of a visual image's meanings (Rose, 2001). This alludes to the task which was given to the students

to make inferences and renegotiate meanings present in the picture book illustrations through writing.

This may further be connected to the idea of accessing writing through engagement with visuals, that is to access on mode through another. Archer (2017) introduces the idea of using multimodal resources to access writing. This builds on the idea of transfer of meaning from one mode to another and between modes. The representational mode of visual images possesses different modal affordances to those of written language, which may facilitate student understanding throughout their writing process as they represent meanings arisen from visual images into another mode of expression, that is written language. However, appropriate scaffolding should be included as part of the students writing processes given that studies have found young learners to have the capacity to conduct critical analysis of visual images, if they receive the relevant vocabulary to reflect on the visual composition (Arizpe & Styles, 2003; Callow in Brown, 2021).

As mentioned, Moebius (2021) presents the notion of the picture book as a site for "absorption" (p. 144). According to this perspective on picture books, the urgency is not situated in the act of turning the page, but rather in "the reader's lingering on the single image on each page, plumbing its depths, understanding its multiple dimensions and messages, and interrogating the feelings of its characters" (Moebius, 2021, p. 144). Thus, it is this philosophy which have influenced the overall aim for this thesis, that is the idea to perceive a visual image not merely to become immediately affected, but to linger by it long enough to absorb its depths and retrieve its multiple meanings. Favouring the site of a painted illustration with its colours, textures and shapes may facilitate students' process to "slow down their perception" and practice the skill of truly seeing (Eisner, 2004, p. 5; Moebius, 2021), which in turn may facilitate and engage students in expressive and explorative writing practices.

3.1.3 Multimodal analysis

A multimodal analysis has been conducted to analyse the connections between the student texts and Tan's painted illustrations, as they alternate between visual images and written language as two different modes of representation. The students' texts may also be defined as multimodal in that their written responses are made in reply to visual images, which are included in each student's written text. Serafini (2017) defines a *mode* as: "a system of visual and verbal entities created within or across various cultures to represent and express meanings" (p. 12). Thus, different modes are employed to represent actual objects, concepts, and phenomena. Serafini's definition points to the value of expression of meaning through different modes, and that each mode enables people to label, categorise, express, and make sense of their surroundings in multiple ways.

Jewitt (2008) introduces the concept of *modal affordance* which may be understood as the possibilities and limitations to a mode's expression and representation of meaning, that is what a mode has to offer. An important point is that the affordances of a mode are limited to its materiality, physicality, and surrounding environment (Jewitt, 2008). "Physical, material, and social affordances affiliated with each mode generate a specific logic and provide different communicational and representational potentials" (Jewitt, 2008, p. 247). The notion of modal affordances is important in this context to recognize both the potential and limitations of written language as a mode of expression, and the potential which lies in the employment of several modes together.

For the remaining part of this section, I define the three terms perception, interpretation and representation, and shortly introduce Bang (2016), Tørnby (2020) and Nikolajeva (2012, 2014a, 2014b) which are all used to inform the multimodal analysis. *Perception* may be defined as "a transaction between the qualities of the environment in which we live and the experiences a person brings to those qualities" (Serafini, 2017, p. 31). Thus, the concept of perception is not merely limited to the eyes' physiological capability of seeing but relies on the notion that the act of seeing is guided by an individual's experiences and knowledge, thus serving as lenses through which one experiences the world (Serafini, 2017). Therefore, visual perception begins with addressing the visual stimuli present, and thereafter proceeding to interpret particular stimulus, that is attaching significance to it and giving it meaning (Serafini, 2017). However, Serafini (2017) emphasises that the distinction between perception and *interpretation* "is never absolute, since what we see is affected by what we know" (p. 32). In turn, visual images and written language are different systems of *representation* used to organize, construct, and communicate meaning and our interpretation of our perceived surroundings (Serafini, 2017). The representational system of written language, which the students utilise in this thesis, offers a distinct set of meaning potential with which students construct meanings from, which differs from other representational systems (Serafini, 2017). The potential for meaningful expression made with a representational system therefore depend on its modal affordances.

Bang (2016) has developed a framework for examining how the composition of visual images affect people emotionally. Her established principles are utilised in this thesis to explore connections between the visual composition of the painted illustrations and the affective responses and interpretations found in the students' writing. These principles function as analytical tools from which one may gain an understanding of the objects and concepts, which the students have focused on in their expressive writing. Examples of some of Bang's principles (2016) are: "White or light backgrounds feel safer to us than dark backgrounds" (p. 68), "We feel more scared looking at pointed shapes; we feel more secure or comforted looking at rounded shapes or curves" (p. 70) and "The larger an object is in a picture, the stronger it feels" (p. 72). In addition, Tørnby's (2020) presentation of colour theory and how affect and emotional experiences are often provoked by and associated with colours are implemented in the analysis to inform my interpretation of the presence of colours in Tan's painted illustrations and in the students' writing. As introduced in the theory section, Nikolajeva's term emotion ekphrasis is also applied as an analytical tool in the analysis to interpret the different representations of emotions present in the written reading responses and *The Red Tree*.

3.2   Data collection process

3.2.1 Collection of data material
The lesson plan designed for this case study was conducted in two 5th grade classes in a primary school located in the middle of Norway in week 36 of 2023. Inhabiting the dual role of researcher and teacher, I lead one 90-minute lesson in one class, and one 60-minute lesson and an additional 45-minute lesson in the second class. The designed lesson plan was implemented as a part of the English subject and began with an introductory activity and ended with the writing activity present in the data material. The articulated goals for the pupils in working with the picture book were: "Read, write, and have a conversation about the picture book *The Red Tree*", and "Present examples of what one can do to make a bad day better". The latter goal was

connected to a lesson I unfortunately only had the time to conduct in one of the classes, as an extension to the first lesson working with *The Red Tree*. Yet, this lesson will not be described here as it is not relevant to the research project. The goals were formulated in relation to the curricular competence aims presented in the introduction.

The activities in the lesson plan were developed and implemented through a social constructivist view on learning (Adams in Brown, 2006). Thus, active co-construction and negotiation of meaning were encouraged through the students' initial introduction to the picture book *The Red Tree*, and throughout our following discussions on the book's meaning and overall message. As a teacher, my role was to facilitate the students' interpretive processes and writing, rather than to conduct explicit instruction (Adams in Brown, 2006). Thus, the introductory activity involved perception and interpretation of the book's painted cover in full class and introduced adjectives and descriptive words as basis to predict the book's content. This activity was designed to activate the pupils' schemata and to model the process of perceiving and interpreting an image, which they were later asked to do individually.

Thereafter, I read a digital version of the book, present on the Smartboard, out loud for the students. I chose when to turn the pages, and thereby forced the students to perceive the individual images for some time after I had finished reading the verbal narrative. A brief discussion of the students' thoughts on what the book was about and who it was about was initiated after the reading. Here, visual metaphors were discussed in simple terms connected to depression, otherness and loneliness, in which the figurative meaning of the red tree and the repeated depiction of a red leaf in all the pages were mentioned. Analogies were also made, that is to seek understanding of a complex issue by comparing it to a more familiar one (Brown, 2006), in using sadness and loneliness as more familiar emotional experiences for the students to explore the complex concept of depression.

The students were presented with a glossary of adjectives to describe feelings which they were encouraged to use in the individual writing activity. It should be noted that the second class went through the list of adjectives more in depth than the first one. The English glossary was accompanied with a translation of all the words in Norwegian as present in the same table. Thereafter, the students were introduced to the individual writing task to which they used their Chromebooks, and they were given the remaining part of the lesson to respond in writing to three illustrations from *The Red Tree*. In the writing task, each illustration was accompanied by the two following questions and a model sentence to scaffold the students' writing process: (1) What adjectives describe the image? Write down three adjectives. (2) Write one sentence that describes how the image makes you feel. You can write more than one sentence. Example: The image makes me feel confused because…. After the lessons were completed, I collected 26 student texts. The few student texts that were considered to be deficient by the practice teacher were omitted from the stored texts, along with a couple of student texts of which the parents of the student author did not agree for their child to be a part of the study. All students texts were collected and stored anonymously.

3.2.2 Description of chosen material: *The Red Tree* by Shaun Tan

This research study aims to investigate how picture books illustrations, depicting difficult emotions, affect students and how this affect is represented in the students writing. Therefore, it was essential to carefully select a suitable picture book for this purpose from which to design the lesson plan and writing activity. During the selection

process, I found myself valuing the affective and interpretative potential of the books' illustrations the most. I needed to find visual images which affected me, the same way I wanted them to affect my students and force them to feel something.

Eventually, I encountered the picture book *The Red Tree* written and illustrated by Shaun Tan. Subsequently, my interest in visual representations of difficult and complex emotional experiences grew. I chose this picture book to base the writing activity for this study upon, because it held potential for engaging students affectively and cognitively. Especially, depression and loneliness are complex emotional experiences which are represented in *The Red Tree*. Tan utilizes as dual narrative to convey these complex emotional states in which: "the visual text is dark and surreal, while the verbal text is sparse" (J. Dillon, personal communication, 2022). In this thesis, I have chosen to focus on the visual text which Dillion here describes as "dark and surreal" to explore its affective and cognitive potential in engaging students' in expressive and creative writing practices. An elaboration on the artistic crafting behind Tan's work is included in the analysis.

3.3   Validity and reliability

In terms of ensuring validity and reliability in this study, certain issues have to be addressed. Considering, that this thesis analyses the students' written reading responses and the painted illustrations in the picture book *The Red Tree*, I have experienced difficulty in finding a specific model for this analysis. This has been a concern of mine in relation to the ensurance of conducting a reliable study. However, along with my supervisor, I decided to conduct a multimodal analysis, informed by analytical terminology from cognitive narratology, to examine my collected data and chosen material. In my analysis, I have been cautious to make interpretations of the data material based on theory presented in my theoretical frameworks and methodology, so to ensure that my findings do not take form as subjective interpretations which merely show the results I hope to find. Merriam (2014) states that personal documents are a good data material source to investigate people's beliefs and worldviews, although one has to be conscious of the highly subjective nature of personal documents. However, to be transparent about the influence my subjectivity as a researcher has on the data analysis and findings throughout this thesis provides it with validity and reliability.

An in-depth analysis of a small sample of student texts can provide valuable insight on the presented issue in this thesis. Thus, it is important to state that the findings presented in this individual case cannot be reliably generalized to make definite statements of the issue discussed as a whole. Throughout this project, however, my intention has never been to present findings that can establish definite conclusions. My limited timeframe and lack of adequate theoretical knowledge of affect and cognitive theory prevent me from providing the reader of this thesis with such definite conclusions. Thus, my objective has been to explore student writing in light of cognitive narratology and theory on writing and development of thought to reflect on the possibilities that the theorization of the current data material reveals in relation to EAL teacher practice. This case study thus contributes with limited, yet valuable insight to the literary and educational development in the research field (Flyvbjerg, 2011).

3.4   Positionality and ethical considerations

In this last section, I reflect on my positioning as a researcher and teacher in this study and clarify ethical considerations related to the collection of the data material in

this thesis. Bullen et al. (2017) state that children's literature is especially "value-laden" and serves to either "reproduce or resist dominant social norms" (p. 1). Hence, the emotions depicted in children's literature and the fictional characters' management of these emotions function to influence students' emotional scripts, that are their memorised knowledge which guides their opinion, management and expression of emotions in different situations. In a dual position of teacher and researcher within this study, I therefore possess power to influence both teachers' views on adapting picture books to engage their students in expressing emotions, and the students present in this study and their emotional scripts, which in turn influence how they manage their own and others' feelings. It is thus important to be aware of this responsibility and carefully consider the literature which one deems appropriate to include in the classroom, as my elaboration on the chosen material for this study earlier displays. Furthermore, Merriam (2014) states that the researcher has faults, and naturally brings biases into the analysis of the research material, which may have an impact on the overall research. Therefore, it is important to attempt at identifying and addressing one's own bias as a researcher which one brings into the analysis to ensure transparency. One example is my initial bias that students who had written that they felt nothing at all, in their encounter with the illustration, were answers in which the students had failed to express emotion and thus they were not relevant. However, I was enlightened by Joy's notion that all forms of expression are "performances of affect" (2020, p. 8). I was thus confronted by my own bias and became aware that also these answers, though challenging my idea of successful expression of emotion, also were expression of emotion and provided me as a researcher with insight to the students' affective and cognitive engagement with the picture book.

Ethical considerations include the process of applying for SIKT approval of my study to ensure that the data collection was administered and conducted according to SIKT's guidelines. However, after reviewing the aims for my study, I decided that it was not necessary for me to store any personal data about the students involved in the study. In agreement with an advisor with SIKT and my supervisor, we concluded that I could collect my data material anonymously according to ethical guidelines. The process of which the anonymity of the students where ensured began with the students uploading their texts without their names to a database controlled by the practice teacher. Then, all the students' texts were downloaded to the teacher's computer and were all completely anonymised before they were further transferred to my possession by using a memory pen. All student texts were anonymous and stored on my computer with no possibilities for tracing each text back to individual students. Nevertheless, an information letter to the parents and caretakers of the students in both classes was distributed by email to inform them of my project and provide them with the opportunity to have their child's text being removed from the texts which were later given to me.

4 Analysis

This section presents the analysis of the student responses of two 5th grade classes to three selected illustrations from the picture book *The Red Tree* by Shaun Tan. Firstly, a short account of the artistic crafting behind Tan's painted illustrations is presented. Thereafter, each illustration that the students was asked to respond to is introduced, with an analysis of a selection of the student responses connected to them. The students have been through the process of verbalizing their emotional experiences in encounter with non-verbal narratives conveyed by single illustrations, as the tasks presented only included the illustrations without the minimal verbal narrative elsewhere present in the actual picture book.

Additionally, it is important for the reader to bear in mind that the students' choice of words and interpretations, although their own, are conditioned by the learning environment in the classroom, and my pedagogical choices and scaffolding practices as a teacher in the learning situation. Bullen et al. emphasise this by stating that: "How individuals experience, interpret, and act on their feelings is shaped by the emotional scripts they have learned or acquired. The fact that they are formulated on past experiences does not preclude the influence of social conditioning" (Bullen et al., 2020, p. 5). Finally, the following list of adjectives was introduced to the students as a means of scaffolding their writing process, and the reader should take its significance and influence on the words present in the students' writing into consideration in the following. The list included the ensuing descriptive words to introduce the students to nuances in emotional experience and expression: *scared, confused, overwhelmed, hopeful, calm, curious, lonely, thoughtful, worried, depressed and trapped*.

4.1 The artistic crafting behind Shaun Tan's painted book illustrations

Given the significance of Shaun Tan' painted illustrations to this MA thesis, it seems justified to shortly describe the crafting behind Tan's work as author and illustrator. Hunter (2011) describes Tan's artistry as something which "can make us question what we thought we had seen and known, and *to look again* at what *was once familiar and see it afresh*" [my italics] (p. 10). Based on Hunter's assertion, it is reasonable to claim that Tan's artistry holds the possibility to aid students' development of their existing schemas and scripts, and to produce affective encounters between students and his books. In fact, Arizpe (2023) emphasises the importance of considering the power that lies within outstanding artwork in many picture books, "which provokes affective as well as cognitive reactions in young readers" (p. 153). Tan's artwork and authorship defy categorization, and his picture book illustrations are made with a variety of different medias, among others acryl and oil paint, graphite pencil, scratch board, coloured pencils, watercolour, pen and ink, and digital colouration, as can be seen in the illustrations pictured below (Hunter, 2011; Tan, n.d.). In fact, the illustrations in The Red Tree are painted with acryl and oil paint on paper, which from my perspective produces a vivid and dream-like atmosphere in which affect thrives. Although, affect seems to be at the heart of all of Tan's artwork.

On this account, The Red Tree has been recognised as one of Tan's most controversial books. It captures and presents difficult emotional experiences to young readers, and thus resists a dominant view of many adults who "find in its extraordinary pictorial renditions of overwhelming emotions a physical representation of the nightmarish space of the mind," which they are alarmed to know is read by children (Hunter, 2011, p. 14). However, that which adults may forget, Hunter (2011) stresses, is "the monstrous shapeless fears of childhood that this book acknowledges, gives voice to […] (p. 14). Therefore, Tan resists this adult view of children's incapacity to manage the visual representation of difficult emotional experiences, and instead he invites his readers into the depths of the darkest places of our minds, to shape and verbalize the fears and anxiety that many children are already experiencing themselves. In relation to his crafting of *The Red Tree*, Tan himself has stated that it was in fact the negative emotional experiences, which he found to be the most intriguing, especially depression and loneliness; "[…] these ideas seem to be ultimately more thought-provoking on the page" (Tan, n.d.).

Indeed, an interesting characteristic of Tan's illustrations in *The Red Tree* is that each painting tells a story of its own with no definite conclusion, which leaves it up to the imagination of each reader to fill in the gaps and determine what happens in the space in between images. Tan notes that the picture book is made from the "impulse of children and adults alike to describe feelings using metaphor – monsters, storms, sunshine, rainbows and so on. […] I wanted to paint images that would further explore the expressive possibilities of this kind of shared imagination, which could be at once strange and familiar" (Tan, n.d.). This notion of using metaphoric expression to convey emotion seems to rub off on some students, who either adapt it in their own writing or question its presence in the illustrations. The following analysed data material points to the potential that lies in the process of exploring "the expressive possibilities of this […] shared imagination" of ours, and the students' responses reflect their affective textual encounters that indicate both feelings of familiarity and strangeness as expressed through their writing. Ultimately, the nameless protagonist serves as a stand-in for the reader, as she helplessly travels through chaotic and dark moments which compose her day, but at last she discovers the notion of hopefulness as her journey ends (Tan, n.d.).

Figure 1 The Old Country (Shaun Tan, 2004, n.p.)

Figure 2 Reflection (Shaun Tan, 2000, n.p.)

Figure 3 Hello! (Shaun Tan, 1999, n.p.)

4.2 Analysis of student responses and picture book illustrations

4.2.1 Overview of most frequently used verbal representations for emotion in student responses across illustrations

This section of the analysis presents an overview of the most frequently used words in the student responses to describe the emotions conveyed by the illustrations and/ or their own or the protagonist's emotional experiences. The following analysis of the students' most used verbal representations for emotion may provide valuable insight on their overall interpretations of the emotions conveyed by the illustrations. Further, it may suggest the vocabulary that was available to the students during their fictional encounters, in the moments affect was recognized and personalized into emotional experience and in turn expression. The following tables were made to present these findings and illustrate at how many instances the following words were used, and how many students made us of the different words belove.
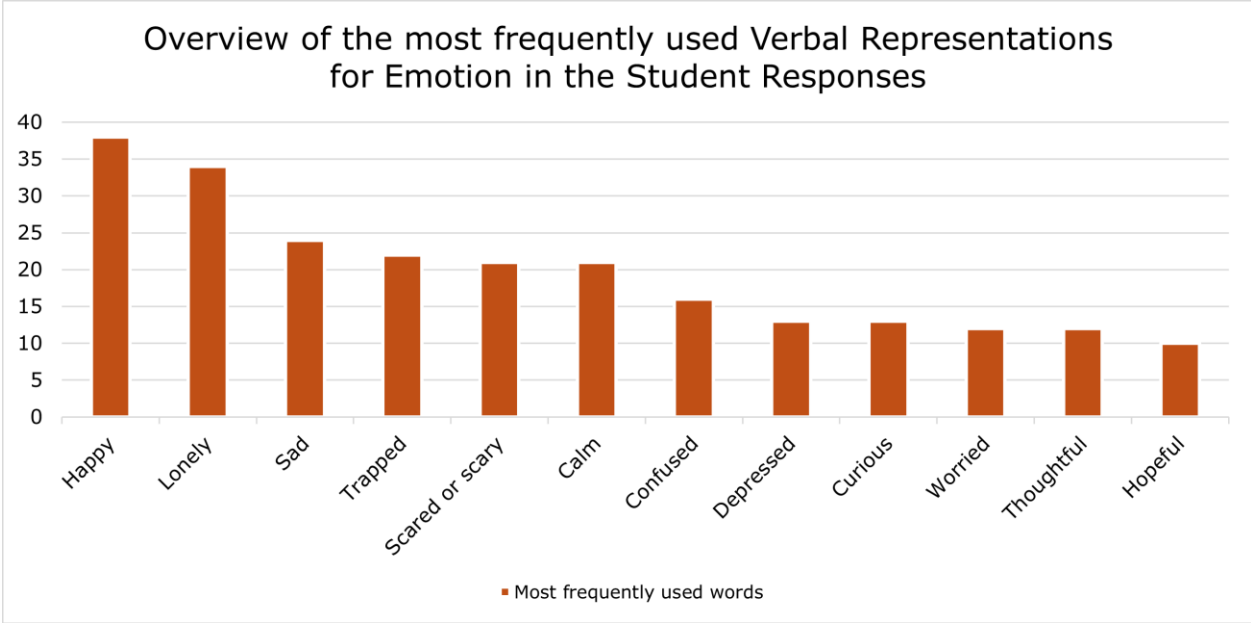

Figure 4 Diagram of the most used verbal representations for emotion in student responses.
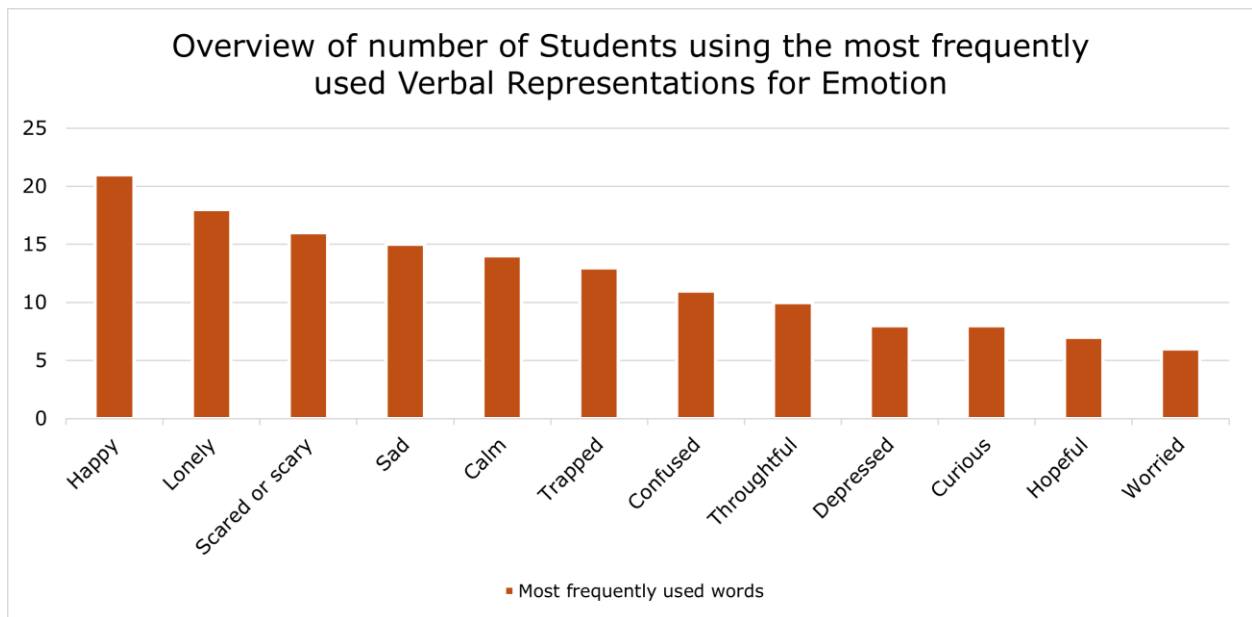
Figure 5 Diagram of number of students using the most frequently used verbal representations for emotion.

Firstly, the tables inform the reader of a significant difference between the number of times the most frequent words were used and the number of students who used them in their writing. The findings shows that many students have made repeated use of particular words throughout their written responses. The students' repeated word use may be interpreted as a writing strategy, utilized as a result of an absence of relevant synonyms to alternate and nuance their verbal expression. Moreover, the table informs the reader that the most frequently used words among the students are *happy*, *lonely* and *sad*, which are present at 38, 34 and 24 instances and used by 21, 18 and 15 out of 26 students throughout the written responses. In turn, the students express emotional experiences through the concepts of happiness, loneliness and sadness, which function as verbal representations of diegetic or extradiegetic emotions present in the data material. Notably, the word *scared/ scary* was also used often by the students (21 instances by 16 different students).

The frequent presence of the words *happy*, *sad* and *scared/ scary* in the students' writing may be interpreted based on Nikolajeva's notion that since sadness, happiness and fear are basic emotions, they are "[…] ostensibly the first choice in our interpretive strategy" (2012, p. 278). As a part of the students' interpretive strategy, they first recognise their own and the protagonist's emotional experiences as basic emotions, given that their verbal representations are often words that the students learn early on in an EAL context and find to be easily accessible. The repetition of words, such as happy, sad and scared, is a result of the students' utilization of the vocabulary that was the most available to them at the moment of expression, in contrast to actively choosing words to convey nuances to their emotional experiences or those conveyed by the illustrations. On this account, it should be mentioned that Evans (2003) defines happiness and sadness as moods and categorises joy and distress as emotions. However, as it is not relevant for the analysis of the following data material, I will here describe sadness and happiness as emotions in accordance with Nikolajeva (2012).

A considerable number of the students attempted to verbally convey nuances to the basic emotions of happiness, sadness and fear by using additional words or synonyms.

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As visualized in the table above, 6 of 26 students use *worried*, 7 of 26 use *hopeful*, 8 of 26 use *depressed*, 13 of 26 use *trapped* and 14 out of 26 students use *calm* in their written responses to nuance their expression of emotion. Some students also included adverbs to amplify or minimize the effect of a word expressing emotion, or by using creative typographic means such as caps lock, which can be detected in the following examples: extremely depressed, a tiny bit sad, a little tiny bit small and SCARY. In these instances, the students expanded on the literal verbal label sad, which has been used to identify the emotion conveyed by the illustration (Nikolajeva, 2012). By using additional words to describe the emotions they recognize in the illustration or as felt by themselves, the students manage to verbally express nuances to the basic emotion of sadness. They may be said to expand on their understanding of emotions and their ability to verbally express complex emotional experiences more accurately through the means of language.

Furthermore, many students used different words to describe different emotions in the same word string to describe an illustration. This may be interpreted as the students' attempts to account for possible contradiction within complex emotional experiences as conveyed by the illustrations. Examples of this is found in the following word strings written to describe illustration 1, 2 and 3 respectively: "Lonely, hopeful, depressed" (Student 17), "Scared, worried, thoughtful" (Student 25) and "Lonely, curious, calm" (Student 8). The examples suggest that the students interpret the emotional experiences of the protagonist and those felt by themselves during their fictional encounters as multifaceted and non-linear, just as emotions often are felt and experienced in everyday life. Indeed, Nikolajeva emphasises: "We cannot unequivocally identify the emotion experienced by the character: it is a combination of sorrow, fear, loneliness, anxiety, despair and plain horror" (2012, p. 280).

In view of this, it is important to repeat that the students' overall word choices have been influenced by the vocabulary list they were given as a scaffolding device, to provide them with words to express nuances to emotional experience. Bullen et al. argue that we personalize affect and in turn interpret emotion based on our emotional scripts that each individual has learned or acquired through interpersonal interactions with their surroundings (2020). However, although our emotional scripts are shaped by our memory of past emotional experiences, this does not prevent "the influence of social conditioning" on our interpretive strategies (Bullen et al., 2020, p. 5). Thus, my influence as a teacher and researcher on the vocabulary present in the data material should be considered. Nonetheless, the presence of this glossary has, as indicated by the tables, provided the students with new vocabulary to express emotion more accurately and nuanced.

From my perspective, I find the students' willingness to make use of the glossary introduced to them impressive in and of itself, especially given that the writers are 5th grade students with limited EAL learning experience. As will be examined in the following sections of the analysis, the students' utilization of the words present in the tables suggests that most students' have to some extent understood their meaning. Some answers imply that the students have used words to either describe illustrations or emotional experience while lacking an understanding of the utilized word, and a more thorough introduction to the new glossary would probably have resulted in more students utilizing it more intentionally in their writing.

To conclude, Serafini (2017) states that "we attend to what we notice, and what we notice depends on what we understand" (p. 32). What we understand in turn depends on

what we know – that is, the activation of our schemas and scripts – and our expression depends on our available means to express that which we notice. The student responses may provide an insight into the visual elements of which the students have noticed, yet failed to understand or express, or failed to notice in the first place due to lack of understanding. This will be examined and analysed more closely in the following sections presenting each of the three illustrations taken from *The Red Tree* and relevant student responses.

4.2.2 "Darkness"

Figure 6 Darkness (Shaun Tan, 2000, n.p.)

The presented illustration may be read as part of a shift in the book's narrative towards the manifestation of a steadily more absurd reality, which is presented to the reader as it is felt and experienced through the body and mind of the protagonist. Here, the enormous, monstrous fish represents the beginning of the absurd and horrific world that the protagonist lapses into. It serves to obscure the lines between reality and imagination. The fish-like creature may be interpreted as a visualisation of the monstrous, dark and overwhelming feelings and thoughts that may follow a child, like a mood that influences and colours our perspective, which we use to perceive our surroundings. For this reason, the present illustration was chosen to accompany the written tasks for the students. Dillon describes the shift in the narrative in the following manner: "This sense of place – of reality – is immediately disjointed in the following pages. As the protagonist moves throughout her day, we glimpse her descent into the

surreal" (J. Dillon, personal communication, 30th October 2024). The protagonist's slow descent into a gradually more nightmarish state of mind presents itself through her own situatedness in absurd places and situations, as presented through each new double-spread. Mallan (2017) states that authors of children's books often seek to emotionally engage their readers with fictional characters and place, by situating them in "both real and imaginary spaces […]" (p. 131). The protagonist's situatedness and the composition of the illustration therefore become important in conveying emotion, dependent on the students' processes of recognizing and interpreting emotion.

A consideration of the composition of the illustration may aid in further understanding and interpretation of the students' written responses of their affective encounters. The reading of pictures, as informed by visual stimuli, may be regarded as "the event", which produces affect and prompts students to feel something. Especially when we as readers encounter the particularly intense emotions through the protagonist's situatedness in bizarre scenarios, the affect of reading as an event becomes significant. In fact, Nikolajeva states that: "Surrealism, as deviating strongly from the actual world, generally affects our senses, including disgust, which is evoked powerfully in *The Red Tree* […]. We do not only empathise with the character but relate directly to the imagery" (2014b, p. 106). Examples of this can be found in the students' writing, as they both affectively relate to the emotional experience of the protagonist and directly to the absurdness in the imagery.

I want to return now to the most prominent feature of the illustration, the monstrously painted fish looming over the protagonist. Such a weird setting affects some students and serves to manifest emotional experiences of fear: "The image makes me feel a little scared because the fish looks kinda creepy" (Student 7), "This image makes me feel that this image is very creepy because of the big SCARY fish" (Student 24), "This image makes me feel scared because of the fish" (Student 15) and "When I look at this picture, I feel scared. I am afraid that someone will kidnap me" (Student 6). These student responses may be interpreted as the students engaging with emotion *extradiegetically*: as experienced by themselves through directly relating to the imagery independently of the emotional experience of the protagonist. However, only Student 7 managed to point to the visual elements in the illustration, that make the reader interpret the fish-like creature as disturbing: "Something black comes out of the fish's eye. The eye is white […]" (Student 7). The presence of the fish-like creature in the students' writing may be explained based on its size, shape and positioning in the image. It is the largest object in the image, which according to Bang makes it produce the strongest affect, and its position in the centre of the image makes it presumably the most effective "center of attention", or what we lay our eyes on first (2016, p. 72). In relation to shape, the pointed outline of the shadow of the fish, which engulfs the protagonist, may additionally cause affect and in turn distress, as "we feel more scared looking at pointed shapes […]" (Bang, 2016, p. 70), although none of the students' have directly addressed this detail in their writing.

Then, according to Nikolajeva, through reading imagery readers may "engage with the emotion both diegetically, as experienced by the character, and extradiegetically, as experienced by an extratextual agency, which presumably produces a synergetic effect" (2014b, p. 106). Here, the students diegetic engagement with emotion is most prominent through their expression of sadness and loneliness, as interpretations of the protagonist's emotional experience. The protagonist, illustrated as a girl with orange hair and a purple dress, is also situated in the centre of the image, and although her size

should prompt indifference in the reader, both her placement and colours make her attract the students' attention, as a majority addressed her presence in their writing. Purcell notes that: "The text is narrated […] in the second person, a rarely used mode which functions here to tell the story as if the child reader were the character. This encourages strong alignment between them" (2018, p. 361). Although the students did not have access to the single sentence verbal narrative during their writing process, as they were asked to focus on the illustrations alone, all students were present during the read-aloud of the book and were thus exposed to and presumably affected by the second person narration. This and the repeated appearance of the girl in each double-spread may be viewed as reasons for a majority of the students' expressed mirroring of and engagement with the emotions of sadness and loneliness, as presumably experienced by the protagonist.

The following examples allude to the students' engagement with emotion *diegetically* as they interpret the emotional state of the protagonist as informed by the visual: "The image makes me feel lonely sad because she is lonely" (Student 9), "The image makes me feel sad because the girl looks very lonely and sad" (Student 26), "The image makes me feel lonely because the girl walks alone" (Student 10) and "This make me feel lonely because the girl is going down the street alone" (Student 8). Here, student 9 expresses their own experience of loneliness as a reflection of their interpretation of the protagonist as lonely. In turn, the interpretation made by student 26 is less absolute as they state that the protagonist appears to be experiencing loneliness and sadness. Considering that the girl is painted with no clear facial expression to aid students to interpret emotion, they are forced to draw on the girl's body language and situatedness in the illustration to inform their interpretations. In fact, Nikolajeva points out: "the girl's facial expression does not change throughout the book, and the absence of the mouth makes it almost impossible to read her mind through her face" (2012, p. 280). Students 10 and 8 both express a feeling of loneliness which they allude to be an emotion experienced by the protagonist as her situatedness and spatial position is set apart from the other people present in the image as she walks alone. Another student also alludes to the presumed lonely existence of the protagonist as they read her to be the only person affected by the fish's presence: "I don't like that it is a fish over her and no other" (Student 2). This statement further acknowledges the significance of placement in the illustration's representation of emotion.

The students presumably activate relevant scripts during their reading of the image, as it enables them to fill the gaps and express that which is left unsaid in the narrative. Hence, they are able to speculate, reflect and complete the story of the girl, whose presence is completely left out of the verbal narrative of the picture book. Both students 8 and 10 seem to activate their script of "walking alone" which aided them in their further interpretation of the girl as being lonely, as their scripts presumably made them associate the act of walking alone with the emotional experience of loneliness. Hence, interpretation and understanding of a narrative demand the reader to "make pragmatic inferences about the connections between the events described in the story", and, as Gibbs further emphasises, these inferences require "cognitive effort" (1994, p. 330). Similar inferences made by students may be found throughout the students' writing, as they reasoned their identification of emotion with knowledge from relevant schemas or scripts and their knowledge of literary conventions, as will be displayed in relation to colour in the next section.

4.2.3 "Nobody understands"

Figure 7 Nobody understands (Shaun Tan, 2000, n.p.)

As the reader continues to explore the mindscape of the protagonist, the next selected illustration brings the students to a pebbled beach with a glass bottle probably washed ashore, at present housing the girl. The glass bottle can be interpreted as an object of shelter for the girl from the unpredictable and hurtful outer world. However, the bottle becomes merely a temporarily place of escape, as one cannot run away from one's feelings forever, resulting in what Dillon describes as the girl sitting "amongst her feelings as the bottle slowly fills up with water. One can assume that these are the tears of the girl, hidden from the world through a diver's helmet" (J. Dillon, personal communication, 30th October 2023). Furthermore, the perspiration on the inside of the bottle may resemble falling tears, which further supports the interpretation that the girl is sitting in a growing pool of her own tears. Most of the students also detect the sombre atmosphere which the illustration conveys and interpret the emotional state of the protagonist as one of sadness and distress. Some examples are: "When i see that picture i feel lonely and trapped" (Student 6), "The image makes me feel a little bit sad and thoughtful because its dark there" (Student 9), "Its look like she is so depressed, and she never will be glad agen [sic]" (Student 25) and "I feel very sad because she feels lonely, sad and thoughtful (Student 26). However, as suggested by the students' overall writing, all of them lack the interpretive experience and vocabulary to express and reflect on the visual emotion ekphrasis (which provokes these feelings) in a more extensive manner. The students recognize the same emotions as Dillon but express them in a significantly simpler language, which is to be expected of 5th grade EAL learners provided with a limited time frame for completing these writing tasks.

Indeed, Tan depends on his readers' capacity to activate and map relevant schemas, to "attach significance and meaning to objects in order to access metaphorical meaning" (Purcell, 2018, p. 361), and thus make more advanced interpretations. As a complex picture book, *The Red Tree* conveys emotion through sophisticated and highly ambiguous imagery, yet the narrative may be read as a girl's simple transformation from sad to happy again (Nikolajeva, 2012). Overall, the students' responses suggest that they have read and understood the narrative in this simpler way and failed to notice the visual metaphors present in the illustrations and retrieving their metaphorical meaning.

This affects the way they express themselves, in simpler verbal representations of emotion, like their frequent utilization of sad and scared, often with no further justification to accompany their interpretations. In fact, the "because"-clause, in the example-sentence given to the students was implemented for me as a researcher to gain some access to the students' affective and cognitive engagement with the picture book illustrations. It was also implemented as a means to challenge students to consider the features in the illustrations that made them feel a certain way, or for them to become more aware of poetics. A considerable number of students' did not manage to justify their verbally expressed emotions by pointing to the illustration itself, which may in part be understood as a reasonable response because the students have little experience with reading visual narratives in this manner. However, some students recognise and question the metaphorical nature of The Red Tree, which I will argue in the discussion is the first step for readers to unpack the meaning of the complex and metaphorical emotion ekphrasis present in Tan's illustrations.

Nevertheless, prominent in the students writing is their continued attention to the protagonist. Positioned in the foreground as the largest object in the painting and situated in a weird setting inside a big glass bottle, the girl becomes easily noticeable to the perceiver. One student writes: "A girl with a purple dress is sitting in a bottle" (Student 7). The interpretation of the girl's spatial position inside the bottle as one of entrapment, which in turn causes her to feel distress, is evident in most of the students' written responses. As present in the table above, 13 students used the word trapped in their writing, as they either described the situation of the protagonist or verbally convey their own emerging feeling of entrapment. Some examples from students' writing are: "The image makes me feel trapped because she is in a big bottle" (Student 10), "The image makes me feel that she is trapped because she has given up" (Student 16) and "This image makes me feel trapped, lonely, confused" (Student 13). Several students imply the girl's apparent distress emerges from her entrapment. These students engage with the emotion diegetically as shown through their own expressed feeling of being trapped.

The students seem to recognize the protagonist's position in the bottle as one of entrapment and verbally label it as her being or feeling trapped, which derives from a state of discomfort and distress. Nikolajeva (2014a) states that: "In reading images, we project our own embodied emotions onto represented figures" (p. 717). We remember how our own body, or the bodies of others in different situations, respond to and express certain emotions, and we further project these onto fictional characters to determine their emotional state. It is reasonable to assume that the students have ask themselves consciously or unconsciously the question "How would I feel if I was trapped inside a small space with no possible escape?" One student writes: "The image makes me feel a little tiny bit, small but not tiny" (Student 1). This may be interpreted as the student momentarily feeling "small" as caused by their identification with the protagonist's situation of feeling small within a trapped space.

Another student states: "This image makes me feel trapped because she can't get out and she is just waiting" (Student 13). Here, the student arguably makes the presumption that the girl feels trapped because she cannot physically get out of the bottle, causing the student to conclude that the girl is forced to simply just wait. Interestingly, in this statement the student suggests a form of temporality. The girl is

believed to be at the pebbled beach for a considerable duration of time, long enough to be waiting for something or someone, despite of the illustration giving no indication of time or duration in itself. However, Bang states that: "We read light backgrounds as day and dark backgrounds as night, twilight and storm", and Tørnby elaborates that: "In many images the dynamic between light and dark colors adds suspense and movement" (Bang, 2016, p. 68; Tørnby, 2020, p. 134). One may therefore assume that the student has perceived the protagonist's surroundings and noticed the lighter sky in the horizon and the clouds that are painted in different nuances to resemble movement. These clues prompted the student to express the temporal aspect of the narrative within the illustration.

Further, in their responses, several students continue to interpret the girl as lonely. This interpretation may be understood as deriving from inferences made from the protagonist's positioning in the glass bottle, the mood conveyed by the colours in the painting, and the fact that that she is the only fictional character present in the image. Dillon also interprets the girl's current existence as one of isolation and loneliness, stating: "She is on the fringes of the world around her, existing in the seclusion of the glass bottle" (J. Dillon, personal communication, 30th October 2023). This is reflected in the students' written responses as they also observe that the protagonist's experience of loneliness is tied to her current place of confinement. Dillon and the students' interpretations may be viewed in light of Bang's reading: "The edges and corners of the picture are the edges and corners of the picture-world" (2016, p. 66). Positioning the girl in the corner of the painting may be a decision made by Tan to reflect the protagonist's isolated existence outside of her own mind.

Tørnby (2020) states that dark and light colours are often used to create contrast and provide depth to a painting. The lighter colours made to paint the sky, clouds and water in the other end of the image creates a sense of distance between it and the protagonist. One student noticed the light-coloured sky, which seems to be outside of the protagonist's field of vision: "I see the sky, it's beautiful. And I can see the water. It's very clear" (Student 7). Both the sky and water are painted in shades of white and blue, which stand in stark contrast to the darker colours surrounding the protagonist and filling the upper part of the painting. Tørnby elaborates: "We sense the wide span between the darkness surrounding the character and the happier skies far away, which seems to be almost out of reach" (2020, p. 134). The girl's situatedness in the far corner of the painting becomes more easily interpreted as her living "on the fringes of the word" (J. Dillon, personal communication, 30th October 2023), as she is isolated and lonely far away from the lighter place, which may be interpreted as representing community and society. One the other hand, another student has interpreted the colour scheme in the distance differently: "In the picture there are lots of dark clouds and I think it is going to rain and thunder soon. The water looks very dark blue and maybe the water is gray" (Student 26). Here, the contrast created by Tan's use of darker and lighter colours utilised to paint the sky above the clouds has made the student interpret the illustration as a moment of calm before the storm.

Indeed, several students use the word calm to describe the painting and engage with the emotion diegetically and extradiegetically. The presence of both felt calmness and distress/entrapment among the students as provoked by the same illustration speaks to the ambiguous and suspenseful nature of Tan's illustration, and the students' ambivalence may further be explained by the utilization of both dark and light colours. Bang states that: "White or light backgrounds feel safer to us than dark backgrounds" (2016, p. 68). The students that have felt a sense of calmness when perceiving the illustration have presumably noticed the lighter skies in one end of the painting. While the students who have engaged with the emotion of distress by entrapment diegetically have firstly perceived the protagonist and the darker colours which engulf her body. In fact, colour becomes evident in several students writing as it is connected to affect and emotion. Some examples are: "Black, dark, weird" (Student 4), "Blue, sad, lonely" (Student 8). "Dark, scared, calm" (Student 19), "Dark blue, very dark and weird"

(Student 24), and "The image make me feel a little bit sad and thoughtful because its dark there" (Student 9). Several students describe the darkness that fills the painting. Tørnby writes that it is precisely the presence of the lighter colours that makes the darkness stand out to us as perceivers and creates it's felt intensity (2020). Finally, artists also create contrast by the use of dark and light colours "to bring out their beauty" (Tørnby, 2020, p. 134). One student has noticed this exactly and expressed it in their writing: "The image makes me feel calm because of the beautiful picture" (Student 15).

4.2.4 "The Red Tree"

Figure 8 The Red Tree (Shaun Tan, 2000, n.p.)

The final image of *The Red Tree* brings the reader back to the protagonist's bedroom, where the little red leaf, barely noticeable yet present in every double-spread across the book, has blossomed into a full-grown tree. Here, the reader finally witnesses an expression on the girl's face – one that yields hope. This change in atmosphere and mood conveyed by the illustration is detected by almost all of the students, and some of them express the following: "Calm, happy, overwhelmed by that beautiful red tree" (Student 6), "Happy, calm, not worried anymore" (Student 2), "Finally happy, home, bright colours" (Student 16), "This picture makes me happy because she smiles and looks happy too" (Student 9), and "This image makes me feel hopeful" (Student 22). The darkness in the previous illustrations is still present but does not provoke the same felt intensity as in earlier images, and it is therefore generally not present in the students' responses to the painting. However, one student describes the image in the following manner: "Tree red, dark room, happy" (Student 14). The student points out an important

detail as to why the darkness appears less noticeable to the students. The dark room, which here functions as a contrast to the bright, glowing, warm, red tree, in turn makes us notice and feel the tree's presence more intensely than the darkness surrounding it. It seems more pressing for the students to express the emotions of happiness, curiosity and calmness, which the presence of warm and bright colours and the smiling protagonist provoke.

Several students attend to Tan's use of warm red and orange colours in the illustration, and they indirectly connect colour to the conveying of positive emotions, in particular happiness. In their responses, one can find the following descriptions: "Glowing" (Student 9), "Glow" (Student 4), "Happy, bright (…)" (Student 1), "Finally happy, home and bright colors" (Student 13), "Red, glad, happy" (Student 23), "This image makes me feel happy because it got color" (Student 1), and "[…] i like the bright big red tree" (Student 2). Consequently, the way Tan has painted the red tree, with that which resembles a red and orange glow encircling its crown, has left many students feeling momentary joy, almost mesmerised by the tree's intense presence. One student felt "[…] overwhelmed by that beautiful red tree" (Student 6). Indeed, a majority of 21 students, express and/or experience happiness in their engagement with the illustration. Some examples are: "This picture makes me feel happy because she looks happy" (Student 13), "Happy😊 because She finally got happy" (Student 14), "The image makes me feel happy because she smiles and looks happy too" (Student 9), and "This picture makes me feel happy because the girl looks very happy and hopeful" (Student 26). Nikolajeva explains that readers experience "vicarious happiness through the happiness" of the fictional character (2014a, p. 721). This may be seen in relation to a considerable number of students, who here mirror their interpretation of the protagonist's emotional experience, expressing their felt experience of the same emotion.

The frequent expression of happiness may be a result of the presence of the protagonist's facial expression, which is absent in the other two illustrations, and thus aids students in identifying the emotion conveyed through the illustration. Some examples are: "The tree is red and big. The girl is smiling" (Student 7), "This image makes me happy because she is smiling at a tree" (Student 10) and "This picture makes me happy because she smiles and looks happy too" (Student 9). Yet the frequent expression of happiness could also be a consequence of the students' lack of available synonyms to express nuances to this emotion. Some students try to vary their words of expression, like *glad*, *better*, *ok*, *calm*, *not lonely*. In contrast, the two first illustrations seem to result in more divergent interpretations of the emotional expression conveyed through the illustrations, and in turn the emotional experiences that the students feel encountering the protagonist and the narrative. This could be because the two first illustrations convey ambiguity in meaning to a larger degree then the last illustration, and therefore produce ambiguity in the students' own experiences of emotions present in the textual encounter.

Still, 5 out of 26 students continue to use the word lonely to describe the protagonist, which indicates that even though the girl may be experiencing a moment of joy, she is still situated in her room alone. Loneliness seems to be understood by the students as an emotion which lingers, perhaps even after the narrative has officially ended with the last double-spread page read and the book closed. However, the expressed emotion of loneliness among some students may provide space for nuancing the more definite emotion of happiness, which the majority of the students interpret the protagonist to be experiencing. One student describes the illustration in the following

manner: "Lonely, hopeful, depressed" (Student 17). The student acknowledges the feelings which the protagonist has felt in the previous illustrations and indirectly insists on their still lingering presence, yet it provides fertile ground for the exploration of hopefulness, for a nuanced examination of the basic emotion of happiness. To feel hopeful may be understood as a person realizing that there is hope of reaching a more permanent state of happiness within one's reach.

These are the broad strokes of the collected student responses as presented in my analysis. It is important to convey that a full analysis of the data material is beyond the scope of this study, and I have therefore included student examples to highlight the variety in the students' affective and cognitive engagement with the picture book illustrations. I have also excluded responses that did not present themselves as particularly relevant to the overall argumentation introduced in the next section. An overview of all student responses may be found in the appendices.

5 Discussion

In this part of my thesis, I present to the reader some pedagogical possibilities which have emerged from my analysis that I want to explore further and discuss in light of my theoretical framework. The section is thus divided into two parts: *The potential of metaphoric expression to optimize emotional expression* and *Writing to develop conceptual knowledge and interpretive skills*. Throughout my discussion, I draw on overall findings from my analysis and introduce some more advanced examples of student writing to reflect on their potential for teacher practice in the EAL classroom. This is to further generate a pedagogical approach focusing on affective fictional engagement to aid students in developing their ability to express their feelings, thoughts and experiences in writing.

5.1 The potential of metaphoric expression to optimize emotional expression

Metaphors are to most people restricted to the creation of poetic and rhetoric expression, and thus they are seen as a foreign concept inessential to our everyday lives (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). However, Lakoff and Johnson insist that our daily existence is indeed permeated with metaphors as part of our language, thoughts and actions (1980). Metaphors are often utilized subconsciously – deeply, culturally embedded within our language – as a means to conceptualize and fathom the world around us: to express our felt experience of that which we sense and perceive. In fact, Lakoff emphasises that "[…] as soon as one gets away from concrete physical experiences and start talking about abstractions or emotions, metaphorical understanding is the norm" (1993, p. 3). It is plausible to assume that an expanded capacity to utilize metaphoric expression could optimize students' ability to understand and express their feelings. As earlier established, emotions are non-verbal by definition, and thus words alone do not possess the capacity to convey emotion adequately (Nikolajeva, 2012). However, as Nikolajeva states: "Metaphors are a powerful device to circumvent this dilemma […]" (2012, p. 277). Learning to read and produce metaphoric language, as it is often used as a system to understand and express emotions, makes this useful linguistic competence to acquire in an attempt to optimize one's emotional knowledge.

Tan's picture book *The Red Tree* presents a simple narrative of an emotional transformation, yet he does so through the means of highly ambiguous and metaphorically loaded imagery. This serves to ultimately complicate the emotional experience conveyed by the narrative. As established in my analysis, the majority of the students express their feelings encountering the illustrations in a simple language, through conventional verbal representations, like sad, scared and happy, to identify and express emotion. A considerable number of students also failed to elaborate what it is about the image that make them feel a particular way, or what features in the image provoked emotion. I want to reintroduce an earlier quote by Serafini which says that: "we attend to what we notice, and what we notice depends on what we understand" (2017, p. 32). This may be said to be true for most of the students as they failed to notice the visual metaphors used by Tan to convey complex emotional experiences.

However, a few students interestingly noticed some of the visual metaphors and managed to convey their confusion towards the imagery.

These students notice that which they in fact do not understand, yet they possess the vocabulary to verbalize the different concepts which make up the metaphoric expression. For example, a few quotes from the students' writing relating to the monstrous fish floating above the protagonist in Figure 6 are: "[…] i don't know why there is a big fish over all the people" (Student 13), "I don't like that it is a fish over her and no other" (Student 2) and "I feel a bit confused because a fish can not fly or survive without water" (Student 14). Further, two students express confusion and disturbance towards the image of the protagonist inside the glass bottle in Figure 7: "The image makes me feel confused because the girl is sitting in a bottle. And the girl has a mask on her head" (Student 7) and "This is very creepy because who puts themselves in a glass bottle?" (Student 23). Especially the statement made by student 14 may be seen as an example of confusion arisen due to the imagery being interpreted literally by the student. In the real world, fish do not possess the ability to fly or survive on land. The last statement made by student 23 seems to express their feeling of disturbance and confusion towards the visual imagery of the girl as entrapped within the bottle, as emphasised by the use of the words "very creepy" and the question mark at the end of the sentence.

The students seem to understand that these visual objects are of significance and produce affect but lack the experience and metaphoric competence to access their metaphorical meaning. These students fail to transform their meaning from literal to metaphorical, and their literal interpretation of the visual metaphors should indeed result in confusion on the perceiver's part. The metaphor's invitation for the reader in said context "to treat something *as* something else" (Purcell, 2018, p. 359) is not taken and thus does not evoke new meanings and understandings for the perceiver. Nevertheless, the recognition of objects seeming to appear out of place or placed within an unusual or weird setting is still a great entrance point to initiate a conversation on the visual metaphors in the illustrations. Students' identification of objects used in an unfamiliar context or placed in an unfamiliar setting may be the first step in determining their significance and retrieving metaphorical meaning.

It is important to establish that my intention in this section is not to make specific claims about the development of these students, as my data collection was only retrieved at one instance in time. I aim to only suggest the potential that some of these students' responses point to, in relation to students' possible development of concepts and metaphoric competence and expression. This section more generally explores the potential of metaphoric expression in encouraging creative thinking and optimizing emotional expression, with students' written responses as the foundation for theorization. In fact, Purcell argues that: "A reader's capacity to access metaphorical meaning of visual image and verbal expression […] is a skill that is likely to develop over time and through experience" (2018, p. 362). On this account, she brings us back to *The Red Tree* with the example of the solitary red maple leaf: a visual image she stresses requires time and experience to aid students in retrieving its metaphorical meaning (Purcell, 2018)..

One student has "cast the leaf as significantly meaningful" (Purcell, 2018, p. 362) through their writing, connecting the leaves' shifting colours to the emotional experience felt by the student: "I feel happy, calm and ok because before it was only black leafs but now it's orange" (Student 6). The significance behind this transformation of the black or

grey into vivid, bright, red or orange leaves may be said to be underpinned by the conceptual metaphor of "LIFE IS SEASONS CHANGING" (conceptual metaphors are conventionally written in capital letters [Stockwell, 2002, p. 107]). This conceptual metaphor is exemplified in the following expressions: *this season will also pass*, *embrace the different seasons of your life*, *no winter lasts forever*, *silence before the storm* etc. Here, one maps onto the conceptual domain "life" the structure associated with seasons changing, and thus it may be used to understand changes and unpredictable happenings occurring in life through changes in seasons. Here, autumn and winter are often associated with difficult and harder periods in life whereas spring and summer may represent "becoming anew" and the returning experience of happiness. The student explains their emotional experience, which consists of happiness, calmness and the state of being comfortable, by referring to the transformation of the colour of the leaves, which may be seen as this change from a difficult and depressive day in the protagonist's life. Hope exists and at last becomes visible to the protagonist as well, resulting in a moment of joy as she witnesses "a vividly red maple tree sprouts from her bedroom floor" (Purcell, 2018, p. 362).

As mentioned in the theory section, Tan utilizes the conceptual metaphor of "LIFE IS A JOURNEY" throughout his narrative in *The Red Tree*. In Purcell's words, Tan "represents the girl's cognitive processes as imagined landscapes, as she journeys through her day of perceived negativity, mental anguish and depression" (2018, p. 361). One may presume that this conceptual metaphor has derived from our bodies' physical act of moving from one place to another, shorter and longer distances made throughout a day and a whole life. The concept of life may be understood through the conventional metaphor of LIFE IS SEASONS CHANGING and/or LIFE IS A JOURNEY, in which both "target" domains consist of similar structures, but each conceptual mapping still results in "slightly different entailments in our understanding" of our life and our humanly existence (Gibbs, 1994, p. 249). Trites continues to describe entailments as instances where a specific mapping serves to limit a person's capacity to apprehend a concept in any other way (2017). It is plausible to presume that introducing students to different ways of conceptualizing the notion of life, by thinking of it through something else, may help them conceptualize the abstract complexity of their existence into more tangible terms, to provide richer understanding of life and to better manage its unpredictable nature.

From my perspective, teachers should strive to aid students in accessing metaphorical meaning as it has, in Purcell's words, "the potential to affect children's ability to interpret literature, formulate and articulate ideas and understand the world in culturally normative and customary ways" (2018, p. 359). We already structure most of our existence and universally felt experiences through metaphoric expression (Gibbs, 1994), which are merely so deeply ingrained in our everyday communication that we struggle to perceive it as based in figurative thinking. Indeed, Gibbs emphasises that "[…] contrary to the traditional view, children possess significant ability to engage in figurative modes of thought" (1994, p. 402). This is true as witnessed in the following students' own writing, in which they creatively explore and produce figurative and metaphoric language to convey emotional experience and produce affect. The following four responses are introduced as examples of this, respectively the use of simile, personification and metaphor: "The tree looks like a lollipop" (Student 24), "My calm soul is waiting for me.. I'm just confused, depressed" (Student 3), "Town is so dead" (Student 20), "[…] she is curious about what the bright world feels like it's freezing, her world is dark […]" (Student 6). In the last response, "the bright world" becomes a place which is

out of the protagonist's reach, one that she is forced to merely observe from a distance. It may be further interpreted as an expression which amplifies the experience of depression and loneliness, reminding us that no one wants to be trapped within their own dark thoughts, but rather, as in this instance, we feel curiosity and perhaps longing towards the protagonist's possible partaking in a brighter world surrounded by others who care. In writing that "her world is dark", the student might have perceived the shadow, which is being cast over the protagonist by the monstrous fish, engulfing her in darkness, which further represents the girl's dark and sombre place of mind.

Another student writes: "But... one day.. it's like I have opened my eyes for the first time! I feel more happy than I thought.. […]" (Student 3). This response is underpinned by the conceptual metaphor "TO UNDERSTAND IS TO SEE" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 49), in which we "think of understanding in terms of vision" (Trites, 2017, p. 105. To open one's eyes for the first time is used here to think of an emerging understanding of life as consisting of hope and moments of joy to be found in one's surroundings. The hope will be revealed to us when we manage to perceive our world through a different perspective and thus see it anew as if for the first time. A new metaphor may be said to emerge from the students' metaphoric expression, *to feel is to see*. To allow oneself to feel and thus perceive one's surroundings in a different manner that reveals an emerging feeling of happiness, resulting in the conclusion that: "I feel more happy than I thought". In fact, the same student has written another response, which is an example of metaphoric expression used to convey the bodily, emotional experience of distress, unease or anxiety. They write: "I have this big thing in my tummy that is hard to stop feeling" (Student 3). The student's metaphoric expression is produced from the conceptual metaphor "PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL STATES ARE ENTITIES INSIDE A HUMAN" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 51). Here, the student understands and expresses that which I interpret as the universally felt bodily sensation we experience being formed in our stomachs: a bodily response to affect which brings about the emotional experience of anxiety or distress in terms of something else. The student articulates this sensation through the expression of a "big thing in my tummy". This is exactly how Gibbs defines metaphor comprehension (1994).

These examples show that metaphoric thinking and expression arise "from children's bodily experiences" (Gibbs, 1994, p. 414) and their physical orientation in this world. According to Gibbs, through social interactions children learn "the fundamental spatial-emotional concepts of for example HAPPINESS IS UP and DOWN IS SAD. This metaphorical mapping organizes many conventional expressions that we use to speak of our emotional experiences" (1994, p. 414). Access to these essential spatial-emotional concepts helps students to conceptualize the experience of difficult feelings, like depression, through innovative and explorative language use and metaphoric expression. An example from the visual metaphors in *The Red Tree* is to think of depression as being followed by a monstrous creature floating above you, weighing you down and swallowing you in complete darkness. The visual metaphors present in Tan's picture book and the metaphoric or figurative expressions present in some students' writing would have been an interesting segment to bring back to a follow-up lesson, to use as a conversation starter on alternative ways to express felt experiences. This may also have provided an opportunity to have the writers of the quotes provide insight to their formulations and thought processes, given that they would be comfortable with sharing this.

According to Nodelman, "a child cannot understand the information their perceptual organs provide until they interpret that information in the light of previous experience"

(Nodelman in Purcell, 2018, p. 361). This speaks to the importance of incorporating encounters with visual, verbal and multimodal metaphors in the EAL classroom to engage students in their meaning-making. Metaphorical knowledge as presented in new contexts may therefore be argued to become easier for students to access when they are already familiar with metaphorical encounters in literature and everyday speech. This is not to say that metaphors are not hard to understand, because they are, even to adults. However, there are ways to introduce metaphors in an age-appropriate manner. With the 5th grade students in this study, one approach to use in introducing figurative thought could be to tell the students that there are many things in life that are difficult to understand and express through words, like feelings, experiences and life itself. For us to understand these things better, it might help to think of them as something else, that is to for example think of our life as a journey in which we encounter obstacles and move towards different destinations. Further, one may return to the visual illustrations in *The Red Tree* and exemplify with the protagonist's depicted journey, and together look at all the different scenarios she experiences and explore what emotions the different parts of her journey convey.

Also, Gibbs emphasises that: "Young children find metaphors based on physical or perceptual similarities easier to understand than metaphors based on abstract or complex relations or metaphors that use physical terms to describe psychological states" (1994, p. 408). In the early stages of metaphor comprehension, one may choose to begin with introducing students to metaphors that are based on similar perceptual qualities of the two conceptual domains which constitutes them. An example is the conceptual metaphor of "ANGER IS HEATED FLUID IN A CONTAINER" (Gibbs, 1994, p. 7). Anger is often thought of as building up in a person until it needs to be released, as frequently illustrated in picture books as characters are depicted as becoming red with anger (or the expression to explode with anger). Gibbs states that there has been evidence that shows that children understand verbal metaphors, given that they are simple and introduced in appropriate contexts (1994).

Initiation of conversations about visual metaphors may aid students in exploring and understanding visual and verbal metaphors. If a student already struggles to understand English as an additional language and thereby finds it difficult to follow the classroom conversation, it is nearly impossible to establish a mental representation of a verbal metaphor on one's own. So, if a teacher begins with an image, one can to a larger degree ensure that all students have the same visual understanding of the metaphor and make most students better equipped to explore and understand the visual metaphor and its verbal equivalent. According to Purcell, initiating conversations with students about "visual metaphor or metaphorical expression introduces them to a feature of language and thought that provides *a conceptual frame for richer understanding* and *expression of ideas* [my italics]" (2018, p. 356). In the next section I discuss how writing may be used as a means to develop students' conceptual domains and thinking to in turn develop their metaphoric comprehension and capacity to communicate emotional expression in writing.

5.2 Writing to develop conceptual knowledge and interpretive skills

Our metaphoric comprehension depends on our conceptual knowledge; one must have developed conceptual domains on which to blend into new, emergent meanings (Purcell, 2018). As embodied codes in our brain, conceptual domains are defined as "any sort of conceptualisation: a perceptual experience, a concept, a conceptual complex, an

elaborate knowledge system, etc." (Langsaker in Purcell, 2018, p.). Gibbs argues that "most generally, though, the development of metaphor comprehension appears to be constrained by limitations in children's conceptual knowledge, linguistic skills and information processing abilities" (1994). As the conceptual system of a young student is less developed than that which an adult possesses, this poses a difficulty in relation to children's understanding of metaphors (Gibbs, 1994). In Purcell's words: "Put simply, the brain must process the interaction of a primary and secondary subject to produce the metaphorical idea" (2018, p. 361). If one of the two subjects are not developed or identified through the English language, then the student will not have access to the metaphorical meaning. Implementing a pedagogical approach focusing on the expansion and development of students' conceptual systems through engagement with fiction and writing may therefore be a solution to circumvent this issue.

As elaborated on in the theory section, thinking, in the context of this MA thesis, is viewed as a cognitive process in which thoughts are recognised and personalised through verbal expression. Thinking is initiated through affect and becomes a processing of sensory information, of which one senses and replies to simultaneously, be that through inner or outer speech, writing, or other modes of expression (Dryer & Russell, 2017). During the writing process students may develop conceptual knowledge because reflection and writing happens simultaneously (Dryer & Russell, 2017), as the physical act of writing brings a thought forward and expands it. This may be witnessed in the following student response: "It looks dark it must be cold she's probably sad. When I look at this picture, I feel scared. I am afraid that someone will kidnap me" (Student 6). Here, Tan's illustration can be viewed as the sensory information presented for the student, which they have to process through the means of writing to produce a meaningful response.

The first detail that seems to affect the student is the darkness present in the illustration, which presumably forms a thought that in turn becomes known to the student through inner speech and then is represented through the verbal expression "it looks dark". The student continues this thought by writing that "it must be cold she's probably sad". Bang emphasises the word *association* to be a key term here to "the whole process of how picture structure affects our emotions. […] we associate the shapes, colors, and placement of the various picture elements with objects we have experienced in the "real" world outside the picture" (2016, p. 73). These objects which we draw on from real life are represented in our brains as mental schemas and scripts, which we use as mental maps, so to say, to associate one concept with another and attempt to interpret the visual image or read a character's emotional state or state of mind. The student presumably activates their "darkness" schema to interpret the visually present darkness in the illustration by drawing on their experiences with darkness in real life or other associations they make in relation to the concept. In their writing, the student associates darkness with coldness and sadness, all the while using words that signify reasoning of their train of thought and interpretation of the protagonist's state of mind, like *must* and *probably*. Finally, they start a new sentence by expressing their feeling of fear as evoked by the illustration, signifying a new thought, which they elaborate on by associating this emerging feeling with a more specific fear of theirs: to be afraid that someone will "kidnap" them.

Other student responses have also made use of description and association to interpret the illustration from *The Red Tree* and to make inferences to verbalize and continue the visual narrative. Student 6 writes: "She is depressed, she feels trapped, it's

overwhelming, she is curious about what the bright world feels like it's freezing, her world is dark, she's scared". Student 26 writes: "I feel very sad because she feels lonely, sad and thoughtful. In the picture there are lots of dark clouds and I think it is going to rain and thunder soon. The water looks very dark blue and maybe the water is grey". The first student seems to attach significance to and become affected by the depicted protagonist, whom they interpret as depressed based on the sensory information available to them and the presumed activation of their script of "walking alone", which enables the student to make inferences to fill in the gaps and complete the story, which is otherwise only implied by the visual narrative (Gibbs, 1994). Through making these inferences, the student both reasons their interpretation of the protagonist's state of mind and carries the narrative forward through association. The girl feels depressed and trapped, which is an overwhelming emotional state, and she is curious about the brighter, less lonely world that she only perceives (which in turn, by contrast, makes her world cold and dark, associated with the emotion of fear).

The other student makes a similar attachment of significance to the protagonist and also interprets her to experience a complex and intertwining emotions of sadness, loneliness and thoughtfulness. The student is further influenced by the scenery painted in the Figure 7 where the schema of "dark clouds" is activated to allow the student to carry forward the narrative reasoning "I think it is going to rain and thunder soon". To introduce students to writing prompts which initiate richer and more detailed descriptions of picture book illustrations may encourage conceptual thinking and prompt students to become more aware of how textual features and the composition of a picture book affect them and evoke emotions. In addition, teachers may use students' responses and visual elements like colour, form and placement in illustrations to initiate conversations with students about poetics. This may help students become more critically aware of how images are constructed to make us perceive them in a particular way so to make us feel something.

Additionally, one student writes: "She is sad, lonely and maybe she is missing somebody" (Student 2). The student continues their thread of thought by assuming that the protagonist is "missing somebody." This assumption presumably derives from the student's conclusion that the girl is lonely and devoid of a fellow human presence. The student may be said to carry the narrative forward. These rather complex interpretations, as they are made my 5th grade students in their second or additional language, are made possible due to the activation of stored scripts or schemas which allow students to fill in the gaps, complete and continue the narrative solely based on few visual, textual cues as the verbal narrative is completely absent in the writing activities presented to the students. Moreover, the painted picture book illustrations and the students' writing may prompt reflection and interpretation, which in turn "opens […] a new dimension to our experience" (Merleau-Ponty, 2018, p. 118). One may conclude that these students, through their writing, develop their interpretive skills, specifically making inferences and practicing theory of mind while also conceptualizing and verbalizing their own and others' feelings.

Expressive writing in this context should have a focus on the explorative aspect of writing, a safe space for students to make use of language to explore different forms of emotional expression and generate new conceptual understanding of their surroundings. In relation to metaphoric understanding, Gibbs states that: "Because metaphor understanding requires the mapping of knowledge from a source domain onto a target domain, children have an easier time understanding metaphors containing familiar

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terms" (1994, p. 410). Familiarising students with verbal representations may aid students in further exploration of emotional expression through metaphoric and figurative language and thinking. Additionally, the use of complex picture books may be viewed as entrances for students and teachers alike to engage in emotions and felt experiences, as picture books attempt to prompt affect through various interactive modes of expression. Tan's books especially seek to convey the intricate nature of emotional experience, in which his painted illustrations encourage students' "own immersion and reflection" (Johansen, 2014, p. 41). Providing students with a space to practice making inferences and interpret the emotions conveyed is critical pedagogical practice. Followingly, Johansen (2014) states this about *The Red Tree*:

> "Not only is the reader invited to become involved, though, but also to experience *a sense of wonder*. There is no attempt to disambiguate or simplify the inexplicability of existence, […] allowing instead the indefinable and the indeterminate to remain in a state of potentiality, or as spaces of possibility" (my italics) (p. 41).

The Red Tree prompts us to experience "a sense of wonder," to make us aware of and in turn wonder about different aspects of our lives and emotional experiences. The spaces created between the picture book and the students' writing may be understood as pathways in which the indefinable and inexplicable nature of existence are represented through different modes of expression (here, as present in Tan's book and the students' writing). This creates space for possibility. Possibilities to discover and create new forms of expression to view one's lives through new and emerging perspectives.

However, for students to utilize the possibilities that lies within these pathways created between picture books and writing, habits must be formed, and it is the teacher who has to ensure that the students are given time and space for this habit formation to find place. Alerby emphasises that: "In order to […] incorporate language in the body, habits must be formed" (2009, p. 3). Thus, for aspects of language, as presented above, to be fully understood and utilised more intentionally by students, teachers may implement a pedagogical approach in their EAL classrooms which focus on affective fictional engagement and writing to aid students to develop their ability to express their feelings, thoughts and experiences. However, in the case of generating such a pedagogical approach it has to permeate a teacher's entire EAL teaching practice, that is so the language introduced to express emotion takes hold in the students to the degree that they use it intentionally to convey emotion. Students' capacity to express their feelings, thoughts and experiences through emotional and metaphoric expression is developed over time (Purcell, 2018), and for this development to take place teachers need to create systematic space for it in their classrooms. For introduced words to become a part of the students vocabulary that is easily available to them, teachers need to provide their students with multiple opportunities to use these words and incorporate them into their bodies.

In addition to a teacher's influence, it is important to consider students' own individuality, especially in relation to emotional experience and scripts. Students' responses to affective encounters with fiction heavily depend on their emotional scripts and their previous experiences with expressing emotions. Even the student responses which seemingly do not manage to express emotions verbally are indeed all "performances of affect" (Joy, 2020, p. 8). Some examples from my data material are: "Nothing" (Student 23), "This image makes me think about how she feels, not how I feel" (Student 16), "This image makes me feel nothing" (Student 4), "I feel nothing, but I think about water" and "I feel nothing, but I think about a tree" (Student 14). These are

student responses that one may in this context be quick to define as "undesirable" affective responses, in their incapability of expressing the "right" emotions as experienced through affective engagement with fiction. However, "to feel nothing" may be interpreted as an emotional experience of blockage or indifference, which should be regarded as a valid experience in fictional encounters.

Yet such student responses may be important offsets for learning to explore different emotions. Students should further be encouraged to consider and investigate what it is about a picture book illustration or literary piece that make them feel "nothing". Moreover, to feel nothing or regard the protagonist's feelings as more easily accessible than one' own are presumably responses which derive from students unfamiliarity with expressing emotions. Purcell states that: "[…] variation in response is influenced by each child's developmental path" (2018, p. 359). Introducing one's students to similar writing prompts – asking students to describe picture book composition and their emergent feelings in encountering a fictional narrative – may provide teachers with vital insight on students' familiarity with or reluctance to express emotional experience. The student responses may also point to the language that a child manage to generate more or less independently and may further help determine what the teacher's "expert guidance" (Purcell, 2018, p. 359) should look like to help students develop their capacity to express emotion.

A final note: not all students will attain the same capacity to express their emotions eloquently. As Tørnby (2020) states: "[…] a wide range of emotions exist, and children cope with them in unique ways. Some hide their emotions deeply inside themselves giving nothing away – while others display them openly" (p. 131). We have different emotional scripts to draw from when being asked to affectively engage with fiction, which in turn will influence the emotion we allow ourselves to show through our writing. Evans (2001) also questions words' capacity alone to make individuals obtain happiness, through verbalizing one's emotional experiences, especially the difficult or traumatic ones. On this account, it has never been my intention to claim that awareness of our emotions and a language to express those emotions alone will be adequate to ensure students' mental health. With that being said, emotional expression and affective fictional encounters may help students realise that their feelings are always valid; however, how we express those feelings to others or choose to act on those feelings are not always socially acceptable. Writing prompts created from fictional encounters may provide important spaces for students to learn to express emotion and in turn respond more intentionally. Literature, in other words, may be an affective, ethical practice ground with little risk for repercussions but enormous potential for learning.

6 Conclusion

As I aim to conclude this thesis, I return to the assumption that I began with that this thesis rests upon; literature can affect readers emotionally and cognitively, and thus our fictional encounters can teach us something about people in real life, including ourselves. In this thesis, I have collected written reading responses from 5th grade Norwegian EAL students which have provided me as researcher with insight into their affective and cognitive engagement with the picture book *The Red Tree*. The findings show the students' willingness to engage affectively and cognitively with the picture book illustrations, which is detected in the students' own verbal expressions of emotion, and their identification and description of visual elements that provoked their felt emotions. The students' written responses also show their interpretations of the emotional experiences of the protagonist, in which many students engage in cognitive practices that make them expand on and continue the narrative, beyond that which is present in the book. In addition, some students affectively and cognitively engage with the visual metaphors in the illustrations and utilise figurative language to express their emotional experiences. Thus, the findings in this thesis alludes to the potential which fictional encounters possess in providing students and teachers with affective, ethical practice grounds to identify, convey and explore emotion ekphrasis, and in turn learn to respond more intentionally and express their feelings, thoughts and experiences in new, explorative and creative ways.

6.1 Suggestions for Further Research

The following suggestions for further research have arisen from my work on this thesis. A clear progression of this research study is to conduct a study with a similar structure, but introducing students to writing prompts, which ask them to consider both verbal and visual emotion ekphrasis in picture books, or to collect student texts at two separate occasions to compare and detect changes in the individual students' writing. Further research should also investigate the potential limited facial expressions in *The Red Tree* may have in aiding neurodivergent children in recognizing, understanding and expressing emotion, that is because emotions are mostly conveyed through space, colour and composition in the picture book. Additionally, Trites (2017) states that neurotypical children understand that simple metaphors are not to be read literally, which implies that neurodivergent children struggle to read metaphors figuratively and therefore fail to retrieve their metaphorical meaning. This prompts for an investigation of whether the use of visual metaphors in EAL teaching may aid neurodivergent children in developing metaphoric understanding. Lastly, this thesis shows that many students find it more intriguing or easier to attempt to read the protagonist's emotions, rather than to express their own. However, the question of whether reading literature fosters genuine empathy is unfortunately beyond the scope of this thesis. I therefore encourage scholars to research how affective and cognitive engagement with fiction and the theory behind "mirror neurons" may be an entrance to discuss development of empathy or compassion though the use of fiction, and in turn to investigate if reading children's literature fosters empathy at all (Mallan, 2013).

6.2 Final thoughts

As one student has pointed out, it is hard to stop feeling those difficult, dark and anxiety-ridden emotions which settle in the body like a stomach ache and seem to take permanent residence in one's head. It is in these moments when the negative feelings become overwhelmingly large and refuse to leave that it becomes important for students to learn strategies to remind themselves that these feelings also will pass, and that hope may be found. Thus, I believe fictional encounters have the power to make students perceive their surroundings more closely and in a different light, so to open "their eyes for the first time". Fiction may function to voice and illustrate difficult emotions, but also to remind readers of the ordinary beauty of life and the appreciation of small moments of joy which makes this life worth living. Especially, complex picture books, like *The Red Tree*, insist that their readers slow down and truly look at the details in the illustrations, which in turn is an ability that may help students look more closely for the positive aspects of their own lives. For in all that is difficult, chaotic, horrific and overwhelming, hope and joy are to be found and experienced by those who dare to look for it and feel it all with one's entire body: «But... one day.. it's like I have opened my eyes for the first time! I feel more happy than I thought.. *a small smile on my face😊* […] (Student 3).

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Overview of student answers and writing tasks to the picture book *The Red Tree*

Student responses to Figure 6:

    a. What adjectives describe the image? Write down three adjectives.

Student	Task answer
1	Small, plain, lonely
2	Darkness, lonely and a gray day
3	Sad, dark, and incomplite
4	Grey, loney, big
5	Lonely, dark, worried
6	She is depressed, she feels trapped, it's overwhelming, she is curious about what the bright world feels like it's freezing, her world is dark, she's scared.
7	Something black comes out of the fish's eye. The eye is white. i see a red leaf.
8	Lonely, trapped, depressed.
9	Big, lonely, scared
10	Lonely, trapped, scared.
11	Big, sad, lonely
12	Weird, worried, curious.

13	Scary, confusing and curious.
14	Sad, red, little
15	Scared, Calm and Worried.
16	Darkness, lonely, depressed, trapped,
17	Lonely, trapped, depressed
18	Lonely, poor, calm
19	Dark, confused, lonely
20	Red, sad og black
21	It is a Scared image.
22	Depressed, confused, lonely
23	Big, long, liten
24	Depressed, boring and sad
25	Worried, confused, trapped
26	Big, lonely, sad.

b. Write one sentence that describes how the image makes you feel. You can write more than one sentence.

For example: The image makes me feel confused because …

Student	Task answer
1	The image makes me feel bored because there are not many colors.
2	Curious, Thoughtful, and sad. I don't like that it is a fish over her and no other.

3	I have a big thing in my tummy that is hard to stop feeling. The town is full of darkness.
4	This image makes me feel scared.
5	
6	It looks dark it must be cold she's probably sad. When I look at this picture, I feel scared. I am afraid that someone will kidnap me.
7	The image makes me feel a little scared because the fish looks kinda creepy.
8	This make me feel lonely because the girl is going down the street alone.
9	The image makes me feel sad because she is lonely.
10	The image makes me feel lonely because the girl walks alone.
11	The image makes me feel
12	Confused, thoughtful, Scared.
13	This image makes me feel curious because i don't know why there is a big fish over all the people.
14	I feel a bit confused because a fish can not fly and survive without water.
15	The image makes me feel scared because of the fish.
16	This image makes me think about how she feels, not how I feel.
17	The image makes me feel depressed.
18	Scared, trappet, lonely
19	The image makes me feel sad because …
20	Town is so dead.

21	The image makes me feel curious because it is a scared fish.
22	The image makes me feel confused
23	Ingenting
24	This image makes me feel that this image is very creepy because of the big SCARY fish.
25	The image makes me feel depressed because ist sad and this looks like sad.
26	The image makes me feel sad because the girl looks very lonely and sad.

Student responses to Figure 7:

    a. What adjectives describe the image? Write down three adjectives.

Student	Task answer
1	Sad, big, rainy.
2	She is sad, lonely and maybe she is missing somebody.
3	Weak, lonely, trapped.
4	Black, dark, weird.
5	Trapped, worried, thoughtful
6	Worried, overwhelmed, lonely
7	A girl with a purple dress is sitting in a bottle. I see the sky, it's beautiful. And i can see the water. It's very clear.
8	Blue, sad, lonely.
9	Small, lonely, thoughtful.
10	Lonely, hopeful, trapped, scared.

11	Weird, lonely, trapped
12	Scary, confused, worried
13	This image makes me feel trapped, lonely and confused.
14	Water, red, sad
15	Scared, Calm and Worried.
16	Sad, extremely depressed, nobody, lost
17	Overwhelmed, thoughtful, trapped
18	Lonely, depressed, confused.
19	Dark, scared, calm
20	Sad, dead and boring
21	Confused, calm, Thoughtful
22	Scared, trapped, thoughtful
23	
24	Dark blue, very dark and weird.
25	Scared, worried, thoughtful
26	Trapped, thoughtful, scared.

b. Write one sentence that describes how the image makes you feel. You can write more than one sentence.

For example: The image makes me feel confused because …

Student	Task answer
1	This image makes me feel just a tiny bit sad. The image looks just sooo lonely for me though it does. The image makes me feel a little tiny bit, small but not tiny.
2	I think that is sad and dark.

3	My calm soul is waiting for me.. I'm just confused, depressed. I feel trapped. I feel bad for her. This makes me sad. This is just wrong.
4	This image makes me feel nothing.
5	
6	When i see that picture i feel lonely and trapped.
7	The image makes me feel confused because the girl is sitting in a bottle. And the girl has a mask on her head.
8	It makes me feel depressed.
9	The image make me feel a little bit sad and thoughtful because its dark there.
10	The image makes me feel trapped because she is in a big bottle.
11	The image makes me feel confused
12	Scared… worried.
13	This image makes me feel trapped because she can't get out and she is just waiting.
14	I feel nothing, but I think about water.
15	The image makes me feel calm because of the beautiful picture.
16	This image makes me feel that she is trapped because she has given up.
17	The image makes me feel curious.
18	When I look at the picture i feel confused
19	The image makes you feel me scared.
20	No one cares they yust of others if they are family.

21	The image makes me feel Confused and calm.
22	The image makes me feel board.
23	This is very creepy because who puts themself in a glass bottle?
24	
25	Its look like she is so depressed and she never will be glad agen.
26	I feel very sad because she feels lonely, sad and thoughtful. In the picture there are lots of dark clouds and I think it is going to rain and thunder soon. The water looks very dark blue and maybe the water is gray.

Student responses to Figure 8:

    a. What adjectives describe the image? Write down three adjectives.

Student	Task answer
1	Happy, bright, fun.
2	happy, Calm and not worried anymore,
3	Happy, curious, and hopeful.
4	Red, glow, big.
5	Calm, hopeful, happy
6	Calm, happy, overwhelmed by that beautiful red tree.
7	The tree is red and big. The girl is smiling.
8	Lonely, curious, calm
9	Glowing, red, big
10	Clam, happy, lonely

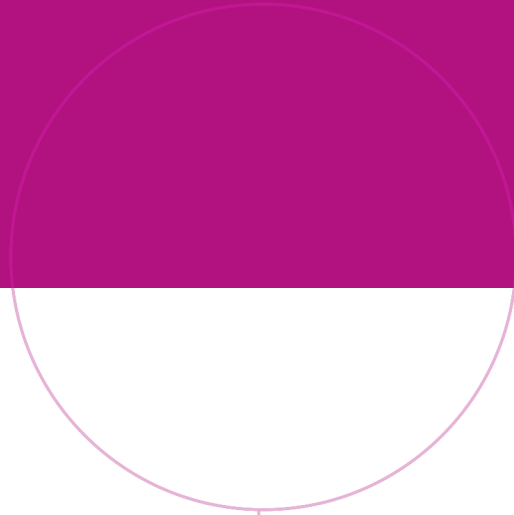| 11	Red, big, happy
12	Happy, calm, hopeful
13	Thoughtful, calm and happy.
14	Tree red , dark room, happy
15	Happy, Worried and Surprised.
16	Finally happy, home and brights colors.
17	Lonely, hopeful, depresse
18	Happy, not lonely, curious
19	Sad, lonely, happy
20	
21	Calm , Trapped , Lonely
22	Hopeful, calm, curious
23	Red, glad, happy
24	Better, happy, calm
25	Hopeful, happy, calm
26	Happy, big, red

b. Write one sentence that describes how the image makes you feel. You can write more than one sentence.

For example: The image makes me feel confused because …

Student	Task answer
1	The image makes me feel happy because it got color. The image makes me interested.
2	Happy, god and colors. i like the bright big red tree.
3	But.. one day.. it's like I have opened my eyes for the first time! I feel more happy than I thought.. *a small smile on my face! 😊 *

	That story was short.
4	This image makes me feel happy.
5	
6	I feel happy, calm and ok because before it was only black leafs but now it's orange.
7	The image makes me feel happy because the girl is happy.
8	That picture makes me feel curious.
9	This picture makes me happy because she smiles and looks happy too.
10	The image makes me happy because she is smiling at a tree
11	Makes me feel curious.
12	Curious
13	This picture makes me feel happy because she looks happy.
14	I feel nothing, but i think about a tree
15	She is happy because she smiles.
16	Happy☺because She finally got happy.
17	The image makes me feel scared.
18	I feel happy and calm.
19	The image makes you feel me calm
20	
21	The image makes me feel calm and Trapped, lonely
22	The image makes me feel hopeful
23	Nothing
24	This is better than the last one that it makes me feel better.

	The tree looks like a lollipop.
25	This is making me happy wheen uders are happy den am happy
26	This picture makes me happy because the girl looks very happy and hopeful.