

Critical & Creative Thinking

The Australasian Journal of Philosophy in Education

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Review

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Welcome to Critical & Creative Thinking

Welcome to Vol. 15 No. 1 of *Critical & Creative Thinking: The Australasian Journal of Philosophy in Education*.

Critical & Creative Thinking is published in May and November. Subscriptions are due in February (forms are available in this edition). We hope that you will continue your subscription, and if you have any suggestions, please send them to us.

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About the Journal

Critical & Creative Thinking is an international journal published under the auspices of The Federation of Australasian Philosophy in Schools Associations (FAPSA). The focus of the journal is philosophical inquiry with school-age students. What was once called Philosophy for Children has now grown into a sub-discipline of philosophy with its own history, traditions and pedagogy, and incorporates what could be called philosophical inquiry in the classroom, reflective education and, generally speaking, philosophy in schools, as well as related methodologies such as Socratic Dialogue. The journal performs two roles. The first is to publish scholarly research concerning the theory and practice of philosophical inquiry at school level. These articles will appear in the 'Research Articles' section. The second is to publish reports of practice, comments on resources, suggestions and ideas about philosophising with school students and so forth, with a view to encouraging professional interchange among those interested in philosophical inquiry with school-age students.

Aim and Scope

To provide a vehicle for the communication of ideas and a forum for discussion and debate of issues concerning the practice of philosophical inquiry with school-age students.

To promote better teaching and curricular design for the development of critical and creative thinking amongst school-age students through increased understanding and use of philosophical inquiry in the classroom.

To enrich the understanding of philosophy and philosophical inquiry as well as its role in the development of good thinking and good judgement.

To increase interaction and collaboration between the academic community of scholars in universities and teachers in schools on matters of logic, epistemology, creativity, metaphysics, aesthetics, ethics, inquiry, philosophy of science, mind, personhood, community, understanding, learning, thinking, dialogue, discussion, and related matters concerning philosophy, inquiry and classroom pedagogy.

To promote discussion of the place of philosophy in the nation and school curriculum and its infusion into the present curriculum, as well as the place of philosophy in the intellectual, creative, moral and social development of individuals.

Notes for Contributors

All contributions will be considered for publication. Articles will be subject to the normal processes of peer-review for scholarly refereed journals, including blind reviewing by at least two referees drawn from the Editorial Committee (or from other international scholars with special expertise as necessary).

Manuscripts should be prepared with a title page. Include all relevant information about the author; institutional affiliation (if applicable), email address and contact details. The title page will be removed prior to review.

Articles should be 1.5 or double spaced in 12 point. Please keep formatting to a minimum. Use footnote citation with a list of references at the end. Tables and text in side-by-side columns should be placed in a table with 1 point border.

Please send articles attached as a Word document to:

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Letters to the Editor

It may happen that you read an article and would like to respond, but not in the form of a lengthy article. Such responses, which might simply add to a point made by the author either in agreement or disagreement, or offer an alternative view, could appear as a 'Letter to the Editor.' The idea is to encourage dialogue between readers and authors, in effect using the journal to create a community of inquiry.

Send all contributions to: Sue.Knight@unisa.edu.au

Critical & Creative Thinking

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Note from the Editors

The papers in this issue of *Critical and Creative Thinking* contribute a discussion of what surely lies at the heart of the movement to bring philosophical inquiry to the classroom. We refer here to the role collaborative structured dialogue might play in developing students' capacities and disposition to engage in well-reasoned, ethically grounded thinking about matters of individual and social importance. The first two papers, from Ann Sharp and Mor Yorshansky, contribute to scholarly debate on the nature of the processes and relationships which characterise flourishing communities of inquiry. In the third paper, Clinton Golding discusses the sort of questioning most effective in unearthing philosophical puzzles within the classroom, while in the following paper, Nimet Kucuk reflects on the formation of 'out of school hours' communities of inquiry; on the way in which such extensions of classroom dialogue can enrich and extend students' thinking. In the final papers, Junnine Thomas-Williams and Kylie Sturgess show their students exercising the very capabilities community of inquiry dialogue is designed to foster, but doing so in different and exciting ways. The issue closes with Emmanuel Skoutas' review of *The Well of Being: Childhood, Subjectivity and Education* by David Kennedy.

It is noteworthy that these papers issue from a number of different countries – from the U.S., from Israel, Turkey and Wales, as well as from Australia. We take this to indicate a far-reaching commitment to preparing students for engagement in well-reasoned and ethically grounded deliberation, especially around matters of social importance. We would argue that such widespread commitment is crucial to the resolution of the global social and environmental problems we face today. For while we clearly have the resources to make headway in relation to pressing concerns such as climate change, the treatment of refugees, the welfare of indigenous communities, the growing gap between rich and poor and attitudes to punishment by the state, progress depends upon individuals firstly recognising these issues as essentially ethical, or more broadly, philosophical

in nature, and secondly, engaging in reasoned ethical deliberation in relation to them.

We would like to thank the authors for their thought-provoking contributions, and to thank too, our sub-editors – Justine Gallasch, Clinton Golding and Angela Pfitzenmeier – for the work they have done to help bring this issue to press.

Carol Collins and Sue Knight

The Classroom Community of Inquiry as Ritual: How we can Cultivate Wisdom

Ann Margaret Sharp

Wisdom is really hard to study. People tend to pooh-pooh wisdom because, well, you know, what's that? And how could you possibly define it? Isn't it culturally relative? And yet, the cultivation of wisdom...is essential to the future of society.

Robert Sternberg

Introduction

It was Aristotle who introduced a distinction between theoretical wisdom (*sophia*) and practical wisdom (*phronesis*); the former being the intellectual virtue that disposed one to understand the nature of reality; the latter being the ultimate practical virtue that disposed one to make sound judgements bearing on the conduct of life. Theoretical wisdom invoked a contrast between deep understanding versus a large accumulation of facts, whereas practical wisdom made a contrast between sound judgement and mere technical facility.

Contemporary philosophers and psychologists tend to use the term wisdom to describe both knowledge and understanding of human nature and reality as well as the capacity for sound judgement in matters of conduct. Psychologists are interested in empirically studying this wisdom, which they see as multi-faceted, involving knowledge, reflection, emotional maturity and reasoning ability. Wisdom in action, thought the Berlin Wisdom Paradigm at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin, who embarked on the task of taking wisdom into the laboratory in the 1980s, might manifest itself as good judgement, shrewd advice, psychological insight, emotional regulation and empathetic understanding.

In a recent article in *The New York Times Magazine* (2007), Steven Hall hypothesises that perhaps the most important aspect of wisdom is the different shapes it takes in the public and private sphere. The public face of wisdom often manifests itself in leadership, judgement and a responsibility to the collective future, offering a kind of moral inspiration to people despite adversity, as shown in the behaviour of Martin Luther King. The private face of wisdom is invisible to all but the inner circle of family and acquaintances that benefit each day from the wise judgements of parents, rabbis, priests, teachers, doctors and friends.

In 1997, Monika Ardelt of the University of Florida, Gainesville, developed a test to assess wisdom, the 'Three-Dimensional Wisdom Scale'. For Ardelt, wisdom integrates three separate but interconnected ways of dealing with the world: cognitive, reflective and emotional. The cognitive aspect included the ability to understand human nature, perceive situations clearly and make decisions despite ambiguity and uncertainty. The reflective dealt with a person's ability to examine an event from multiple perspectives, to be able to step outside oneself and understand another's point of view. The emotional aspect involved the capacity to feel compassion toward others as well as an ability to remain positive in the face of adversity (Hall, 2007).

One question the psychologists have not seriously confronted yet is what kind of education would help children to develop the multi-faceted dispositions and abilities that comprise wisdom. If Baltes and Staudinger were correct, that 'wisdom is a collectively anchored product and that individuals by themselves are only weak carriers of wisdom' (Hall, 2007, p. 62), would it not make sense to think of a new paradigm of education that would be both communal and collaborative in nature?

Of course, we in Philosophy for Children would posit the classroom community of inquiry as such a paradigm for the cultivation of wisdom. It is in just such classroom communities that children can learn to inquire together about issues that are of mutual interest in a non-competitive fashion and in the process foster their own cognitive, reflective, emotional and social growth, while at the same

time learning how to identify with the work of the group and overcome their own pre-occupation with self.

What characteristics determine such a classroom community? I would posit the following: ritual action, empowerment of individual members, non-egocentricity, emotional regulation, loyalty, self-correction and a commitment to persevere in ongoing inquiry. In such an environment, students learn to attend to each other, to use their emotions as a guide to further inquiry, to listen to each other, to share perspectives by entering compassionately each other's worlds, to build on each other's ideas, and eventually come to the point where they can attempt to bridge the multiplicity of perspectives by creating and/or discovering a story that makes some sense to all participants.

But there is something else very important. Participation in such a community fosters an ability to put one's ego in perspective. This ability is an outgrowth of the group work; it is highly complex and involves a slow realisation of what it is to be human and live the human predicament. As children become more confident and secure in mastering the skills of communal inquiry, they concurrently ought to become more sensitive to the importance of involving *all* in the dialogue and taking care of the individual growth of *each* of the members. Classroom communal inquiry can only foster wisdom if the participants can overcome a narcissism that blocks the ability to care for one another's thoughts and feelings, to seriously take each other's perspective into account and to develop the capacity for empathy and compassion that is essential if one is to understand the self and other.

Ritual action

We can learn a lot from Confucius about the role that ritual action plays in the cultivation of wisdom. A ritual is a rule-bound, form-giving act which seeks, through the exercise of some kind of sequence of behaviour, to realise an end that is extrinsic to the act itself. Rituals are repetitive in principle and should eventually be performed appropriately by all members of the group, their efficacy lying precisely in their being in accord with various rules, while at the same time fostering the moral growth of the practitioners.

For Confucius, *li* or ritual are the rules that govern human relations – how to act in a given situation. In the East, it is thought that ritual enhances the possibility that people will respect each other because it serves as a regulator of behaviour. It also serves as a means of expressing benevolence toward the other. It is the right expression of the words or the right procedure at the right time. Such ritual governs inter-human relations, and in a community of inquiry, the dialogical discourse and inquiry itself.

In the *Analects*, Confucius says, 'Deference that lacks form becomes servility, caution without form becomes timidity, and honesty without form becomes rudeness.' To apply the rules of ritual appropriately, and distinguish between that which is proper and that which is not, requires the ability to make discriminating and prudential judgements. Such ability requires wisdom (*chih*), the ability to discriminate well.

This capacity is not given to children at birth; it needs to be carefully educated. However, it cannot be educated for directly. No lecture will solve the problem. Children need to teach themselves how to make these judgements well. What we can do is set up the conditions for such education to take place. A classroom community of inquiry represents such conditions.

In a classroom community of inquiry the rituals are embedded in the process itself. There is a stimulus: the written text (or video or music or other work of art) that motivates philosophical questioning and models the communal inquiry methodology. There is the eliciting of questions that the students would like to talk about that constitute the agenda for the session. There is the democratic choosing of where to begin the discussion and, the decision taken, the inquiry begins.

The discourse and inquiry are also characterised by ritual. When one shares an opinion, it is expected that she will give a reason for her views. The reason offered ought to be attended to carefully; it might be questioned by another, or it might be supported by another with further reasons proffered. Someone in the group might come up with a counter-example or an alternative position and so the dialogue ensues. Inferences will be made and questioned, assumptions will be detected, criteria will be called for,

analogies will be offered and criticised and consequences ought to be examined. At times, there will be calls for evidence or comprehensiveness or consistency. Empathy or compassion may be expressed. One might ask the group 'what kind of people they would like to be' or 'what kind of world they would like to live in' before considering any final judgement.

Finally, communal inquiry always calls for evaluation of the group's behaviour. How can we self-correct unless we take time to reflect on how well we did? Questions such as (a) Did we get anywhere in dealing with our question? (b) Did we really listen to each other? (c) Was there anything blocking our inquiry? (d) Did we give reasons for our views and criteria for our judgments? (e) Did we detect assumptions, make good distinctions, ask for evidence and critically evaluate our inferences? (f) Did we include all in the conversation? (g) Did we attend to the views and feelings of others? (h) Do we understand the issue any more than when we began? (g) How can we self-correct? and (h) Where should we begin tomorrow?

An analogy that I often use to understand the *praxis* of communal inquiry is playing chess. One can never predict the moves of a chess game in advance of the playing. But to play one must know the rules. It would be pedagogically advantageous to ask ourselves, how do we learn these rules? How do we learn what to do, when, in what context? How do we learn what not to do? How do we learn to regulate our emotions while playing? What roles do the following play in the acquisition of the capacity to play well: lecturing, modelling, attentive observation, actual playing, reflection on the playing?

It is important to remember that once the first move is made in chess, there is a ritual that is followed *in one way or another*. Although one can never predict the moves in advance of the playing, one can detect almost somatically when someone has not followed the rules, or has made an indiscriminate move. So much more is required than merely knowing the rules. To play chess well one must immerse oneself in the playing of chess and slowly build up an understanding of what moves are advantageous and what moves are foolhardy in a certain context. And the context is never, or very rarely, the same.

Yet, unlike chess, the aim of communal inquiry is not to 'win' but to come to understand the issue under discussion with the help of all in the community. Children in such a community learn the rules and how to use them well for their own sake and the sake of all in the group. Further, each participant does not have to master all the skills initially; the community can learn how to distribute skills so that they work as an inquiry *team* to probe the problems that disturb them.

Ritual action is communal in character and sustained by practice. We need each other to practise well the inquiry moves of questioning, detecting assumptions, attentive listening, giving reasons, examples and counter-examples, judging the quality of inferences and analogies, contextualisation, discriminating, perspective-taking, entering into the worlds of others with empathy and compassion, reflecting judiciously on our emotions and how they are either helping or hindering the group inquiry.

Moreover, we need each other to learn how to put our egos in perspective. As Confucius taught, such ritual is not only aimed at understanding; it is also aimed at becoming good persons. It is through *li*, or ritual action, that we learn how to express benevolence toward others. It is also through ritual that we foster our own development in terms of eschewing power over others, development of loyalty to the group and overcoming narcissism.

Power

In contemporary feminist philosophy today, there is much attention given to power and the role that it plays in any community. Nietzsche differentiated between two kinds of power: power over others and the power to do. The latter power manifests itself in good reasoning, inquiry, judgement-making and wise action. The community of inquiry is interested in fostering in each child the latter kind of power, a kind of power that is usually associated with freedom, the freedom to think for oneself and to do what we think is best after having the opportunity for discourse and reflection. This power to do is not something children cultivate in isolation; it is essentially a communal self-correcting process.

There is a fundamental difference between a community of inquiry, a hierarchical work-group, religions

and a cult. A cult tends to reduce individuality, thus diminishing the humanity of the participants. Religions often include a set of dogmas that cannot be questioned but must be accepted on faith. A hierarchical work-group often assumes that the ultimate power lies with some authority figure. A community of inquiry, on the other hand, although it has procedural rituals that initially have to be modelled by the teacher, is a *form of life* that is constituted by questioning individuals, each of whom is aiming to understand and to grow in the capacity to think for oneself. These skills of inquiry are always subject to reflection and self-correction.

There is always the risk that a community will degenerate into a cult, or a dogmatic religion, especially if there are strong personalities in the classroom group. This is something that initially teachers must be aware of until the children become conscious of negative power or inequality itself and are willing to call it into question and solicit the group's self-correction. With time, the children themselves are well able to devise strategies to protect egalitarianism, fallibilism and open-ended dialogue that are essential if genuine inquiry is to result.

Yes, in all communities there is power – but not necessarily the coercive power of dominance. At its best, the classroom community of inquiry is characterised by creative, distributed power, the kind of power we associate with liberation. A person's actions are free to the degree to which they are emotionally mature and are carried out in a spirit of reasonableness and care for others. It is in this sense that freedom becomes a quality of the inquiry itself, with the students enjoying, as well as engendering, a power of concentration, attention, reason, feeling and discipline. The distributed power that exists in a community of inquiry is there for itself; the participants partake of it as well as engender it. It is this kind of communal power that binds all the participants in deep feelings of solidarity and loyalty.

Learning to put the ego in perspective

'I have identified people I consider wise and people I consider relatively low in wisdom,' says the contemporary psychologist, Monika Ardelt, who is still analysing the data that she has accumulated from administering her wisdom test to a number of different people in collaboration with

Vaillant from Harvard Medical School. 'People who rated high in wisdom were very generous, both financially and emotionally; among those who rated low in wisdom there was this occupation with the self' (Hall, 2007, p. 64).

Learning to put the ego in perspective does not mean the annihilation of the ego. It is the recognition that each of us is a member of the group, a person in herself with needs, feelings and a world-view that is worth investigating. We all have our perspectives, our world-views that ought to be shared with the group, but not at the expense of anyone else's doing the same. How can a community construct a story that represents the perspectives of each individual in the group if some are silenced by those more dominant speakers who decide ahead of time that only a certain few in the group are worth listening to with attention?

One test of one's having learned to put one's ego in perspective is whether one can listen attentively and build on the ideas of others. This listening can express itself in offering counter-examples, pointing out assumptions or consequences, questioning these assumptions and consequences or extending the idea itself. Although each of us is important in our own right, no one of us is more important than the other. In a community of inquiry, children must learn how to share the time they have together, and make this time work for them. Collaborative inquiry not only involves sharing our ideas but taking the inquiry to another level and telling the story of the multiplicity of views that exist among the children. That is, there is a struggling to bridge these various perspectives. It is hard critical and creative work that requires the active involvement of all in the group.

Learning to put one's ego in perspective not only allows for children to be able to attend to each other's views, but also their needs (emotional, social and cognitive) and to learn the importance of being open to alternative possibilities. As one enters into the world-views of others, one begins to sense the fragility of being human and it is this sensitivity that explains how people come to incorporate forgiveness, intellectual humility and the capacity to learn from one's own and others' mistakes. This is more than a growth in knowledge; it is a leap in understanding and goes a long way in accounting for the fostering of an emotional resiliency, the ability to cope in the face of adversity, which

initially in the classroom takes the form of confusion, puzzlement and lack of understanding of the world around us.

The classroom community of inquiry is not hierarchical, with an unequal distribution of power, but rather a *form of life* in which children have learned how to share power, distribute tasks and communally construct their own meanings. The loyalty, which characterises such a community, comes from common commitment to the ritualising activity of inquiry in which the critical, creative and caring thinking of each individual is not only enlisted but fostered and celebrated. Such participants come to realise the importance of emotion in coming to understand together with the role of detachment in coming to judge wisely.

Just as those who participate in an elaborate ritual will contribute to the performance in different ways, so participants in a community of inquiry distribute their interventions so as to bring about meaningful inquiry. No intervention should be motivated by the need to dominate.

Communal inquiry also requires that each of our perspectives be heard in our own voice. Children don't need others to speak for them, nor should they tolerate those who refuse to let others participate in the dialogue. If some of the children are reticent at the beginning, again it is the responsibility of the group to encourage them to participate. A few words, like 'Tommy, what do you think?', might be sufficient for Tommy to share his perspective. The teacher might have to model this behaviour in the beginning, but hopefully, in time, the children can do it for themselves. To the extent that the children do not have access to the multiplicity of perspectives that the group represents, their making sense of the multiplicity of views is short-changed.

This developing non-egocentricity involves the cultivation of an attitude, a way of being-in-the-world, which disposes children to inquire with each other with confidence and develop, for themselves, a belief in the meaningfulness of the inquiry activity. Becoming a participant in a community of inquiry is about liberation and the cultivation of wisdom; non-egocentricity is characteristic of persons who are wise and free. When one acts out of an emotional, social and cognitive balance, one has no problem in following the inquiry where it leads. One cares about understanding what

is at issue. As Eliot Deutsch puts it, 'The little 'T' is simply not there to be destroyed.'

Loyalty

There are those who, like Laurance Splitter, think that the community of inquiry is nothing more than the sum of its individual members. I do not agree. The community of inquiry is an ideal toward which children work by self-correction. It is guided by criteria such as egalitarianism, non-coercive power, open-ended dialogue, truth and meaning. It is an instantiation of what Kwame Appiah calls 'soul-making' when referring to educational endeavours that intentionally shape children's sense of identity and self (Appiah, 2006).

The question can still be asked, however, if there is anything besides the inquiry itself that is holding the community of inquiry together. The answer is yes. What eventually holds the community together, in addition to the communal inquiry, is loyalty and a feeling of solidarity. Members of a classroom community of inquiry are persons with hopes, feelings, fears, strengths and weaknesses. Such a community is held together by the individuals becoming conscious of and accepting the fact that their participation is necessary for the growth of each other. It is such a consciousness that is responsible for a child's silencing himself at times for the good of the group, or another child's offering an alternative position for the good of the inquiry or another child's questioning the dominance of some members of the group.

Following Joshua Royce, when I speak of loyalty to the community of inquiry, I do not mean blind, uncritical support. That is the kind of loyalty that characterises cults with no dissension, dialogue, multiplicity of views, perspective-sharing, reflection, self-correction or ongoing self-correction. It is an insulting claim to demand of each other that we support an activity or a ritual that is in itself unquestionable. Such action is servitude, not loyalty.

Eliot Deutsch holds that loyalty is non-calculating, open-ended and self-reflective. It aims to involve oneself cognitively, emotionally and socially in order to sustain a presence of solidarity, or *belonging-together in an attempt to come to understand the world*, which is the work of the community. Initially, the loyalty might not be conscious.

However, as the dialogue proceeds and the children come to feel that they are making progress in understanding themselves, and the world around them, they become self-conscious of the role their commitment makes in sustaining the group's works of inquiry itself. They discover themselves becoming loyal to the class group because they come to place a special value on it – in a word, they care about it and its work. They care about its members and their growth. They care about the ideals that regulate their activity and, if they could no longer participate, they would feel they had lost something very precious.

When as persons we participate in such a community, we create those very conditions that allow us to grow as persons. The fact that a community of inquiry is an achievement, not something given, does imply that it is something unnatural or inauthentic. Quite the opposite, there is nothing more authentic than persons striving and struggling to achieve understanding of themselves, each other and of the world around them in a community of other persons.

Conclusion

I have attempted to show how the role of ritual in the classroom community of inquiry is a means of cultivating wisdom. This ritual is not dogmatic; it can always be questioned and/or changed as the community evolves. Good ritual always leaves room for the spontaneity of its group members and sensitivity to context. It is informed by the concern to care for and enhance the dignity of all the community members in the exercise of critical, creative and caring *praxis* that requires good judgement-making. It is this multi-dimensional *praxis* which is the end; the wise action. The ritual is the means of getting there.

And yet, there is a sense in which this is not so. There is something intrinsically aesthetic, ethical and enjoyable in the ritual itself. As one child voiced at the end of a particularly good communal inquiry session, 'That was really nice, not ugly.' Such communal inquiry gives children hope, and empowers them to think they can make a difference in the world. It is ritualised *praxis* for itself, for the child's growth, understanding and consummate satisfaction.

Ultimately, the ritual behaviour of the community of inquiry is an aesthetic and moral form-giving content which aims to motivate inquiry and dialogue. Because of its commitment to fallibilism, and self-correction, the classroom community of inquiry, as ritual participation, has the potential of becoming the means of fostering wisdom, the wisdom that contemporary psychologists like Robert Sternberg think is so essential to the future of our global society.

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Democratic Education and the Concept of Power

Mor Yorshansky

Abstract

As conceptualised by the Philosophy for Children movement, a classroom community of inquiry (CI) depends on the deliberation skills of its members and their willingness to share ideas, time and power, despite conflicting interests, in the process of social inquiry. However, these assumptions present some practical as well as theoretical difficulties, particularly in relation to distribution of power, a political or pre-political resource, among the members of a community of inquiry. Two such problems seem to require further analysis: members' ability to develop an egalitarian attitude towards sharing power among the members of the CI, and the pre-set truth value that is attributed to certain power related behaviours, which participants are expected to demonstrate while participating in a CI. While I do not question the importance of equal participation, or any manifestation of sharing power equally, it seems to me that over-emphasising such practices may jeopardise the sincerity of emotions and opinions expressed in the inquiry process. Following group dynamic theories and the ideas of Hannah Arendt, I suggest first that behaviours which imply that the CI process was blocked or went terribly wrong, especially in relation to sharing power among the community members, in fact, provide opportunities for growth. Second, in accordance with CI assumption that all values should be subjected to inquiry and the attitude of fallibility, I suggest that the values of equal participation and non-domination, understood as equal sharing of power among the community's members, should also be subjected to inquiry and reconsideration.

Introduction

Since Rousseau, who viewed education as a way to free children from the oppressive influences of culture and society (Arendt, 1977b; Boyd (Rousseau), 1962), educational philosophers have offered different pedagogies, through which children's ability to develop as active members of society and its political organisation could be cultivated. The discourse of democratic education is an example of such a theoretical attempt in today's educational discourse, especially in western democratic societies. The democratic discourse in education contains various ideas, each defining democracy and the appropriate education to which children should be exposed for successful initiation into collective social and political life to take place (Apple & Beane, 1995; Cevallos-Estarellas & Sigurdardottir, 2000; Dewey, 1916; Goodman, 1989; Gutmann, 1987; Harris, 1995; Kyle & Jenks, 2002).

One assumption inherent to democratic discourse, that skills and traits (which develop during a child's apprenticeship period) could influence her or his behaviour as an adult member of the community and in turn change society at large, requires attention to power and how this resource affects individual and collective life in democratic communities. Although not in complete agreement, democratic and progressive educators believe that power should be more equally distributed among the members of any democratic community in order to allow them to voice their opinions, criticisms and claims in small and large scale public spheres (Cummins, 2001; Ellsworth, 1999; Fine, 1991; Freire, 1970; Gutmann, 1987; Hooks, 1994; Shor, 1992). Many democratic educators claim that more equal distribution of power between students and teachers in classrooms and during their schooling could meaningfully conduce these future citizens' ability to use their own power once they join the public sphere as citizens (Cummins, 2001; Delpit, 1988; Ellsworth, 1999). One example of such pedagogy is the community of inquiry developed and practised in the Philosophy for Children (P4C) movement.

Community of inquiry as a democratic practice

The community of inquiry (CI) is a pedagogy that aspires to cultivate reasoning, communication and social skills among young members of a classroom community and their

teachers (Sharp, 1993). This practice was influenced by pragmatist theory and places ongoing inquiry, dialogue, self-correction, communication, caring relationships and fallibility among the core values of communal democratic and associated living (Gregory, 2004a; Gregory, 2004b). These values, if practised appropriately, could generate qualitatively different and more equal power relations among the members of a classroom community and influence the participants' understandings and habits of sharing their common world with others in their communities inside and outside of schools (Gregory, 2004a).

A leading notion that influences the vision of CI as a democratic practice, or social democracy in Gregory's terms, is the pragmatist epistemological claim that:

...intelligence is the process of constructing hypotheses for action on the basis of a semiotic interpretation of experience, testing our hypotheses in experience, and re-constructing and re-testing them until we hit on a mode of action that successfully avoids harm or achieves benefit. (Gregory, 2004a, p.1 of paper)

This notion shapes the understanding of the appropriate skills and relationships that should guide members of any given society attempting to better their private and collective lives. According to Dewey, organisms, either individuals or communities, are constantly presented by puzzling new situations in the course of their lives. Puzzlement leads to a process of inquiry, in which individuals and communities attempt to reach new solutions to situations that could not be explained or resolved by their previous habits and practices. Thus, intelligent inquiry is the process that should be nurtured and improved to assist the members of a society in their constant attempt to self-correct and to better their lives (Gregory, 2004a; Gregory, 2004b).

Yet, human life develops in communities and is influenced by them. Individuals are interdependent and influenced by social phenomena. Thus, their inquiries, more often than not, depend on the presence of others and have to be practised collaboratively within their communities for successful amelioration (Gregory, 2004a, pp. 1-2). Furthermore, since each community is faced with its unique

problems and opportunities, the community's inquiry process must be based on the diverse and even conflicting view points of its members, and not those of external social experts. The collective inquiry within the community must involve the collection of evidence, dialogue, reasoning, experimentation, criticism, solicitation of alternative view points, interpretation, avoidance of censorship, and fallibility and higher order thinking skills in order to reach new social directions (Gregory, 2004a; Gregory, 2004b). This process of collaborative and participatory inquiry, in which communities of all kinds rely on their own intelligent sources to reach social solutions, is a deliberative democracy. Such democracy as a form of associated living furthers the practices of institutional democracy (Barber, 1984; Dewey, 1916; Gregory, 2004a; Gregory, 2004b).

Participation in deliberative democracies requires many skills from each citizen, much more than the skills required from a citizen in an institutional formal democracy (Gross, 1992). The individual is required, or expected, to know her own moral, aesthetical, professional and material purposes, and be able to introduce various aspects of her social identity during the process of inquiry. The individual is also required to be able to use many high order cognitive and social skills such as reasoning, critical, creative and caring thinking, willingness to self-correct her opinions, and allow herself to be influenced by, and attribute importance to, opinions of her contemporaries (Gregory, 2004b, p. 165). Since these skills and values demand much practice it is believed that young people should be initiated into the practice of a deliberative democracy during their schooling years and learn to engage in collaborative deliberation before they join the public sphere as citizens (Gutmann, 1987; Lipman, 2003). Furthermore, democratic education initiates students to the political aspects of associated living as Sharp's claim demonstrates:

...the commitment to engage in a community of inquiry is a political commitment even in the elementary school level. In a real sense, it is a commitment to freedom, open debate, pluralism, self government and democracy.... It is only to the extent that individuals have had the experience of dialoguing with others as equals, participating in shared, public inquiry that they will be able to

eventually take an active role in the shaping of a democratic society. (Sharp, 1993, p. 343)

This equation of the community of inquiry with a political process directs this discussion to the implication of power and its distribution among members of a classroom community of inquiry. While the definition of power and its distribution among members of society differs considerably among philosophical traditions, it is often understood as the ability of individuals and groups to influence the process of resource allocation – material, cultural and various other resources – among the members of society, thus securing their particular and subjective interests (Lukes, 2005; Lukes, 1986). In democratic communities, especially those committed to democracy as a form of associated living, members strive to extend the degree to which power is equally and pluralistically distributed among them in order to prevent unbalanced influences by some groups and members on the results of the resources allocation process. The common good of the community is believed to depend on the group's ability to generate as many opinions as possible before reaching collective decisions, since such broad articulation of interests allows the best social solutions to evolve. In a classroom democratic community, such as CI attempts to cultivate, the resources that are available to the members are time and ideas. These resources influence the outcomes of the collaborative inquiry and in turn shape the individual and collective habits and practices of the community members. The resources of time and ideas and the way they are distributed influence the social reconstruction of the CI. Hence, time and ideas should be distributed as equally as possible during the inquiry, and preferably allow all members to have their voice, interests and claims represented before any collective understanding is reached.

While teachers and students engage in dialogue during CI, they bring particular subjective interests to the community's agenda. As ideas are explored among the members, some may try to over-influence the inquiry and its result in favour of their particular interests, using illegitimate means, by monopolising discussion time and by insisting to voice their ideas and understandings over other timid and less influential voices. Such attempts can be

conceptualised as the use of coercion and domination by individual members who are able to use their influence, gain more power and influence the inquiry in an unbalanced manner. Thus, coercion and domination are practices which jeopardise the development of a deliberative democracy in the classroom, and the community's attempts to identify new visions of betterment based on a collective perception of the good (Gregory, 2004a).

For successful deliberative democratic practices, such as CI, to develop in the classroom, some conditions have to be met. Students and teachers engaged in CI may enter the process fully or partially aware of their personal interests, ideas and abilities. However, while the process continues and the members become more aware of their own perceptions of truth and values, they must allow themselves to submit these values to further collective inquiry and continuously re-shape and self-correct their ideas during the process. Members, including teachers, who attribute absolute truth value to their own ideas, unwilling to either further examine them, develop new solutions or self-correct in collaboration with others, possibly damage the community's ability to distribute power equally among its members by allowing different opinions to influence the emerging criteria for new social resolutions (Gregory, 2004b). Such members may try to coerce the community to follow their ideas, and according to pragmatist theory as well as democratic theory, jeopardise the community's ability to identify and develop the insight of where their common good lies. Therefore, unequal distribution of power resulting from any community member's attempt to use her ideas, while refraining from the attitude of fallibility, to coerce others to comply, seriously risks the community's common interest to develop new opportunities for amelioration (Gregory, 2004a).

A similar threat may be presented by tyrannical majorities within classroom communities. Indeed, new decisions in democratic communities often rely on the majority's will. However, such decisions can only conclude the inquiry process after additional view points, especially those expressed by minority groups and timid voices in the community, are elicited and considered intelligently in the course of the community's deliberation. Only if alternative values were used by the community to self-correct initial

attitudes, could the deliberation process end provisionally, with the intent to reconsider accepted decision and self-correct them again against new relevant criteria and possibilities for betterment (Gregory, 2004a).

A classroom community of inquiry depends on the deliberation skills of its members and their willingness to share ideas, time and power, despite conflicting interests, in the process of social inquiry. Gregory sums this aptly:

The ability to think critically and creatively about disputes involving one's interests; the disposition to be curious about views different from one's own, and to investigate them with the expectation that they may be useful in correcting or evolving one's own views; the willingness to avoid coercion to advance one's commitments – these are the collective habits that democratic communities take to be normative because they are the most likely means of turning conflict into growth. And education is the best means available for their cultivation. (Gregory, 2004a)

Individual and collective power in the community of inquiry

The previous section explored some of the assumptions that influenced the practice of CI in educational settings. However, these assumptions present some practical as well as theoretical difficulties, particularly in relation to the distribution of power, a political or pre-political resource, among the members of a community of inquiry. These difficulties, if not discussed and developed theoretically, may challenge the feasibility of turning a classroom into a deliberative democracy through the practice of CI among students and teachers. Two such problems require further analysis: members' ability to develop an egalitarian attitude towards sharing power among the members of the community of inquiry, and the pre-set truth value that is attributed to certain power related behaviours, which participants are expected to demonstrate while participating in a community of inquiry.

Development of egalitarian attitude towards sharing power among the community's members

One assumption that is often presented in descriptions of CI is that members of the community, students and teachers, could develop the ability to inquire together while refraining from behaviours that abuse their personal power, such as dominating the inquiry process and practising coercion on the community, even in situations of conflict. Domination and coercion in this respect are assessed as using discussion time in an unbalanced way if some members tend to talk and express themselves more or less than others, and attributing truth values to pre-formed opinions, which dominant members refuse to let go (Cevallos-Estarellas & Sigurdardottir, 2000; Gregory, 2004a; Sharp, 1993, pp. 339-340). While I do not question the importance of equal participation, or any manifestation of sharing power equally, it seems to me that over emphasising such practices may jeopardise the sincerity of emotions and opinions expressed in the inquiry process. Furthermore, the assumptions of P4C, as discussed, were framed cognitively, or in terms of what constitutes reliable inquiry, and although the movement attributes importance to the development of caring relationships and thinking among the members of CI, additional clarification is required in order to understand how these dispositions could develop in the course of the inquiry process.

Sharing power, opinions and other resources in the inquiry process, many times, cause strong emotional responses among the CI members. Letting go of one's opinions and dispositions and subjecting one's opinions and ideas to collective inquiry cannot be expected to be influenced entirely by high order cognitive analysis. When individuals in the CI are required to share the community's resources equally, they may resist the process and as a result exhibit artificial behaviour and emotions, or simply withdraw. Students and teachers who are used to dominating the community's inquiry, or to remain silent, may find it difficult to alter these acquired behaviours, and would possibly respond emotionally to strong demands to change their patterns of sharing power within the community. Such responses may be manifested as resistance and jeopardise the necessary tension between vitality and form in the CI.

This possibility is clear from Sharp's (1993) description of a well functioning, as opposed to blocked, inquiry (pp. 338-340). In a well functioning CI, participants move from considering themselves and their accomplishments as all important. They become conscious of other members' contributions and allow themselves to be transformed, eventually becoming part of an interdependent whole (pp. 338-339). But this process requires participants to take the risk of communicating with others while fully presenting their opinions, beliefs and selves. And at times this is a real risk. Students could allow themselves to transform and risk becoming vulnerable only if trust and care of the community are in place. The absence of care and trust often result in a blocked inquiry in which some members are overpowered by fear and other emotions which keep them from sharing their views and ideas with the community. In Sharp's view this is a sign that something is very wrong (pp. 339-340).

While I agree with Sharp that trust and caring relationships are salient conditions for a successful CI process, it is not clear from her description how successful communities establish such caring relationships. Neither could I identify in her description a discussion of ways to help blocked communities develop trust and caring relationships, or find ways out of their blockage. I suggest that behaviours which imply that the process was blocked or went terribly wrong, especially in relation to sharing power among the community members, in fact, provide opportunities for growth. These opportunities rely on attributing emotional states to the community, which reveal the level of trust and caring relationship the group shares, and influence its ability, or inability, to advance further towards the goal of becoming egalitarian and democratic. By focusing on the emotional state of the community as a whole, and accepting that unequal sharing of power could be understood as the community's way of signalling their own needs and solutions for conducting collective inquiry, CI facilitators could assist the group to develop gradually and establish trust and care based on its members' fashion of sharing power.

Group dynamic theories may help us to understand the inherent functions that conflict and unbalanced manifestations of power among members contribute to the

emotional life of any group, including a well functioning classroom community practising collective inquiry. Group dynamic theories suggest that particularly these emotional situations, which are sometimes expressed as unequal domination of the inquiry process by individual members, present valuable clues for possibilities of further progress and growth in the group's inquiry (Bion, 1961; Rioch, 1970; Smith & Berg, 1987). Thus, these theories can help facilitators and community members understand their conflicts and attempt to resolve them while progressing towards a well functioning CI.

These theories were mainly influenced by the work of Wilfred Bion who developed the metaphor that group members function simultaneously as members of a rational and task-oriented working group and an emotional unconscious basic assumption group (Bion, 1961; Rioch, 1970). While the working group, much like the CI, is composed of cooperative members who constantly test the conclusions they established in an intelligent scientific matter, seek knowledge, learn from experience, and constantly question how they may best achieve their goals, the basic assumption group operates differently beneath the surface (Rioch, 1970, p. 58). Most, if not all, groups alternate between situations in which they are committed to their task and emotional manifestations of behaviour, which allow the group to resist further growth and protect itself from proceeding to inquire into threatening and uncertain situations. The latter behaviour, Bion claims, is framed by tacit assumptions, usually one of three basic assumptions of groups: dependency, fight or flight and pairing, which the group unconsciously shares as a whole, and which provide the emotional foundation for the group's behaviour (Rioch, 1970).

When groups are influenced by basic assumptions they tend to be influenced by emotional states, such as anxiety, shame and others, which resist change. These emotional states are shared by the group as a whole, and cannot be attributed or explained by individual members' behaviour, even if particular members seem to lead the group's resistance. There is a kind of conspiracy of anonymity among the group members and no individual participant is willing to accept ownership for such behaviour. However, certain members accept roles, such as *the leader*,

the clown and *the trouble maker* in basic assumption groups, usually due to personal valency¹. These roles represent the vicarious aspect of the group's life, in which certain individuals become fixed in roles that the group needs for its own purposes, but from which they cannot get out (Riich, 1970, p. 62). This aspect of group life can be understood by the mechanism of projective identification, which is salient as long as the group operates as a basic assumption group (Wells, 1980).

Projective identification is an unconscious mechanism that describes the emotional interdependence developed among the group members in the course of their collective inquiry. This mechanism develops from early childhood in every individual, and protects infants, children and adults from dealing with threatening emotional states, such as the fear to lose their individuality in the group or the family. Individuals use the group to deny and disown personal dispositions which they cannot or would not deal with, let alone subject to inquiry. They split these dispositions into their positive and negative manifestation and then project the negative aspects onto other group members, who then become identified with these negative behavioural traits, and responsible for their presence in the group's work. Other group members accept such roles projected on their personality according to their personality and valency, which are influenced by emotional as well as social characteristics. Consequently, each group member functions unconsciously in a role projected by the group as a whole on her or his personality. Thus, the group, while in a state of basic assumption, operates in conditions of role differentiation, in which individual members represent various dispositions that the group and its members are emotionally threatened to deal with. A net of role differentiation such as this connects the group members to each other by different emotional states such as pity, indifference, respect, love, guilt, hatred and so forth. As long as the projective identification mechanism is sustained, the group feels secure and successfully refrains from dealing

¹ According to Bion, every individual has a tendency to enter into group life, especially the irrational and unconscious aspects of group life, with certain tendencies - valencies. Different and various levels of such valencies influence the roles that individuals may adopt while participating in the emotional lives of basic assumption groups (Riich, 1970, p. 63).

with its emotional threats by consciously discussing and inquiring about them. The group seems ineffective, and the inquiry process cannot proceed (Wells, 1980).

One powerful example common in educational settings is the disruptive student, who takes over the learning process and dominates it with his or her personal agenda. When this student plays a role for the group's basic assumption, the teacher will probably find that removing the child from the classroom will result only in another student taking the missing role and continuing the disruptive behaviour pattern. This process will probably repeat itself until the teacher, or the group, try to identify the function this behaviour plays for the classroom community. However, once attempts are made to interpret this behaviour for and with the entire group, the participants would be able to consciously deal with the latent threats that made this behaviour necessary and continue their inquiry process (Wells, 1980).

As this example demonstrates, group theories do not understand the group's ineffectiveness when under the basic assumption state as a threat to the group's ability to continue their cognitive work. On the contrary, these emotional states and mechanisms provide opportunities for the group members to continue their inquiry process. Basic assumptions and projective identification provide the group with defence mechanisms, allowing it on the one hand to continue the inquiry in accordance with the members' emotional abilities, and on the other to identify perceived threats and slowly subject them to conscious deliberation by bringing these threats to the group's attention in a manner which they could handle. According to Bion, consistent interpretation of the basic assumption tendencies will gradually bring them into consciousness and cause them to lose their threatening quality (Roch, 1970, p. 64). In this discourse there is a connection between the contents discussed and the emotional context in which the group functions, therefore, the facilitator and the group members must inquire into both aspects and the relationships between them.

Thus, emotional states are important influences on the CI ability to advance towards a democratic form of associated living. Emotions pre-exist, constantly evolve and cannot be ignored if we want the inquiry process to succeed.

While practising CI, as any other group engagement in education, we must pay attention to these emotions, hoping to educate and bring them to the group's conscious and overt awareness, and include them in the group's cognitive inquiry (Powell, 1997). Only then could the community let go of its fears and progress further (at least temporarily) in a meaning-seeking dialogue in which increasingly more aspects of the group's life are subject to vital inquiry, while allowing individuality and conflict to co-exist with the community's collective goals.

Awareness and interpretations of the community's emotional states, sometimes manifested by dominant members' attempts to coerce and block the inquiry process, are the missing link in Sharp's (1993) description of the necessary tension between vitality and form in a successful CI process. These emotional states are not mere false convictions, or attempts to get rid of pain at all costs, but important mechanisms, which protect and assist the CI advance according to its internal states of caring and trust, and its coping abilities. Some dis-logical thinking among CI members cannot simply be disturbed by cognitive skills such as comprehensiveness, coherence and consistency. Such thinking must be interpreted as the group's unconscious defence against further exposure, and be treated with sensitivity to the community's particularity as a whole, and with respect. In other words, the presence of dis-logical thinking and behaviour should be treated as a sign that further cognitive progress will be resisted by the group as long as emotional states such as fear and anxiety will not be dismantled, and the group has the opportunity to offer its own solutions to deal with their emotional states:

...when a creative tension exists among participants a tension between vitality and of the many relationships and the form of the community of inquiry, the group has the potential for open debate, growth and each participant has the potential for self-transformation. Because tension is painful, we tend to get rid of it at any cost. Often we find ourselves instead a mere form of communal inquiry. The purpose, however, of a community of inquiry is to restore the tension between vitality and form, to bring participants into deeper and more significant relationships, to shake them free of their complacency, their false

convictions and to make them available for more comprehensive understandings. Therefore, it follows that dis-logical thinking within the community requires a willingness to be disturbed and to be challenged by the ideas of the other, a process of active reconstruction using criteria of comprehensiveness, coherence and consistency, together with sensitivity to the particularity of each situation. (Sharp, 1993, p. 340)

Sharp's claims, presented in this quote, suggest that pre-set values such as self-transformation, shaking participants free from complacency and false convictions, willingness to be disturbed and to be challenged by the ideas of others and cognitively dealing with emotional and painful experiences, must direct the successful practice of CI. However, this seems to contradict the theoretical foundations of CI itself, namely, that the community must rely on its own particular intelligent sources for identifying new opportunities for betterment. Thus, emotional sources, as well as different solutions for organising the political life of the community, presented sometimes as group members' insistence to dominate the CI process, must be considered equally legitimate in the inquiry process. These intelligent solutions and resources are valuable for the community's well-being and progress, and cannot be determined in advance, over and above the participants' own conflicts, interests and choices.

Attribution of pre-set true values to egalitarian participation and behaviours during the inquiry process in the community of inquiry

Successful CI practice seems to require pre-set values and behaviours from the participants, as discussed above. This attitude of the P4C movement directly follows from the discussion in the previous section, and contradicts the assumption that all values should be subjected to collective inquiry during CI in order to intelligently identify where the community's common good lies. In accordance with CI assumption, that all values should be subjected to inquiry and the attitude of fallibility, I want to suggest that the values of equal participation and non-domination, understood as equal sharing of power among the community's members, as well as other assumptions of CI,

should also be subjected to inquiry and reconsideration. Hannah Arendt's ideas about human action, power and freedom further support this possibility, as I will show below.

Nancy Vansieleghem (2005) claims that philosophical inquiry with children should provide a space where children can encounter each other and examine new possibilities for understanding these encounters. Following Arendt, it is precisely the newness, natality, that each child brings into the world by being born, that makes such new understandings of social relations possible. Thus, CI as a democratic practice must allow the newness in children to influence inquiry by refraining from presenting the world as fixed and determined by egalitarian attitudes toward democracy, deliberation and power. Vansieleghem's claim points to the importance of allowing children to influence the process of CI with insights that were not imagined by the founders of the movement. Such insights can be imagined by children since their experiences of the world are new and different from those of adults. This outlook, influenced by Arendt's ideas, stretches the previous argument further and suggests that not only emotional states prevalent in the CI when it operates as a basic assumption group, but also originality and creativity, may provide sound reasons for understanding power relations in CI differently than discussed so far. Thus, I turn to Arendt's ideas to clarify this possibility.

Arendt uses the concept of natality, which is rooted in the human condition to describe the potential for renewal that every birth of a child brings into the world. Unlike preserving life, which is a process doomed to decay with life itself, human action introduces new words and deeds into our common world, influences which transform the world and rescues it from destruction. This ability to change the common world is preserved by natality, the ability to renew the world by political action. Since new comers are constantly introduced into the world, each different and unique, they are capable of beginning something new, of acting and introducing new initiatives into the world. The new comers by birth, strangers to the world's ways, are themselves new beginnings by virtue of being born, and beginners, since their future cannot be restricted by the old world to which they were born (Arendt, 1998, Levinson,

2001). Once new comers develop and join the common world as free agents, they can set it anew; they are the world's hope for political change. Accordingly, if natality is lost, the public realm collapses as well. Human life on earth cannot develop by natural historical processes alone. Human life depends on renewal, which springs out of people living together and influencing with their words and deeds their common world. This renewal is secured by the constant flux of new comers by birth to the world. Therefore, the newness of these new comers should be cultivated (Arendt, 1998).

This is perhaps the core difference between Arendt and democratic educators who view democratic education as associated living as P4C theory also advocates. Arendt shares democratic educators' vision of democracy as a form of associated living, and claims that modern social structures, particularly the social sphere in which sustaining life was subjected to public scrutiny and became all important, vehemently restrict the feasibility of action and freedom in the public sphere (Arendt, 1998). However, while democratic educators see students' democratic deliberations in their own sphere as a necessary condition for a specific social change towards equality and democracy, Arendt refuses to frame the future development of humans' communal existence in terms of progress towards a specific political goal. She insists that children, capable of initiating new processes in the world due to their condition of natality, would influence the common world with new and unpredictable actions, if given the opportunity to preserve their freedom to act while being introduced to the world during their education period. Arendt expresses a strong faith in children's inherent freedom, and does not believe future actions should be forced on them by different conceptions of historical processes. Such finite perceptions of progress, which already predict the direction in which human collective existence should develop, introduce tyrannical elements of control to the public sphere and undermine the role of natality to set our common world anew.

Democratic education, P4C being one movement within this discourse, prescribes students' empowerment as a function in a process, which should turn the public sphere into an egalitarian democracy of equals. Arendt criticises this view and claims it introduces tyrannical control suitable

to the private sphere and the human conditions of work and labour within it (Arendt, 1977a). Even though democratic educators, such as P4C facilitators, acknowledge the continuous nature of students' inquiry, they nevertheless evaluate the outcomes of the CI practice by the consequences they help achieve in the world in view of the ends they established in advance, particularly in relation to sharing power among the group's members (Schutz, 2001, pp. 110-11; Kohan, 2002, Vansielegem, 2005).

Any educational vision that presents the future as if it already happened shapes the future with the ideas of those who hold these beliefs. Such pedagogy disables the freedom of the young to influence the common world with their condition of natality. The message of utopian political ideologies that were introduced in modern education is that the future is already here, therefore the young need not bring their own actions to the common world. Children who are exposed to such an educational pre-political sphere cannot help but understand that they are left to obey the rule of the future, and that the common world does not expect their initiatives, since its problems were solved before they even joined the political sphere as equals. Children as political agents are stripped of their individuality and positioned as identical entities in a public sphere that could only develop in pre-determined directions. This political attitude of progress leaves no role for individuality and freedom and, in fact, follows the condition of the private sphere in which life necessities alone are preserved (Arendt, 1977b; Arendt, 1998; Schutz, 2001).

Arendt argues against the attempt to apply political ideas, such as equality in power, to the pre-political or semi-private sphere of education. She claims that the crisis in American education is a political crisis because progressive political ideas were applied in education in order to erase as far as possible the differences between the young and the old, children and adults, teachers and students in an attempt to reach equality (Arendt, 1977b, p. 180). Arendt warns adults not to collapse the educational sphere into the political sphere, since this would unequivocally mean destroying all possibility of renewing our common political world. Political renewal depends on the constant introduction to the world of new comers, children who are born new into the world and are strangers to its ways. These

new comers, each unique and unpredictable, conceal the potential of bringing new actions into the political sphere, actions that could rescue the world from the natural process of decay and destruction, which are the destiny of every automatic process, including processes initiated by humans.

Students' individuality springs from the condition of plurality in the world. Each new child is different and unpredictable and must be acknowledged as such. The conditions of plurality and natality, once matured in students, could influence our common world in ways yet to be determined, and shape a democratic public sphere in which individuals contribute their individual words and deeds to group power, and together generate immortal traditions for future generations to set anew further with their own natality. Power, generated by communicative efforts between individuals gathered to deliberate about their common world, constantly sets the world anew and changes political reality in a process that cannot be predicted and depends on human agency alone. This understanding allows free agents as well as young students to participate in and influence the common world. Therefore, the process of CI should welcome such manifestations of newness and communicative power, even if they seem to contradict values of freedom and political equality. Students experiment their natality during CI and if allowed to mature as political agents could influence our common world with new understandings of power and freedom in ways we could not have foreseen.

Conclusions

Although additional consideration should be given to pedagogical practices that may address some of the issues I pointed to here, and while I agree with the democratic vision of P4C and believe classroom communities should strive to achieve full and equal distribution of power among members of classroom communities, I believe that students and teachers should autonomously assess their emotional comfort, caring and relationships levels during their inquiry process and allow these attitudes to influence their common goals and inquiry as well. Furthermore, these emotional resources, in conjunction with creative thought and actions of the CI members, may inspire new insights about the common good of the community and the future image of the

public sphere. Democracy and associated living, as those in the P4C movement believe, differ among communities, classrooms and groups, each according to its own particular opportunities, problems and cultural habits. Allowing these particularities to influence the CI process unequivocally mean subjecting all values, including equal sharing of power and possibly other assumptions of the P4C movement, to inquiry. If we aspire to emancipate children as we expose them to philosophy and CI, we must allow their natality, their promise to introduce new ideas into our common world and set it anew, to influence their philosophical inquiry and refrain from framing the results of the process and the future with our own ideas. Democratic educators must trust the inherent freedom of children, and their ability to introduce new ideas into communal life; ideas which we, adults, could not imagine, but must open our minds to accept as part of the everlasting journey of inquiry that life and political existence summon.

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Types of Philosophical Questions

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This paper was presented as a section of 'What are Philosophical Questions?' at the 'FAPSA Philosophy in Schools & Strategic Planning Conference', University of Melbourne, 22 July 2006, and was published in the conference proceedings, Singapore Teachers' Union (Eds.), *Philosophy in Schools: Developing a Community of Inquiry*, Singapore, 17-18 April 2006, pp. 100-114.

Learning how to ask good philosophical questions is one of the hardest things to learn for teachers and students doing Philosophy in Schools.¹ This is a significant issue because Philosophy in Schools relies on teachers and students being able to recognise and formulate philosophical questions that can be productively discussed. Without having a clear picture of philosophical questions, it is easy for a class to end up discussing, for example, literary or psychological issues without doing anything recognisably philosophical.

The Philosophy in Schools literature has offered a number of different means to help students and teachers recognise and formulate philosophical questions. However, I argue that while these are useful for philosophical novices, there needs to be more guidance for mastering philosophical questions. The first part of this paper will outline some simple means that have been used to help students and teachers ask and understand philosophical questions. The second part of this paper will offer more sophisticated means that can be used as students and teachers become philosophically advanced. I will finish with two examples of collections of philosophical questions developed by using the means that I offer.

¹ I use the term 'Philosophy in Schools' to refer to the movement that is broader than and distinct from Lipman's 'Philosophy for Children' (P4C) curriculum materials, but which has arisen out of and is indebted to the P4C tradition.

Philosophical questioning can be seen as a skill that can be developed with the help of tools and training. Beginners lack virtually all skills of philosophical questioning and so need simple tools to get them started. However, once mastered, the simple tools need to be replaced by more and more complex tools so students develop more sophisticated philosophical questioning skills.

The Philosophy in Schools literature offers many ways of distinguishing philosophical questions from non-philosophical questions that can be used as tools for novices. For example:

It is one mark of a philosophical question that its 'answers' are essentially contestable and problematic: not only is there no consensus as to what constitutes a satisfactory answer, there is no consensus as to what constitutes a satisfactory method for even beginning to answer the question. Philosophical questions stimulate the kind of thinking which both increases our understanding and leads us to ask further questions. (Splitter & Sharp, 1995, p. 95)

Alternatively, tools such as Cam's 'question quadrant' (2003; 2006, pp. 32-36) help a great deal to introduce the difference between philosophical questions and other questions which are often mistaken for philosophical questions. Cam distinguishes between four types of questions: reading comprehension, factual knowledge, literary speculation and inquiry questions. Philosophical questions are a type of inquiry question. For beginning philosophers, this tool can be used in a very simple way to pick out philosophical questions as those questions that you have to think about to answer and which have many different possible answers. For more advanced philosophers, the tool distinguishes philosophical questions as open intellectual inquiry questions (Cam, 2006, p. 36). These questions do not have settled answers and so require complex thinking (Golding, 2006), where we make a number of interrelated and often demanding cognitive moves about abstract and intangible issues (Bloom, 1964, p. 30). In other words, we need to use critical, creative and caring thinking to answer philosophical questions (Lipman, 2003).

Accounts of philosophical questions, such as that given by Cam's 'question quadrant', are of most use to help beginners ask and explore philosophical questions. However, students and teachers need new and more sophisticated tools to help them recognise and ask different *types* of philosophical questions.

It would be inappropriate to try to offer students and teachers a precise and irrefutable account of all types of philosophical questions. Apart from doubts about whether this is possible, this sort of account would be too sophisticated to be useable in the classroom. Instead I offer a more modest proposal – an account of some different types of philosophical questions that draw on a variety of traditions and areas of philosophy, but which do not pretend to give an exhaustive analysis of them.

Traditionally, philosophical questions are categorised according to the fields identified by Western philosophers, such as Philosophy of Mind, Metaphysics, Ethics and Political Philosophy. One way to understand these fields is as groups of fundamental questions about principal areas of human knowledge and experience (Beardsley & Beardsley, 1965). For example, Philosophy of Art consists of fundamental questions about art, while Metaphysics consists of fundamental questions about reality and existence. If we see the essence of philosophical questions to be about issues of fundamental concern, then we help students and teachers master philosophical questions by pointing out the different areas of fundamental concern that we might inquire into – such as, science, religion, art, history, education, government, social science, mathematics or language (Beardsley & Beardsley, 1965, p. 12).

Another way to see some of the fields of philosophy is as groups of questions that take the same approach to a variety of topics. For example, Metaphysical questions look at the essence or fundamental nature of a variety of different subjects, such as the ontology of art works or the nature of knowledge. Thus, we can also organise philosophical questions according to different approaches rather than subject matter. This understanding of philosophical questions makes the type of question, rather than the subject of the question, the essential feature of a philosophical question.

I take the second approach to philosophical questions. I do not rely on distinguishing types of philosophical questions based solely on the topics investigated by the fields of philosophy. Rather, I draw on the approaches or directions instantiated in different fields of philosophy to distinguish types of philosophical questions.

The virtue of this second approach to philosophical questions is that it provides needed help for learning how to ask different types of philosophical questions. Understanding that philosophical questions are about issues of fundamental concern is not as useful for this purpose as it is to understand different types of philosophical questions. It is relatively easy for students to understand that philosophical questions are about fundamental topics such as society or art, but they find it harder to understand the difference between the directions we take with an epistemological, ethical or metaphysical question. Yet, to ask a variety of good philosophical questions, students need to understand both the topic of the questions *and* some possible philosophical directions or approaches that could be taken to this topic.

An initial division of types of philosophical questions has been completed by Cam and Kovach. Cam (2006, pp. 23-26) divides philosophical questions into value and concept questions. Kovach (2006) distinguishes three different directions a philosophical discussion can go: epistemological, ethical and conceptual. These categories represent two or three of the most accessible types of philosophical questions and so are very useful in helping teachers and students become familiar with the variety of questions raised in philosophy. However, there are other categories, so once students have a grasp of these first types of questions, I recommend introducing further categories that allow other types of philosophical questions to be asked.

I have chosen each of the following categories of philosophical questions because they pick out a prominent area of philosophy that is useful for generating advanced philosophical questioning. Different types of philosophical questions are about different, philosophically rich facets of a concept. Each type of philosophical question gives a new direction or approach you can take when exploring a concept or idea (Golding, 2005). For example, as Kovach (2005) puts it, you could 'go evaluative' or you could 'go epistemological'.

We could take a phenomenological approach to a topic by investigating our experiences of this topic, and we also describe a rich facet of this topic when we investigate its phenomenological significance as distinct from its conceptual meaning or its ethical value. Other approaches are possible, for instance, we could 'go pragmatic' or 'go Marxist', but they may not describe both an approach and a rich facet of a topic, or they may not pick out prominent areas of philosophy.

An alternative categorisation of philosophical questions is given by Smith (2003), who divides the field in the following way:

- Ontology – the study of beings or their being i.e. what is
- Epistemology – the study of knowledge i.e. how we know
- Logic – the study of valid reasoning i.e. how to reason
- Ethics – the study of right and wrong i.e. how we act
- Phenomenology – the study of our experience i.e. how we experience

While this categorisation may be useful as a way of breaking down the areas of philosophical inquiry, some of the specific categories are not useful to break down the types of philosophical questions that can be asked. Some of the categories, for example 'logic' and 'ethics', are based more on subject matter than they are on types of questions.

The reason I have not included 'logic' as a distinct approach to a topic is that I take logic questions to be organised more by topic than by direction or approach. Logic questions are about the topics of reasoning, proof, argument, justification and certainty, for example. Some logic questions take a metaphysical approach to these concepts, such as 'What is valid reasoning?' Some logic questions take an epistemological approach to these subjects, for instance 'How do we know when to believe a conclusion?'

I have included 'evaluative' as a category rather than 'ethics', because I take ethics to be a sub-set of evaluative questions which are about a specific subject matter – human behaviour. Evaluative questions can also be asked about social structures or aesthetic issues such as beauty.

Thinking about values: 'go evaluative'

Evaluative questions are about our values – what is right or wrong, fair or unfair, beautiful or ugly, what we should or should not do. When asking evaluative questions, we explore the justification of our values and preferences (Cam, 2006, pp. 23-24). Thinking about what does or does not have value or how we should act helps us to formulate these questions. For example, if we were thinking about friendship, we could ask:

- Should you keep a friend who is mean to you?
- Is it bad to have no friends?
- Are friends necessary for leading a good life?
- What is the right way to treat your friends?
- What is valuable about having friends?

Thinking about the meaning of concepts: 'go conceptual'

Conceptual questions are about the meaning of concepts, the relationships between concepts, and the implications of these concepts. Thinking about our understanding of different concepts, the connections and differences between concepts or what follows from a particular understanding of a concept will help us to invent these questions. For example, if thinking about stealing, we could ask:

- What is stealing?
- How is lying like stealing?
- What does it mean to say something is wrong or bad?
- Can we consistently say that someone is a thief and they are a good person?
- If something is wrong, does this imply it should be illegal?

Thinking about essence and reality: 'go metaphysical'

Metaphysical questions are about reality, about what is, and about the nature or essence of what is. When asking metaphysics questions we investigate the essential nature of what exists. We examine both physical entities, such as tables and atoms, as well as abstract entities, such as ideas and numbers. Thinking about the fundamental make-up of

what we find in the world will help us formulate these questions. For example, if studying time, we could ask:

- Is time a human invention?
- Is time anything more than change?
- What is the essential nature of time?
- Is time real? In the same way as a chair?

Thinking about our experience: 'go phenomenological'

Phenomenological questions are about the appearance, nature and meaning of our experiences. When asking phenomenological questions, we investigate our experiences and the interpretation of our lives as they are lived. Rather than investigating what our concepts mean or the essence of things, we seek to describe the objects of our experience (Howarth, 2005, p. 791.) Thinking about what our experiences are like, how they appear to us, or what they mean to us will help us formulate these questions. For example, if thinking about love, we could ask:

- What is it like to be in love?
- When we love someone, what are they like to us?
- Does our experience of someone change when we love them or stop loving them?
- What is the meaning or importance of love in our lives?

Thinking about knowledge: 'go epistemological'

Epistemological questions are about the nature of our knowledge, judgements and justification. When we ask epistemological questions, we investigate our criteria for certainty, belief and evidence. Thinking about what we know, how we know these things and what criteria we might use to decide will help us formulate these questions. For example, if thinking about fairness, we could ask:

- How do we know for certain what is fair?
- What criteria could we use to tell a particular action were fair?
- Are we justified in believing that fairness is good?
- Why should I believe that it is fair, for example, to punish criminals?

Following this analysis, we could construct philosophical questions by filling in the gap in the question starters below:

Ethical questions

- Is it right to _____?
- Is it wrong to _____?
- Is _____ valuable?
- E.g. Is it wrong to change?

Conceptual questions

- What does _____ mean?
- E.g. What is change?

Metaphysical questions

- Is _____ real?
- E.g. Is change real?

Epistemological questions

- How do we know _____?
- E.g. How do we know change has happened?

Phenomenological questions

- How do we experience _____ in our lives?
- E.g. How do we experience change in our lives?

This account of the directions philosophical questions might take is not meant to be perfectly precise or to cover every possible philosophical question that might be asked.

First, there may be other philosophical questions that are not picked out by these categories. For example, I have organised the questions as approaches to different concepts. We take an epistemological approach to stealing or an evaluative approach to love. While these questions are about our knowledge or about our values, organising the questions in this way may not allow us to ask philosophical questions about issues that are best thought of as non-conceptual, such as our pre-conceptual experiences, beliefs and theories. However, it may be that we can still inquire into non-conceptual issues by asking philosophical questions about concepts such as experience, belief and theory.

Second, there is a certain degree of ambiguity involved in the categories. Although each question presents

a different approach to a topic, these are not mutually exclusive. For example:

- ‘Are some things wrong to think?’ could be both phenomenological and evaluative.
- ‘How do we reason?’ might be taken to be an epistemological, phenomenological, metaphysical or even a non-philosophical question asking for some empirical data.
- ‘What is the mind?’ could be taken as a conceptual question (What does the concept ‘mind’ mean?) or metaphysical (What is the nature of the thing called ‘mind?’) or even neuropsychological (What part of the brain is the mind?).

This ambiguity cannot be removed. We cannot precisely delineate different types of philosophical questions by analysing their different forms, because the same form of question can be used for multiple different purposes. This is why questions such as ‘What is the mind?’ are ambiguous. It is the intended function of the question, not the form, that makes this question metaphysical or conceptual or neuropsychological (Golding, 2006).

In particular, it is important to note that getting the form of the question right will not ensure productive philosophical dialogue:

It makes no difference whether the question is higher or lower cognitive, whether it is simple or complex, whether it is fact or interpretation. What makes the difference is whether it is predetermined to be right, whether it is to be discussed or recited. (Dillon, 1994, p. 22)

None of the examples of questions above will lead to philosophical dialogue if they are asked with the intention of leading others to the ‘right’ answer rather than with the intention of inviting further exploration. For example, a teacher might ask the evaluative question ‘Is it bad to have no friends?’ intending students to come to what the teacher thinks is the best answer to this question – ‘Yes, because we need friends to be healthy’. In this case, even if the question has the form of a philosophical question, it is only being used to lead students to the ‘right’ answer (as decided by the

teacher) and will be unlikely to lead to any philosophical exploration.

Despite this caveat, questions with the forms I have described will serve the function of generating philosophical exploration better than other forms of questions. This is because even though they can be used for other purposes, the types of questions I describe are sharp tools for directing philosophical exploration and inquiry. Other types of questions could be introduced with the intention of leading to philosophical inquiry, however they will be blunt instruments for this purpose.

The intent of my organisation of these categories of philosophical questions is both heuristic and pedagogical. It is intended as a tool to help students and teachers deepen and broaden their philosophical dialogues by asking a wider range of philosophical questions, and should be judged by how well it fulfils these objectives. In this case, a more accurate and precise approach would not be useful for philosophical inquiry in the classroom. I take what Brandom describes as a 'bricolage' approach to philosophy (Brandom, 2004). My account is useful in the same way that Newtonian physics is still useful for engineers constructing bridges, even though it cannot be defended as the most accurate scientific theory.

These categories are introduced to help students and teachers to understand different types of philosophical questions, to recognise them when they see them and to help them formulate their own sophisticated philosophical questions. I have found these categories to be very useful for this purpose. Introducing these categories to teachers has them asking quality philosophical questions within the space of an hour, and helps them to introduce philosophical dialogue into other subject areas. This way of approaching philosophical questions allows teachers and students an easy 'entrance' into the process of asking sophisticated philosophical questions. They can start by identifying concepts and then pick a direction or an approach they can take to this concept. By using this process, they can formulate excellent philosophical questions.

Examples of philosophical questions about Culture

Thinking about values: 'go evaluative'

- If something is part of our culture, does this mean it is valuable? Does it mean it is right?
- Are some cultures, or cultural practices or customs, better than others?
- Is our culture better or worse (or both) than it was in the past?

Thinking about the meaning of concepts: 'go conceptual'

- What does culture mean?
- What is the difference between culture and tradition?
- If something is part of our culture, does this also mean it is important to us?

Thinking about essence and reality: 'go metaphysical'

- Is culture what we think, what we do or just where we come from?
- Is culture something we value or just something we share?
- Do cultures progress to some ideal?

Thinking about our experience: 'go phenomenological'

- What is our experience of our own culture? Do we notice our own culture?
- Is this different from our experience of other cultures?
- What is the meaning of culture for how we live our lives?

Thinking about knowledge: 'go epistemological'

- How do we know which culture we come from?
- How do we tell the difference between one culture and another?
- Can we ever know what it is like to be from a different culture to our own?

Examples of philosophical questions about Beauty

Thinking about values: 'go evaluative'

- Is beauty valuable? Why or why not?
- Are beautiful things or people more valuable than ugly things or people?
- Is it wrong to destroy beauty?
- Is beauty more important than justice?

Thinking about the meaning of concepts: 'go conceptual'

- What is beauty?
- Can something be beautiful and worthless?
- If something is beautiful, does this imply anything else about it?
- What is the difference between beautiful and pretty?
- What is the difference between inner beauty and surface beauty?

Thinking about essence and reality: 'go metaphysical'

- Is beauty feminine?
- Is beauty more than just skin deep?
- Is beauty only in the eye of the beholder?
- Is beauty necessary to art?

Thinking about our experience: 'go phenomenological'

- What effect does an experience of beauty have on us?
- What is it like to see something as beautiful?

Thinking about knowledge: 'go epistemological'

- What evidence do we need to determine if something is beautiful or not?
- Who defines beauty?

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Teaching Philosophy and Philosophy Clubs

Nimet Kucuk

The teaching of philosophy contributes to the development of free citizens. It 'encourages one to judge for oneself, to confront all sorts of arguments, to respect what others have to say, and to submit only to the authority of reason.'

Philosophy and Democracy in the World: A UNESCO Survey, UNESCO Publishing, 1995, p. 8

An education in philosophy, which develops our intellectual capacity, has helped to foster our basic human rights. This education aims to develop in individuals a questioning attitude towards life. Philosophical education is a process, which begins during primary education and continues throughout life. To be successful, this process requires us to create the necessary conditions in which young people can examine the philosophical tradition. Philosophy clubs, founded to this end in Turkey in 1994, offer new and wide-ranging opportunities for philosophical education. The objective of this study is to present the role of the philosophy clubs in philosophy teaching. In this context, I want to describe the philosophy clubs that run in our high schools and explain how they conduct activities after having become united under the 'Istanbul High Schools Philosophy Clubs Platform'.

In Turkey, philosophy teaching was first included in high school syllabi in 1911. Philosophy lessons became more important after the foundation of the Republic, since the Republic, as founded by Atatürk with a modern and enlightened initiative, was aimed to realise the conception of a 'new person – new society'. Without a doubt, the social changes which flourished from this approach were reflected in philosophy education, too (Kucuk, 2004). It should be

noted that the demand for qualified instructors was critical for philosophy education, until translated texts and textbooks were also made available. In fact, important figures in philosophy had begun to lecture in philosophy in the high schools after 1924, sparking in students an interest in the field that led them to pursue their own studies and then become university staff themselves.

Since that time, considerable progress has been made in philosophy education (Kucuk, 2005). Today, in each and every high school and vocational school, two hours of philosophy classes per week are mandatory. The instructors of these courses hold philosophy degrees from universities and have the certificate of pedagogic formation. In high schools, elective courses of logic, sociology, psychology, democracy and human rights are available in addition to philosophy courses. Furthermore, this year a new course called 'Education of Thinking' has been introduced as an elective course for 6th degree students.

The philosophy clubs have provided a new dimension to mandatory philosophy given by means of the central system in high schools in Turkey. The clubs are organised in high schools to conduct extracurricular studies in the field of philosophy. The students have the chance to meet and conduct studies, in addition to their mandatory weekly philosophy lessons. Indeed, the philosophy clubs offer young people new opportunities in philosophy education in terms of both content and format, and invite them to be free citizens, who think in methodical ways and take responsibility for their ideas.

The first philosophy club was founded in 1994, in Saint Benoit French High School. It was designed as an instrument to prepare students for International Philosophy Olympiads. The club, however, transcended the limits of this function and became an integral part of the philosophy education in high schools. The students in the philosophy clubs, which were initially formed as student organisations, realised that there were very few students interested in these clubs. Due to the fact that they had a limited choice of activities because of an insufficient number of participants, the students decided to exchange students among various schools. The first joint study was conducted in 1995, with the participation of students from the German High School and the Austrian High School. These three schools formed the

core of the philosophy Platform. Later on, nearly 40 private and public schools joined this group. Consequently the 'Istanbul Liseleri Felsefe Kulupleri Platformu' (ILFKP) (i.e. 'Istanbul High Schools Philosophy Clubs Platform') was founded. ILFKP functions as an advisory and guiding organisation that enables philosophy clubs in the schools and performs joint activities. Both philosophy teachers of high schools and students interested in philosophy may participate in ILFKP activities. In early times, there were ideological shifts in the Platform; however, the conscious attitudes of the instructors and the students did not let this situation advance to a dangerous level. The Ministry of Education kept an eye on the philosophy clubs for a long time and the clubs finally secured legitimacy in 2005.

Originally, ILFKP consisted of volunteers who gathered around a 'Love for Philosophy' and formed a particularly flexible structure. As M. S. Sirin, one of the founders of the Platform, says:

The Platform was decided as a title under which every single member would have equal rights and reserve his/her right to withdraw, which would always be open to new participants, and refuse hierarchy, and that would not be perceived as a legal entity.

Students and teachers from various schools started to collaborate in philosophical activities and they took advantage of the store of knowledge of every teacher participating in the Platform. These activities were so intensive that the teachers realised their lack of knowledge and started to design in-service training programs. Thus, both teachers and students worked in co-operation with the instructors from universities, in a non-hierarchical way. Subsequent to the High School-University dialogue, several non-governmental organisations and persons who saw the value of philosophy were also involved in this process. Also, the Platform in Istanbul became a model and similar formations appeared in various cities of Turkey.

The Platform organised 'Philosophy Days' in Harran, an economically under-developed city in Turkey, with co-operation of students, teachers and academics on three different occasions (one of them being international), in addition to its own annual activities. Furthermore, it

organised the 'Philosophy Symposium for High School Students in Turkey' in Antalya, 2002, where high school students questioned the situation of the philosophy environment in Turkey. Every year the students from the Platform participated in seminars with the academics for three days a week or sometimes organised monthly thematic seminars throughout the year. High school students gathered with university degree philosophy students, who had attended philosophy clubs earlier, and for the first time they organised youth sessions in the '21st World Philosophy Congress' (Sirin, 2003). Upon completion of this process, a group of students, teachers, and academics published a magazine on philosophy. ILFKP teachers have now introduced an online communication group for exchange purposes among themselves at the address of ILFKPogretmenleri@yahoogroups.com. The Platform has established 'Istanbul Philosophy Days', and continues to organise seminars, with different themes each year. The Philosophical Society of Turkey, founded in 1974, supports the studies of the high school students through its 'Philosophical Society of Turkey, Philosophy for Children Unit'.

Innovation by ILFKP

- One of the new concepts in these activities is the concept of 'solidarity'. It is a major aim of ILFKP to develop a culture of solidarity, instead of a culture of competition. 'Every teacher can teach every student in the Platform' (Direk, 2002). The voluntary students and teachers (no matter from which school they come) gather around the same topic, work in solidarity, exchange information and make their presentations in various schools. The friendships that flourish among these groups are also a *corollary benefit* of the Platform.
- Secondly, there is no 'hierarchy' in this Platform, which can be described as a jointly led student and teacher initiative. Every student and teacher of this initiative has equal rights and the power to speak and make decisions. No hierarchical organisation can be claimed here. Philosophy clubs of different schools come together, exchange ideas, and then they

practise and follow up their joint decisions. The philosophical meetings organised on the presentation days can be moderated by either students or teachers. The students from different schools, in collaboration with the teachers in charge and academics, conduct studies in the reading groups on the topics determined by the Platform, and present their work.

Functions of ILFKP

- ILFKP plays an effective role in developing 'love for philosophy' amongst young people. Many qualified students, who once attended the Platform, prefer to continue their education in philosophy either in Turkey or abroad. Thus, it is an honour for the Platform that some of the future academics have been trained via this initiative.
- The Platform has helped to diminish the artificial boundaries between the high schools and universities, as well as developing communication and providing feedback. In addition, the in-service training sessions, which had been left aside for years, are now organised in co-operation with universities. Thus, high school teachers have been helped and encouraged to improve themselves and create new course aids.
- The Platform aids the teaching of philosophy in schools through its method of using theme-oriented literature scans and paper preparation.
- Teachers develop closer relationships with their students, feel the further need to improve their knowledge in their increased responsibilities toward students, and they explore the requirements of being 'better qualified teachers'.
- Students show individual improvements in their reading, writing, presenting and discussion skills.

Working method of ILFKP

Collective reading activities

- Choosing the theme: The co-ordinator teacher chooses a philosophic theme, considering the

students' interests and requests. This theme may occasionally be a concept, a work of a philosopher, a field of philosophy, or an interdisciplinary theme.

- Compiling the literature: Students and teachers conduct a literature search together. The texts (at least 4-5 texts) and the questions are important. The texts related to the theme are chosen and studied. It is ensured that the perspectives of the texts will be different from each other.
- Work group: At the beginning of each year, all the topics are presented to the member students and teachers. Every work group, consisting of students from philosophy clubs of different schools, reads and discusses the texts and makes conclusions together with the teacher or teachers in charge (in collaboration with academics). They decide the format they will use in the presentation of the topic. The paper may be supported with visual material and art work (i.e. plays, poems, music, drama, shows, etc). In general, each group works after school once a week, at school or a local cafe.
- Students present their studies at a school other than their own, or at a hall. The presentation is conducted by the students (teachers or academics may accompany them). Other school students, who have been informed about the topic previously, attend the presentation and a discussion is held based on the participants' questions.
- Presentations are organised monthly. The ILFKP programme continues throughout the academic year.

Academic sessions

- Conferences by the academics, thinkers and writers are provided in the reference frame of the prepared programme. Students are prepared for the sessions and address their questions during that time. This activity is beneficial not only for the students, who are interested in philosophy, but also for the teachers.

Philosophy days

- All the theoretical and practical work by each school is shared on two consecutive days. To enrich the

discussion, clubs from other cities are invited to participate in this activity as well. The papers are presented, artistic performances are held, and new friendships are established.

Conclusion

Philosophy clubs and the Platform play an important role in philosophy teaching in Turkey. We are aware of the fact that we have deficiencies and problems. However, despite these difficulties, the interest in philosophy among young people is increasing with the help of the activities conducted. These experiences have taught us that philosophy teaching is possible outside the schools, and that it is a type of education which develops young people's analytic and creative capacity. Indeed, thanks to this experiment, we have realised that all of us are still students, and we are determined to go forward with our learning in the future.

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The 'Philosophy 4 Children *With* Children Conference' Wales, March 2007

Junnine Thomas-Williams

Over the past two years, Dr Sue Lyle, Head of Continuing Professional Development at Swansea School of Education, has been responsible for recruiting and training teachers, head teachers, learning support assistants and Local Authority Advisors in Philosophy for Children (P4C). Dr Karin Murriss (Dialogue Works) has worked jointly with Dr Lyle as a trainer for P4C through the SAPERE organisation (the charity that manages P4C training).

The success of P4C in Swansea schools highlighted opportunities for two local teachers to take up posts as Teacher Fellows in the School of Education during the summer term of 2006. During the sabbatical, Phil Jenkins worked in classrooms supporting staff and leading training sessions in the Institute and in schools. Junnine Thomas-Williams was engaged in research with head teachers (principals), teachers and the Local Education Authority (LEA) to investigate how heads and teachers intend to develop P4C in their schools and classrooms. Following these sabbaticals it was suggested that a conference to highlight P4C might be worth considering.

It was decided that we would host a conference in March 2007. However, we felt that we wanted to make it a conference with a difference! The biggest 'difference' was that we decided to have a forum designed for both adults and children. The children were to be involved from the very beginning in designing and running the conference. P4C develops the ability to ask questions, listen carefully and empathetically to others and to solve problems, so we felt that there would be no better way of doing this than by having the children there on the day 'selling' their ideas.

Initially we formed a working party, which involved pupils from five Swansea schools, their teachers, a head

teacher, an LEA advisor, Dr Karin Murriss, Dr Sue Lyle and Junnine Thomas-Williams, who organised and managed the conference. The children made decisions at every stage of planning, including designing and making posters to advertise the conference and even the detail of times of breaks, catering and car parking arrangements.

The 'Philosophy 4 Children *With* Children Conference' was led by pupils from five Swansea primary schools. The children invited pupils and staff from Manorbier School in Pembrokeshire to present. They had recently set up their own website to celebrate fourteen years of practising P4C in their school.

The pupils and their teachers wore traditional Greek costume for the conference, welcomed the visitors and presented the programme for the day. The audience was asked to think about the importance of P4C, and had a chance to participate in various activities organised by the children and in so doing, experience first hand the many benefits. On arrival, each participant was asked to take a question from the 'philosopher's bran tub'. These questions were originally devised by the children through their P4C sessions. As participants were queuing for their morning tea coffee the school bell rang, signalling that it was time to find someone they did not know and share their questions and thoughts. Each time the bell rang, the process was repeated. This exercise took place again at lunchtime.

As Socrates was famous for visiting the market place in Athens where he engaged people in inquiry, the children wanted to recreate a similar effect. The visitors were therefore welcomed to the 'Market Place' where the children were sharing their practice. Stalls were set up for the pupils to 'sell' their ideas and ask philosophical questions of the audience. The stalls were designed as spaces for thinking, for asking questions and for exploring ideas. In the afternoon the children also led groups with adults in Communities of Inquiry.

In reflecting on the conference and P4C more generally, Jane Cross from Glyncollen Primary School commented that:

There is definitely a change in the pupils since we have introduced philosophy into the school. They are listening a lot more and are thinking more

broadly as they work. It has definitely had a big impact.

Sue Lyle, Head of Continuing Professional Development at Swansea Institute went on to add that:

P4C is now becoming very popular across Wales. Over 300 teachers and head teachers have attended the Continuing Professional Development course at the Institute. We have also expanded the programme to Secondary schools and the success of today's conference proves how important P4C has been and is becoming.

Paul Cleghorn, Chair of SAPERE, travelled down from Scotland to be part of the unique conference and summed up the experience by noting that:

Today's P4C conference is certainly different from anything I have seen across Wales, England and Scotland. I will definitely be taking some of the children's ideas for presenting and sharing best practice in P4C back to SAPERE with me.

All in all, the conference proved to be a huge success with nearly one hundred participants, an audience of local teachers, parents and other public service workers who all came to 'buy in' on the idea of P4C in schools. It allowed the children to share their experiences of Philosophy, outlining the enjoyment and importance that P4C now has for children both in and beyond the classroom.

Mythbusting with Skepticism: Innovations in Year 10 English (The 2006 'Western Australian Skeptics Awards')

Kylie Sturgess (Methodist Ladies' College, Western Australia)

In 2006, the 'Western Australian Skeptics Awards' were launched by the WA Skeptics society. This project is designed to address the rise of pseudoscientific and paranormal practices in popular culture, contributing to the education of secondary-school students by encouraging a skeptical approach to everything from odd beliefs to dangerous frauds. Skeptical societies like the Australian Skeptics are usually made up of concerned scientists, teachers, journalists, magicians and even ordinary community members. Much of their work involves addressing and questioning claims of the paranormal and the pseudoscientific in the media and society at large.

During Terms 2 and 3 of 2006, over fifty students from Methodist Ladies' College entered thirteen team reports for the 2006/2007 awards. The College is a Uniting Church school, situated in central Perth, Western Australia, with around 1100 students in total. The school boasts a tradition of integrating learning across subject areas, and these Science-based awards were comfortably incorporated into an English class assessment framework. Entrants were invited to write critically on any curious belief, alongside designing a related test or survey instrument. They had sixteen weeks to submit their entries, which ranged in subject matter from *horoscopes* to *zener cards* to *Ouija boards*, *i-ching*, *feng shui* and *the afterlife*. To help students learn how to use the scientific method, how to survey people, create a double-blind test, find a reasonable sample size and organise independent and dependent variables, the classes used a range of materials in the classroom (including the TV

show *Mythbusters* and non-fiction books such as Lynne Kelly's *The Skeptic's Guide to the Paranormal*). The task was managed by utilising set English curriculum class times and by calling upon specialised help when required from the Science department.

The practice of integrating Science outcomes in the English classroom made a great difference to the learning outcomes of the students in terms of researching and writing expository investigations, and also created a community spirit amongst the classes. Working together in teams and discussing the projects with other class members created both a sense of ownership of their topic and a great deal of innovation. In total, it took approximately six to seven weeks to complete both the research and the surveys, while at the same time, students studied either the novel *The Chrysalids* by John Wyndham, Shakespeare's *Macbeth* or the picture book *The Viewer* by Gary Crew and Shaun Tan. This enabled philosophical discussion of the role of science and the supernatural in fictional texts.

By the end of 2006, two classes were busy completing research and surveying and testing. The findings of the Term 2 class were presented both to the class as an oral presentation and as an entry for the competition. The WA Skeptics judged the 2006 joint entries from Methodist Ladies' College, recognising the following groups for their efforts:

Awards

- 'Accuracy of the I Ching' – Sonya Chu, Sarah Ng and Sumay Chan
- 'Belief in Tarot Cards' – Adeline Loh, Tam Nateethong, Nicole Teow and Caitlyn Jones

Honourable Mention

- 'Do Feng Shui Images Work?' – Stephanie Van Lohuizen, Amelia Meares, Kate Scheer and Brittany Whitehead

In Term 3, the second class completed their reports ready for the 2007 awards, this time with an even broader range of topics including, *horocopes*, *urban legends in popular circulation*, and *moon landing hoax theories*.

Importantly, the WA Skeptics judges provided feedback on *all* of the submissions, in relation to *clarity and organisation, critical thinking* and *testing/survey*, which was forwarded to the students after the competition closed; this feedback did not influence the grading of the students' assignments, but was highly valued as acknowledgement of the work students had put in to the task.

The culmination of this work was eventually displayed and celebrated nationally at the 'Australian Skeptics Conference' held in Melbourne, and internationally during the James Randi Educational Foundation's annual 'Amazing Meeting' in Las Vegas, Nevada. This conference boasts an array of scientists, media mavens and popular celebrities. The curriculum materials used in our classes were made freely available to conference participants to peruse, and it was gratifying to note that people from all over the world were able to see what teenagers could actually achieve in relation to thinking critically about pseudoscientific and paranormal practices. In particular, the audience seemed impressed with the questioning approach of our all-female cohort, even prompting one question from an audience member as to why more boys weren't showing the same skeptical attitude to the weird things we are told in popular culture!

On looking back, this attempt to teach young people to think critically has been rewarding on many fronts, yet it seems clear that there is much more to be done. Like the students in my class, I find myself questioning previous certainties about the world I live in – asking questions about how much we ought to contribute to the education of young people through the implementation of critical thinking programmes, and whether we know enough about the effectiveness of these to be able to select and implement programmes shown to be most effective, on the basis of empirical evidence. Let us question whether teaching children to be critical of credulous claims really can work, and how, in terms of cost effectiveness, wide application and sustainability, it could be done well. Here's to making a difference – effectively.

The 'Western Australian Skeptics Awards' are running again in 2007. Details are available on the Australian Skeptics site: <http://www.skeptics.com.au>.

Book Review

The Well of Being: Childhood, Subjectivity and Education,
by David Kennedy (State University
of New York Press, 2006)

Reviewed by Emmanuel Skoutas

Do you ever wonder if children are growing up faster than when we were their age? Or have you wondered if advertising that targets and depicts children reflects a cultural change in our understanding of childhood? And do the answers to these questions affect our teaching practice? For aren't we, as teachers, expected to be the ones to prepare students for society?

David Kennedy, Associate Professor at Montclair State University and a former chair of ICPIIC, has written a book, *The Well of Being*, which represents a philosophical meditation on childhood in the phenomenological tradition. It provides the ground upon which the reader can reflect on these and other fundamental questions, from an understanding of the subjectivity of childhood.

This book represents an important culmination of Kennedy's long-time interest in the relationship between children and adults. This is discussed in the context of schooling and offers the intellectual stimulus for adults to reflect on their role as a teacher of children and the importance of that relationship. His careful analysis brings together a vast array of information that provides a historical understanding of childhood and its place in our society today. Rather than a laborious theoretical exercise toward some objective truth, which it could easily have become, it is an invitation to dialogue.

The voice of Kennedy's inquiry is reflective, inviting questioning and engagement in much the same way he

facilitates a community of inquiry. On one such occasion, which I witnessed, he facilitated a group of about 20 children, aged between 10-12 years, at the 2003 ICPIIC Conference in Varna, Bulgaria. This group included gypsy children who had delayed their itinerant summer to participate in the community of inquiry. His rigorous, gentle, caring and openly wondering demeanour inspired a fascinating and engaging dialogue where the children were equal participants in a concentrated and demanding inquiry, which was also full of enthusiasm and good humour. His role as a facilitator was a practical exemplar of the kind of consequences he argues the adult/child relationship can offer: egalitarian and democratic social interaction, non-instrumental approaches to teaching, care and respect of the other and an authentic and deep learning experience. And underlying everything was the openness he showed to be moved and transformed by what the children had to offer in their dialogue together.

As I was moved by the community of inquiry I witnessed, the way in which I regard children was also transformed after having read this book. How was this impact achieved from what is essentially a theoretical and, at times, complex philosophical text? It was accomplished through the presentation of well researched and substantiated ideas as dialectical moves in a discussion that fosters an attitude of democratic education in the Dewey tradition. Kennedy's book fosters the kind of attitude which he argues we can all bring to our relationships with children, not so that we can change them, but to see what they bring in equal partnership of inquiry.

The significance of his title, *The Well of Being*, gives us some clue as to his purpose and style. In the Preface, Kennedy tells us that his title is taken from a prose poem by Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Reverie*, where childhood is, in part, seen as the wellspring of an attitude of infinite possibilities of what we as adults might become from what they as children already are.¹

His thesis in *The Well of Being* is broad in scope; he sees the adult/child relationship as a fundamental portal into nothing less than an understanding of how we see ourselves and who we are. In the first few chapters, Kennedy

¹ There are echoes of T. S. Eliot here, but he is not referenced at all by Kennedy. Part 1 of *Burnt Norton* could easily have been cited.

draws from the current and historically diverse and wide ranging disciplines of art, philosophy, literature, psychology and politics to provide a rich background of various interpretations and theories of childhood. His references here are informative, though largely orthodox, interpretations of thinkers such as Aristotle, William Blake, Martin Buber, Dewey, Freud and Foucault. Kennedy's book represents his dialectical meditation on, and contribution to, the nature of being when we encounter and engage with a child and the transformative experience that this allows.

However, before any practical teachers are perturbed by the philosophical nature of this inquiry into subjectivity, he grounds his discussion firmly and specifically in defining how the adult/child relationship is fundamental to the way we understand and construct the learning environment in which we all participate. This widely accepted constructivist approach is one found in teacher training (in Australia at least). Kennedy provides examples of the potentialities the child/adult relationships can offer and the kind of school that can make the most of them. His reflection is ultimately an analysis of the philosophical foundations of how we as teachers understand childhood and the corollary effect this has on our educational practice. I found the excursions into the various cultural mythologies of childhood particularly fascinating in their broad all-encompassing commentary on how childhood has been interpreted at different stages in our distant and recent history.

But what does Kennedy mean when he argues that understanding subjectivity can help transform education? Would a transformed school look, feel and sound very different from what we already have? The answers bring me to the second and related point I would like to make about this book and that is the place of theory for a teacher. The value here in what Kennedy has to offer in this discussion is how a teacher can overcome the actual and practical dichotomy between pedagogical theory and practice. Kennedy argues, along with Foucault, that the school is where a person's subjectivity is represented, given and reinforced. And his exposition of the traditional school encourages the reader to ask what would happen if the school followed a dialogical approach. The answer is ultimately the subject matter of the book we have been reading all along; the subjectivity of childhood would be

freed from the domineering 'adultist' attitude that constructs the world for the child. And in its place would be the ground upon which together they could construct an understanding of their own selves that would allow for fulfilling the possibilities of their character:

In this new formulation, school remains what it has always been – a place where the child is introduced to the discourses and the forms of knowledge of adult culture, and to the culture of childhood of her own time. But when the adult enters this experience as a subject-in-process, as a 'decentered' manipulation, the school is understood as the communicative space in which children *and* adults are in a process of mutual transformation.

We find the culmination of this discussion in Chapter 5 'Reimagining School'. Here Kennedy proposes that the principles of dialogue are the criteria that describe the ideal school that allows for the realisation of the potentialities in the adult/child relationship. His principles are roughly outlined as:

1. Hermeneutical approach to self and other;
2. Affirmation of the other as the decentered ego;
3. Non-instrumental relationship between children and teachers; and
4. Equitable power relations within the school.

But importantly, he stresses that his principles are not meant to be yet another 'one best system'. That would undermine his project to describe the transformative possibilities open to us when we are engaged with children in the learning environment, because we as a learning community are free and ultimately responsible to find our own journey in our learning experience appropriate for us, by us. This transformative project is depicted as the teacher's main consideration in their teaching practice and Kennedy is also interested in what motivates this consideration:

What motivates this consideration is the search for an understanding that can guide a normative inquiry into the *praxis* not just of child rearing

and education, but of the cultural and social and political transformation that optimal child rearing and education always promise.

Those of us familiar with the Lipman methodology of inquiry would find resonances here. The various mythological, philosophical, psychological, political and social theories analysed and offered in the early chapters of *The Well of Being* are used as voices in an inquiry into how to have a better relationship with our students. This underscores how we should understand theory and it was one of the issues developed in the book that I found most interesting and important. Kennedy wants us to approach theories of education and schooling in the etymological sense of the word as used by Aristotle when his '*theorein*' is translated as 'to behold' or 'to contemplate'. And this is the spirit in which we take his theoretical exercise in this book:

When theory becomes dialogical, prevailing ideology is challenged by new information, which leads to social and cultural transformation. When children are no longer reified, colonized subjects – when their voices are heard – the ideology of adulthood will change.

The implications for Kennedy are that this book, like teaching, becomes a phenomenological exercise where the teacher is the 'onlooker':

...interested in letting the object 'appear' as much as possible apart from her own projections and instrumental purposes. She understands the event of her own understanding of the object as the self-structuring of the object being understood.

Whether Kennedy is justified in making such a philosophical leap between Aristotle and a modern philosophical movement is questionable, but nevertheless his overall argument has merit and at least points to an authentic problem for a teacher. Can teaching become a philosophy and all that this implies? Kennedy has a way of describing such a teacher as an 'artist of soul-making'. And this book is an important contribution to achieving that ideal.

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