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Riku Välitalo

THE PHILOSOPHICAL CLASSROOM

BALANCING EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES

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RIKU VÄLITALO

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Balancing educational purposes

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Abstract

The practice of teaching links long-standing philosophical questions about the building blocks of a good life to daily judgments in the classroom; in the journey to becoming a person who teaches, we must seek different ways of understanding what “good” means in the context of different social practices and communities. This doctoral thesis examines the educational innovation known as Philosophy for Children (PFC) as a platform for teachers and students to address such questions within a community of philosophical inquiry (CPI).

Advocates of PFC seek to promote radical change in our understanding of growth, teaching and the relationships formed in educational contexts. In addressing these issues, this thesis contributes to the ongoing conversation about the teacher’s role within the PFC movement. The thesis comprises four interrelated studies that examine the possibilities and limits of PFC ideas by considering them in the light of general educational theorising about pedagogical action. In addition to the PFC literature, the study’s main sources are 1) the Continental tradition of European educational discourse, especially in German-speaking regions, and 2) the writings of the contemporary educational thinker Gert Biesta. The former offers an opposing view to the idea of a symmetrical, communal emergent system that seems to inform second-generation understandings of philosophical dialogue in an educational context. Gert Biesta’s ideas, especially in relation to the purpose and aims of education, help in envisioning CPI as a structuring element in teaching as a whole and all aspects of classroom life.

The four studies focus on pedagogical action, the nature and role of authority in CPI and teacher agency. The thesis contends that teaching and, in particular, building a community of classroom inquiry, requires a vision of teaching as a reflective practice, informed by subject-specific and educational judgments as key dimensions of teacher reflection and wisdom.

Keywords: community of inquiry, educational philosophy, Philosophy for Children, philosophy of teaching, Philosophy with Children

Välitalo, Riku, Filosofinen luokkahuone. Tasapainoilua kasvatuspäämäärien välillä

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Tiivistelmä

Opettajan ammatissa filosofiset kysymykset hyvästä elämästä ja sen etsimisestä yhdistyvät opettajan päivittäisiin ratkaisuihin luokkahuoneessa. Tämä väitöskirja käsittelee kasvatuksellisia edellytyksiä ja mahdollisuuksia Filosofiaa lapsille -ohjelmassa, joka on pyrkinyt luomaan alustaa kysymyksille hyvästä elämästä osana lasten kasvua ja kasvatusta. Väitöskirja keskittyy tarkastelemaan tämän ohjelman piirissä käytyä keskustelua kasvusta, opetuksesta ja kouluopetuksessa muodostuvista kasvatussuhteista. Erityisesti väitöskirja tarkastelee edellä mainittuja käsitteitä hahmotellakseen filosofisen pedagogiikan erityispiirteitä kasvatuksellisenä käytäntönä. Samalla väitöskirja kiinnittyy myös yleisemmin kasvatukseen ja opetuksen luonnetta ja tavoitteita koskevaan keskusteluun.

Väitöskirja sisältää neljä toisiinsa liittyvää tutkimusta, jotka tarkastelevat pedagogisen filosofian mahdollisuuksia ja ongelmakohtia yleisen kasvatustieteen piirissä tehtyjen teoreettisten hahmottelujen valossa. Filosofiaa lapsille -liikkeen edustajien lisäksi päälähteinä toimivat 1) mannermainen pedagogisen toiminnan teorian traditio (erityisesti saksan kielialueella käyty keskustelu) ja 2) Gert Biestan viimeaikaiset kirjoitukset. Ensimmäinen tarjoaa vastakkaisen näkemyksen symmetriselle, itseään luovalle systeemille, joka vaikuttaa olevan varsinkin liikkeen toisen sukupolven edustajien filosofisen pedagogiikan kehittelyiden ytimessä. Gert Biestan ajatukset, erityisesti hänen ideansa kasvatuksen päämääristä ja tavoitteista, antavat eväitä muodostaa filosofisesta pedagogiikasta opetusta strukturoiva kokonaisuus, joka toimii oppiainerajat ylittävänä, luokan elämää ohjaavana periaatteena.

Väitöskirja keskittyy erityisesti pedagogisen toiminnan, auktoriteetin luonteen ja roolin sekä opettajan toimijuuden käsitteisiin. Väitöstutkimuksen keskeinen tulos on, että filosofisesti orientoituneen kasvatuksellisen käytännön muodostuminen luokkaan vaatii opettajalta moniulotteista omien pedagogisten ratkaisujen reflektointia, ja suuntaa häntä kohti kasvatuksellista viisautta.

Asiasanat: Filosofiaa lapsille, kasvatusfilosofia, opetuksen filosofia, tutkiva yhteisö

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1.8.2018

Riku Vålitalo

List of original publications

This thesis is based on the following publications, which are referred throughout by their Roman numerals.

- I Välitalo, R., Juuso, H., & Sutinen, A. (2016). Philosophy for children as an educational practice. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 35(1), 79–92.
- II Michaud, O., & Välitalo, R. (2017). Authority, democracy and philosophy: The nature and role of authority in a community of philosophical inquiry. In M. Gregory, J. Haynes & K. Murris (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of philosophy for children* (pp. 27–35). New York, NY: Routledge.
- III Välitalo, R. (2017). Internal goods of teaching in philosophy for children: The role of the teacher and the nature of teaching in pfc. *Childhood & Philosophy*, 13(27), 271–290.
- IV Välitalo, R. (2017). Considering subject positions with Biesta. *Childhood & Philosophy*, 13(28), 557–566.

Contents

Abstract	
Tiivistelmä	
Acknowledgements	7
List of original publications	9
Contents	11
1 Introduction	13
1.1 Motivation and background	13
1.2 Research objectives and questions	15
1.3 Research method	17
2 Philosophy for Children: Theoretical underpinnings and historical development	21
2.1 The community of philosophical inquiry	22
2.2 Two generations	24
2.3 Critics	26
3 The pedagogical relationship in transition	31
3.1 Arguments for symmetry	31
3.2 Arguments for asymmetry	34
4 The nature and role of authority	37
4.1 Authority in education	37
4.2 The nature of authority in Philosophy for Children	40
5 Being and becoming a philosophical teacher	45
5.1 The nature of teaching: Literal and actual telos	46
5.2 The role of the teacher	48
6 Challenges and possibilities in Philosophy for Children	59
6.1 Subjectification in the event	60
6.2 Teaching as an expression of the person who teaches	63
6.3 Evaluation of the study process	66
References	69
Original publications	77

1 Introduction

This chapter presents the aim of the research, the research questions and methodical choices. It also clarifies the motivational background that enabled my continuing interest in the questions addressed here.

1.1 Motivation and background

The teacher's job is a peculiar one because, in pursuing the practice, arrogance may appear alongside humility. That arrogance emerges in presenting oneself as a master with something valuable to impart to future generations. At the same time, there is humility in teachers' selflessness in helping others to flourish. Today, the prevailing outlook envisions teachers as altruistic and caring helpers, committed to the noble task of education.

However, this intriguing outlook omits the *me* element of teaching, without which there is little to work with when addressing teaching as the expression of the person who teaches (see Higgins, 2010b). How might we create an account of teaching that does not diminish the teacher as person? As a person, what qualifies the teacher to teach and to contribute to her students' character formation? These are important questions for anyone who undertakes this fundamental role in someone else's growth. In the business of being an educator, the immanent existential burden can sometimes be overwhelming, and it is tempting to present this as a story of self-sacrifice. Certainly, one must address a number of key questions, including *What kind of teacher do I want to be?* and *What kind of social, political, moral and aesthetic environment am I creating in my classroom?* These are essential questions for teachers because as well as affecting ourselves and our work, they have consequences for the growth of the students who work with us (see Gregory, 2012).

In searching for a reasoned and grounded justification for contributing to another person's growth, I am not seeking to restore the view of the teacher as a figure of authority or control. Instead, I hope to frame an alternative to that perception and to the commonly held proposition that the teacher's main function is to provide a safe and fruitful environment for learning. This latter view perpetuates the hollow constructivist notion of teacher as servant, which operates not only as an epistemology or learning theory but as a pedagogy that requires students to construct their own insights and knowledge (Biesta, 2012; see also Fordham, 2016).

The thesis focuses primarily on the complexities of this view of teacher as servant because today's educational climate seems to favour the idea of the teacher as a facilitator of the student's learning process. In this regard, my own teaching has been informed by the pedagogical vision of Philosophy for Children (PFC), which can be characterised as a progressive student-centred pedagogy. During my ten years working in a primary school classroom, I have struggled with the above questions about teaching as an expression of the person who teaches. The questions addressed in this thesis emerged on several occasions during coffee breaks and sometimes during the classroom action itself. Throughout my doctoral training and during the writing process, that fundamental existential question has come to me in different shapes and forms. This thesis attempts to build on those subjective experiences and thoughts by considering the experiences of other educators and the historical tradition and broad conversation of Western educational thinking. More specifically, it engages with the ongoing conversation within the PFC movement concerning the role of the teacher.

These questions were foregrounded when I started my PhD under the supervision of Pauli Siljander, Ari Sutinen and Hannu Juuso (see Juuso, 2007; Siljander, 1987; Sutinen, 2003), whose research group was attempting to develop a theory of pedagogical action based on certain constitutive elements. In contrast to the views of some contemporary PFC scholars, this theory is grounded in certain principles of pedagogical action that include the principle of asymmetry. Although it does not explicitly address the existential question, this principle contribute to my research direction. A more fundamental motivation was that I found myself searching continuously for the *me* element of myself as a teacher.

As a starting point, I tried to find arguments for this particular principle in the pedagogy of PFC. It soon became clear that this was a difficult task because the principles of pedagogical action were founded on subject-based philosophical assumptions while most leading representatives of the second-generation figures, such as David Kennedy, Walter Kohan and Karin Murris, based their views on post-modern assumptions about truth and subject/intersubject.¹ I therefore needed to find the common ground between these approaches, and I believed I had found it

¹ Roughly put, the subject-based philosophical tradition proceeds from the idea that consciousness is a relation to oneself, and that only after a person becomes conscious about him- or herself can he or she become conscious of others. This basic assumption is questioned after the linguistic turn. For example, Jurgen Habermas developed his theory of communicative action on the assumption that consciousness is a social and linguistic phenomenon that is initially experienced in social interaction. It is worth mentioning that this debate is long and deep, entailing various arguments (see Kivelä 2004).

in the writings of Gert Biesta. While appearing to address at least some of the issues raised in modern theorisations of pedagogical action (as in my research group), Biesta remained a post-modern thinker. Referring to Biesta's formulation of multilayered educational purpose, I argue that, there is an inherent tension in pedagogical action, as it must accommodate both uniqueness and plurality of voices while also taking account of other educational ends (see Biesta 2006, 2010, 2013a).

In pursuing a deeper understanding of the issue of symmetry versus asymmetry, I found that many of the arguments against asymmetry sought to deconstruct the traditional model of teaching as transmission. Biesta also argues against that model but has a different take on teaching and learning (see for example Biesta, 2013b, 2016, 2017a).

Many of the arguments for a symmetrical relationship involve a critique of authoritative teaching or teaching as control. My next step, then, was to explore what *authority* might mean in the context of PFC pedagogy. On concluding my first study, I participated in a conference in Quebec where I met Olivier Michaud, who had investigated this issue. Michaud proposed a joint article, in which we would attempt to unpack the nature and role of authority in a community of philosophical inquiry (CPI). In that article, we argued for a shared model, in which authority is not something possessed by a specific person but is relational and fluid. Nevertheless, there seems to be a kind of moral order in CPI, informed by certain rules and guiding principles. A lack of time and space meant that this moral order was not fully explicated in our joint article. This prompted my further investigation of the origins, nature and grounds of that moral order as the main theme of the third study.

1.2 Research objectives and questions

This sub-chapter articulates the common aim of the three interrelated studies, including the specific research questions that each study addresses from its particular perspective. The fourth study investigated the links between Biesta and the PFC scholars in question. The overall aim of the present thesis was to examine the educational dimension of PFC in terms of the challenges and possibilities of PFC pedagogy as an educational framework for interested practitioners and teachers. To that end, I was interested first in analysing the pedagogical relationship

in PFC, and second in utilising complementary theories² to clarify both those challenges and the benefits of PFC pedagogy in light of the research questions.

The overarching objective entails the following more specific aims: 1) to analyse the historical and recent development of PFC, with particular reference to changes between first and second generations; 2) to analyse the nature and role of authority in CPI; and 3) to articulate a pedagogical framework for educators who wish to employ PFC to develop their professional practice.

These objectives centre on the problem of how to be a teacher in CPI as both a methodological and existential issue. In other words, the thesis seeks to clarify, problematise and deepen discussion within the PFC community about the role of facilitator (the commonly used term), based on the interrelationships between education, philosophy, authority and agency in the teacher's formative process.

The thesis addresses the following research questions:

- What makes PFC educational?
- What is the nature and role of authority in PFC pedagogy?
- What are the internal goods of PFC-based teaching?
- How does PFC manifest as the expression of the person who teaches?

In addressing these research questions from different perspectives, each of the studies referred to here also focuses on a particular question. Study I (*Philosophy for Children as an Educational Practice*) examines the new understanding of childhood proposed by second-generation authors, who suggest that PFC challenges the humanistic ideas of first-generation authors in order to adapt to a post-modern world. This new understanding of childhood is seen to allow the subject to emerge through truly philosophical encounters. These views are considered from the perspective of general educational theory as developed in Continental European educational discourse, especially in German-speaking regions.³ Study II (*The Nature and Role of Authority in a CPI*) deals with a problem

² I use the term "complementary theory" in the same sense as, for example, Mälkki (2011, p. 13) to refer to theories representing earlier developments (see Study I) and earlier phases of this research (see Studies II and III).

³ I refer to a tradition of educational thought that draws on epistemic ideas originated by Immanuel Kant. Educational thinkers such as Fichte, Herbart and Dilthey draw on Kant's thinking in their own endeavours (Kivelä 2012; Siljander 2012), and these authors have inspired scholars cited here in relation to the Continental tradition of educational thinking (for example, Siljander and Kivelä). It is worth mentioning that John Dewey (1910) developed pragmatism as a progressive response to the dualistic framework of Continental thought. Jan Masschelein and Norbert Ricken (2003) argued that this tradition informs how education has been structured and systemised: "Kant's practical conception of freedom as it is formulated in his 'Kritik der praktischen Vernunft'—the capacity to initiate something new by

arising from the new understanding of childhood: the nature and role of authority in PFC pedagogy. Study III (*Internal Goods of Teaching in Philosophy for Children*) traces a balanced educational framework in PFC pedagogy by focusing on the teacher's perspective, addressing the third research question. Study IV (*Considering Subject Positions with Biesta*) identifies the links among thinkers referred to in this thesis. Chapter 6 addresses the final research question and offers some concluding remarks.

1.3 Research method

The attributes of philosophical questions generally include being common, contestable, central and connected (Splitter, 2014). The present research questions exhibit these qualities in deploying philosophical method (referring broadly to different ways of reading, writing, discussing and thinking) to develop new insights into the phenomena investigated here. This extended process of reflection in different modes can be broken down into logically distinct steps; Dewey's (1910) analysis of a complete act of thought entails five such steps: 1) a felt difficulty; 2) its location and definition; 3) suggestion of a possible solution; 4) development by reasoning of the bearings of the suggestion; and 5) further observation and experiment leading to its acceptance or rejection: that is, the conclusion of belief or disbelief (pp. 72–78). This cycle of thinking describes the phases of my overall process. While the procedure adopted here does not follow these steps strictly or in an orderly manner, they are indicative of the thinking employed. The next section briefly clarifies how these phases informed the first three studies.

In Study I, I began from the problem of asymmetry in the pedagogical relationship. Contrary to my earlier belief, the PFC literature seemed to characterise the relationship between teacher and students as symmetrical. My supervisors had previously worked on this question, and I had immersed myself in their ideas and in the literature of the Continental tradition of educational thinking (Juuso, 2007; Kivelä, 2004; Siljander, 1987; Sutinen, 2003). I also commenced a thorough study of the nature and background of PFC, clarifying the problem and locating it within the broader framework of two differing but internally consistent explanations,

myself—implies this traditional opposition: not to be determined by the outside [...] Bildung has indeed been conceptualised as a specific practical programme of 'reflexive autonomy'. The 'Gebildete' as an 'educated man' is the prototype of the subject of rational and aesthetic-autonomy" (p. 143). However, in discussing the Continental tradition, we must also bear in mind the differing views within this tradition, in light of the questions addressed here.

respectively informed by modernist and post-modern thought. These two ways of thinking provided distinct answers and also raised some further questions. Incorporating Biesta's formulation of educational action based on multilayered educational purposes, I developed this by linking it to some key principles of the Continental tradition, and I was fortunate to receive comments from Biesta via email. I concluded that both symmetry and asymmetry are unsatisfactory terms for describing the pedagogical relationship.

These findings introduced a new problem in relation to the pedagogical relationship; if that relationship was to be conceived as something other than symmetrical or asymmetrical, how could the controlling factor of CPI be described? I addressed this question with a colleague I met at a conference in Quebec City. The essential problem was to understand the nature and role of authority in CPI. Our initial hypothesis was that PFC pedagogy could be articulated without falling into pure symmetry or asymmetry. We began by reading and discussing Dewey's take on the pedagogical relationship and then moved on to articles discussing power relations in CPI. We also studied Hannah Arendt's *The Crisis in Education* and Rousseau's *Emile* to learn more about different perspectives on authority in education. Based on our reading, we concluded that educational authority could be viewed in terms of two contrasting models: traditional and anarchist. As both models seemed to adequately describe the nature of authority in CPI, we named our proposed solution the *shared authority* model, which we considered appropriate for describing PFC pedagogy.

Having grasped the complexities of the pedagogical relationship in the context of PFC, there remained a need to identify a touchstone or root for finding oneself as a teacher. If we accept the shared model of authority and the collective nature of epistemic progress in CPI, both of which deconstruct the traditional figure of teacher, then what is it that makes me as a teacher *me*? In other words, how can I identify myself as a teacher? Although I had made efforts to turn my classroom into a community of inquiry, I still found myself questioning the educational purpose of PFC, which I take to be a necessary part of situating oneself as an educator.

I had already posed this question at the North American Association for the Community of Inquiry (NAACI) conference in Quebec in 2014. The answers I got included self-reflection, freedom, the power to construct meaning, thinking with others, plurality, social change, wellbeing and collaboration (my own notes, 2014). Favourable as they are, these suggestions seemed too abstract; to gain agency as a teacher, I sought a more meaningful articulation of pedagogical action. I began to explore Aristotelian teleology because it seemed to articulate purpose in terms of

action. I began by studying Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue* and the documentary related to both works. In particular, I engaged with Christopher Higgins's work *The Good Life of Teaching: An Ethics of Professional Practice*. Using the typology that Higgins extrapolated from MacIntyre's *After Virtue* as a lens to articulate the key goods internal to PFC yielded a positive account of the role and agency of the teacher in CPI.

Beyond these sources, my general approach can be described as dialectical. The dialectical method captures the movement of thought that arises from two contrasting ideas. The first philosopher to use this method was Plato, who presented arguments as a dialogue, in which the character Socrates debated with other citizens of Athens (Plato, 1998). Hegel also deployed the dialectical method, describing three general steps in the development of ideas (Hegel, 1977): an idea (thesis) leads to a contrasting idea (antithesis), and when these are combined, a new idea emerges (synthesis).

The dialectical approach is used throughout this research, though more explicitly in the first and second studies. In Study I, a dialectic unfolds between the concepts of influence and development, which are scrutinised through the lens of the Continental tradition of educational thinking and the ideas of second-generation PFC scholars. According to Jurgen Oelkers (1994), this tension is always visible in educational theory; the two paradigms of education as influence (traditional lecturing) or development (learning/thinking) differ in emphasis and entail certain critical problems in failing to capture the unique qualities of pedagogical action. Oelkers (1994, p. 92) distinguished two historical variants based on the philosophies of Locke and Rousseau.⁴ While education as influence (Locke) informs behavioural pedagogies, education as development (Rousseau) informs child-centred approaches.

Study I argues that second-generation scholars (Kennedy, Kohan and Murriss) seem opposed to the Lockean model of education as causal action, in which the learner is seen as a transparent and modifiable subject. This leads Kennedy, Kohan and Murriss to replace the Lockean causal model with a Rousseauian communicative model, which in turn fails to address questions about the educational purpose of PFC.

⁴ We are not arguing here about Rousseau's or Locke's philosophy; Oelkers' distinction is introduced only to characterise two paradigms in educational theorizing. Indeed, Oelkers' account, especially of Rousseau, can be seen as quite provocative.

In Study II, the dialectic involves two contrasting models of authority, looking specifically at authority in PFC while the questions addressed in Study I remain in the background. Here, the dialectic serves as a connector that allows more interplay or recognition of each in its other, if only as an absence. Study III examines the nature of teaching and the role of the teacher in PFC pedagogy. Although implicit, the dialectic is apparent in the differing epistemic aims within the movement (e.g., truth as objective versus truth as subjective) and another contrasting pair: student-centredness versus teacher-centredness. In all of the studies, complementary theories were used to create dialectical movement (see Study I), to indicate a possible solution (see Study II), or as a re-contextualising source of new insights and groundings (see Study III).

2 Philosophy for Children: Theoretical underpinnings and historical development

This chapter presents a brief history of the PFC movement and its links to other philosophy of education theorists, including 1) pedagogy; 2) associated theoretical developments; and 3) criticisms of the approach. PFC⁵ emerged in the 1970s as an educational programme promoting a radical change in our understanding of growth, teaching practices and relationships in educational contexts. As in other child-centred pedagogies, the primary mission was to emancipate the child by developing an educational practice that facilitates agentic action (Lipman, Oscanyan, & Sharp, 1980; Matthews, 1984). To actualize that mission, classrooms had to be transformed into reflective environments that offered young, inquiring minds a space for mutual exploration of ideas.

The introduction of PFC is attributable mainly to Matthew Lipman (1923–2010), who became aware of students' difficulties with reasoning while teaching at Columbia University. Believing that thinking skills should be reinforced earlier in the child's education, he developed a theory of communal philosophical dialogue, grounded in theoretical views deriving primarily from Dewey, Mead, Vygotsky and Buchler (Lipman, 2003, 2008). To varying degrees, many scholars and practitioners still employ the original philosophical, and pedagogical ideas, and over time, many books, articles and doctoral dissertations from different countries have been published on PFC (Gregory, 2011, p. 212). That increasing interest is also reflected in an increasing number of workshops and teacher training courses⁶ and in the UNESCO report *Philosophy – A School of Freedom*, which surveys the teaching of philosophy from primary school to university level across the world. Clearly, then,

⁵ Among the many acronyms for the Philosophy for Children movement, P4C is the most widely used. However, to the extent that it refers specifically to Lipman's programme, PFC is the preferred form when referring to the tradition as a whole.

⁶ Approaches and methods vary across languages and pedagogical traditions. Lipman's efforts to unite pedagogy and philosophy have been carried forward by a number of scholars at Montclair State University's Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC) (e.g., Ann Margaret Sharp, Maughn Gregory and David Kennedy). Representatives of philosophical pedagogy in other countries include Daniela Camhy (Austria); Oscar Brenifier, Jacques Lévine and Michel Tozzi (France); Hans-Ludwig Freese, Karlfriedrich Herb, Ekkehard Martens and Barbara Brüning (Germany); Laurence Splitter (IAPC, Australia, Hong Kong); Richard Morehouse, Gareth Matthews, Michael S. Pritchard and Thomas Wartenberg (USA); Robert Fisher, Catherine McCall, Karin Murriss and Roger Sutcliffe (Great Britain); Michel Sasseville and Marie-France Daniel (Canada); Beate Børresen, Øyvind Olsholt and Ariane Schjelderup (Norway); Philip Cam, Stephan Millet and Alan Tapper (Australia); Walter Kohan (Brasil); Félix García Moriyón (Spain); Karel van der Leeuw (Holland); Eugenio Echeverría (Mexico) and Bo Malmhøster (Sweden and Norway).

PFC has had a worldwide impact in the classroom, and in some places, entire schools are organised around the CPI ideal.

2.1 The community of philosophical inquiry

In PFC, the pedagogical approach is commonly known as the community of philosophical inquiry or CPI (see Gregory, 2008; Kennedy & Kennedy, 2011; Kennedy, 2004b; Lipman, 2003; Splitter & Sharp, 1995). Some scholars favour the term "community of inquiry" to emphasise the method's status as an overarching educational framework or to indicate links to other pedagogical programmes that fall outside the PFC context (see Morehouse, 2010). It should also be noted that PFC practitioners have developed different approaches and may not use the terms "CPI" or "community of inquiry".⁷ For present purposes, the terms are used interchangeably; in general, I use the term CPI to emphasise the philosophical nature of the inquiry, although I also see it as encompassing all aspects of classroom life.⁸

CPI can be characterised as an intentional speech community, in which a group of people engage in philosophical dialogue (Turgeon, 1998, p. 18). The question of what characterises philosophical dialogue invites different answers; Kennedy and Kennedy (2011) offer a minimum definition, describing it as an interlocutive space where "people have a shared intention of undergoing ongoing critical deliberation together about philosophical issues, with the expectation that new meaning or significance will arise from their interaction that will at least be partially shared by everyone; and challenging and testing of each other's assumptions in the common space of dialogue around which they are gathered" (p. 266).^{9,10} The term has its origins in Peirce, who introduced the concept to refer interactions among scientists—in other words, the method of science (see Peirce, 1877). After Peirce,

⁷ For example, Catherine McCall describes her method as CoPI (Community of philosophical inquiry); Peter Worley uses PhiE (Philosophical Enquiry), and Oscar Brenifier is among other practitioners who have developed differing ways of conducting philosophical inquiries with children while clearly distancing themselves from the theoretical background of CPI.

⁸ As I assume here that a philosophical dimension exists (but may remain hidden) in all inquiries, I refer only to the community of philosophical inquiry.

⁹ This definition implies that truth is a social construction, which is the general epistemological stance of pragmatism. However, the movement encompasses differing views of truth, ranging from relativism to absolutism (see for example Turgeon, 1998).

¹⁰ This can be linked to pedagogical applications of the Habermasian ideal speech situation, where educational activity is reduced to communicative action.

John Dewey developed the idea for pedagogical purposes, especially in *Democracy and Education* (1916), based on the idea of the school as an embryonic society.

According to Kennedy (2012), Dewey's notion of democracy is "not just a political but also a social, communicative ideal sets the stage for [...] any school community engaged in genuine democratic practice, and the only basis for a form of moral education worthy of its name" (p. 42). Dewey's insight rests on an understanding of growth as an ongoing expansion of shared experience, which also forms the basis for CPI (Dewey, 1910; Haynes, 2016; Lipman, 2003).

CPI inhabits the realm of concepts, usually proceeding from a puzzle or a problem to find the best argument or truth that settles the case, albeit only until a new problem is identified (see Splitter, 2014). This process can take many forms but generally entails at least three main characteristics. First, CPI participants are placed in a circle as a physical and symbolic representation of democracy, as each participant faces the others and none occupies a special position. Second, the teacher leaves the front of the classroom to join the students in the circle. Third, and perhaps most important, children are invited to engage in a philosophical inquiry—not to be taught philosophy by the teacher, but to advance arguments on a philosophical issue of their choosing and to listen to one another and discuss (Gregory, 2008; Lipman, Sharp, & Oscanyan, 1980). In other words, they engage in a certain form of democratic practice.

Kennedy (2004b) believes that the CPI is a recapitulation of Socratic practice, with one major and determinative difference; in CPI, the argument's direction and self-correcting movement is no longer controlled by a single dominant member of the group but by the systemic dialectical process of the group itself: "[...] the pedagogical locus of control of CPI is shifted from one individual to the group as a whole, which is now understood as potentially self-regulating through a process of ongoing dialectical transformation" (p. 746; see also Kennedy, 2014). Nevertheless, Kennedy sees that the teacher has a role to play in modelling conversational operations or "moves", such as asking a question, agreeing or disagreeing, giving a reason, offering a proposition, hypothesis or explanation, giving an example or counterexample, classifying/categorizing or making a comparison (Kennedy, 1994). This pedagogical emphasis on collective reasoning entails a radical theoretical change in relation to the teacher's role in the classroom,

from authority figure to co-inquirer (Gregory, 2008; Haynes & Murriss, 2011; Lipman, 2003).¹¹

2.2 Two generations

In recent decades, traditional Enlightenment epistemological notions of education have increasingly been challenged in terms of how we should understand growth, teaching and the relationships formed in educational contexts. The PFC movement can accordingly be divided into two generations (see for example Vansieleghem & Kennedy, 2011). The first generation, which included Leonard Nelson, Matthew Lipman, Ann Margaret Sharp, Ekkehard Martens and Gareth Matthews,¹² advocated PFC as a means of equipping students with the necessary skills to participate in social democracy (e.g., logical reasoning) (see Lipman, 2003, Ch. 8); as a critical practice with the potential to neutralise unequal power relations by emancipating those who are currently oppressed (Martens, 1999); or as a way of bridging the gap between adult and child, with a corresponding emphasis on the inherent value of philosophising with children (Matthews, 2003; see also Vansieleghem & Kennedy, 2011).¹³

When PFC was first established as an educational programme in the 1970s, there was growing interest in critical thinking, with intense scholarly discussion of the possibilities of teaching discipline-independent general thinking skills.¹⁴ Like Ann Sharp, Matthew Lipman (2003) saw the potential of philosophy and logic in this regard, as a discipline that focuses on standards of general thinking: "philosophy and logic do exist and they are normative disciplines concerned with specifying what excellence in thinking ought to be" (p. 44). Lipman made a strong case for the development of thinking skills, especially in teacher manuals, and while including the creative dimension in his theoretical writings, he focused in particular on what it takes to be a democratic citizen (Lipman, 2003).

In light of their theoretical background, Lipman and Sharp are often linked to the pragmatism of Peirce and Dewey, although neither Lipman nor Sharp saw their programme as purely pragmatist. Although sharing the ambition of promoting

¹¹ This idea of a shift in the teacher's role is not a new one; child-centred pedagogues from Rousseau to Freire have advanced similar agendas.

¹² For more about Leonard Nelson's views on the Socratic method, see for example Nelson (1993).

¹³ It is worth noting, however, that this oversimplifies the pioneering PFC perspective; for example, Lipman's work extended far beyond mere reinforcement of logical reasoning.

¹⁴ A group of scholars that included Siegel, Norris, Ennis, McPeck and Paul came to be known as the critical thinking movement, in which Lipman also participated.

philosophy in public schools, other pioneers of the movement exhibited different epistemological commitments in developing their methods. Nelson clearly subscribed to Kant's views on knowledge and developed his own principles for Socratic questioning (Nelson, 1993). Martens' method drew on different philosophical traditions at different steps of the inquiry, including phenomenology, hermeneutics, analytic/logic, dialectics, and speculation, in what came to be known as the five-finger model (Martens, 2009). However, all of these thinkers shared the vision of enhancing children's independent thinking capabilities as a means of enhancing democracy, underpinned by a humanistic ideal of personhood committed to truth seeking and to the use of particular methods in that process.

Among those who led the second generation of PFC, Vansieleghem and Kennedy (2011) mention David Kennedy, Karin Murriss, Walter Kohan, Michel Sasseville, Joanna Haynes, Jen Glaser, Oscar Brenifier, Michel Tozzi, Marina Santi, Barbara Weber and Philip Cam (p. 177).¹⁵ They also refer to Ann Margaret Sharp, which is surprising because she worked with Lipman from the very beginning. According to Vansieleghem and Kennedy (2011), one notable characteristic of this generation is that they do not present new ideas as attacks on what came before but as a form of self-correction in light of the "changing circumstances" of the global and educational environment—that is, the rise of postmodernity and new ways of thinking about topics such as truth, perspective and nature. Noting a lack of consistency and unity among this second generation, Vansieleghem and Kennedy (2011) contended that "[...] the only consensus that does exist is that PFC is about promoting the exchange of rational argument and thoughtful opinion" (p. 178). Characterising their philosophical pedagogy in terms of communal reflection, contemplation and communication, Vansieleghem and Kennedy went on to note that "[...] the second generation will no longer speak about philosophy for or with children in terms of a method, but rather as a movement encompassing a medley of approaches, each with its own methods, techniques and strategies" (pp. 178–179).

As Vansieleghem and Kennedy observed, the rise of postmodernity has influenced PFC theory and practice. In theory, postmodernists typically criticise power structures informed by the humanistic ideals of the first generation, such as reasonableness (Kohan, 2002; Vansieleghem, 2005). It is concerning that, in

¹⁵ A number of others might also be mentioned here; in particular, Maughn Gregory and Laurance Splitter should be included in any list of prominent figures in the field. In Finland, Hannu Juuso has developed this work for many years and can be regarded as Finland's most eminent scholar in this area (see for example Juuso, 2007). Tuukka Tomperi's recent doctoral thesis also addresses the possibilities of PFC in teaching philosophy at high school level (see Tomperi, 2017).

deconstructing such ideals, the alternative educational goals seem absent. Vansieleghem and Kennedy (2011) characterised the second-generation philosophy as follows:

Accordingly, philosophy is not perceived primarily as a provider either of skills or "answers"—whether in the realm of fact or value—but as a site in which students can determine what the important questions for our time are, and where they can seek their own answers through the practice of thinking for themselves and with others in communal deliberation. (p. 178)

2.3 Critics

Scholars have always debated the nature of philosophy and the place of philosophy in school curricula, and there have been some serious critiques of the instrumental nature of PFC's goals, the difficulty of doing "serious" philosophy with children, and PFC as a distraction from more important aspects of study (Biesta, 2011; Ecclestone & Hayes, 2009; Long, 2005; Vansieleghem, 2005). To assert that philosophy should have a place in schools, we must first show that children are capable of doing philosophy. The movement has acknowledged this, prompting significant debate about the possibility and benefits of PFC (Lipman, 1988, pp. 11–28; Matthews, 1984; Murriss, 2000).¹⁶ The main criticisms refer to 1) defining "real" philosophy as an academic discipline (e.g., White, 2012; Wilson, 1992); 2) the argument that children are incapable of "proper" philosophical reflection because of their insufficient cognitive development (Kitchener, 1990); and 3) philosophical assumptions that children have not yet experienced enough to reflect upon (White, 1992).

The first of these critiques commonly invokes the distinction between pure and applied philosophy, and this critique is relevant if philosophy is confined to the discourse and activities of professional philosophers and the level of abstraction such activity requires. However, as Gregory (2011) argued, the distinction between pure and applied philosophy has been challenged by pragmatism, feminism and Continental philosophy, among others: "They put the work of philosophy on par with the work of other disciplines, as caught up in all kinds of political, economic and cultural agendas" (p. 202). Murriss (2000) further noted that this definition does not necessarily say anything about what philosophy ought to be, as it is based on

¹⁶ On the benefits of teaching philosophy in schools, see also the special issue of the *Journal of Philosophy in Schools* (2018).

the naturalistic fallacy of deriving "ought" from "is". While professional philosophers think, talk and write in a particular way, this does not mean that philosophy ought to be just that. Even in academic circles, attempts to define philosophy range from positions that refer to some "essence" of philosophy to Rorty's view of philosophy as "a kind of writing" (Biesta, 2011). Nevertheless, White (2012) argued for a criterion that must be met if something is to be called "philosophy":

Essential to it, whether we are talking about Hume or Heidegger in general philosophy, or about some branch of applied philosophy, is second-order thinking, i.e., not simply using concepts like pleasure, knowledge and imagination, but reflecting on interrelations between them and allied ideas, against the background of larger frameworks of ideas. (p. 455)

The second critique—that children may be unable to engage in "proper" philosophical reflection—is often grounded in developmental theories such as the Piagetian claim that cognitive development proceeds through the invariant stages of preoperational, concrete operational and formal operational thought. On this view, education should be organised according to the child's capacities at a given age, following the structure of presumed cognitive development. This critique is psychological and is often rebutted on psychological grounds (see for example Gazzard, 1993). Pedagogical theorisation of CPI adapted the Vygotskian claim that cognitive development is inseparable from the context, and the parallels with pragmatist social psychology are apparent (Gregory, 2011, p. 203; Lipman, 1996). For example, a child can swim but needs water and training to do so; in the same way, we could say that a child is quite capable of entertaining a syllogism but needs proper training to do so (see Daniel & Auriac, 2011; McCall, 2009).¹⁷ Even if children are less capable of doing philosophy, it does not follow that philosophy should not be part of their education. The case can be made by comparing philosophy to mathematics; while accepting that children are less capable of doing "proper" mathematics than "real" mathematicians, we see no problem in including mathematics in the curriculum (see also Murriss, 2000). Similarly, by introducing philosophy at an early age, children can begin to grasp its general

¹⁷ In her book *Transforming Thinking*, McCall (2009) provides a detailed transcript to show how a six-year-old child can construct arguments from a philosophical topic (although she emphasises the role of a trained facilitator in enabling this). In another transcript, Daniel and Auriac (2011) showed how children aged 10 to 12 years can philosophise in a critical and reflective manner.

principles, such as impartiality and objectivity, defending one's beliefs and considering relevant criteria.

The third critique claims that children cannot do philosophy because they lack the experience necessary for philosophical reflection. The assumption is that the more experience (or knowledge) we have accumulated, the better we are able to reflect on that experience and construct meaning. Matthews (1994) argued that, as natural rather than cultivated philosophers, children should not be likened to adult philosophers. In the same context, Haynes and Murriss (2013) referred to professionals "that position children as uniquely insightful or wise, by virtue of their being newcomers and novices in the world: assigning children a kind of chronological advantage" (p. 217). That advantage comes from children's lesser engagement in common discourse; in that sense, they are more open and creative in their thinking (see also Matthews, 1978). One might also add that while we have a certain framework to justify philosophising with children, the necessary condition for doing philosophy is having experience of reality. As this is something everyone has from the moment we are born, children already have life experience to draw upon (if not as much as adults). Following Wittgenstein, Murriss (2000, pp. 266–267) argued that concentrating on how words are used in everyday circumstances and asking the meaning of concepts embedded in language games is precisely what children are doing in CPI. By doing so in a disciplined manner, following certain procedures and principles, they can expand their grasp of concepts and learn to use them in a sophisticated manner.

Philosophy with educational interest

While acknowledging reasonable arguments against the possibility of doing philosophy with children, this study takes a positive view. The critique grounded in the Piagetian model of cognitive development seems untenable because it claims that cognitive development depends simply on maturation and that the stages follow each other step by step. However, Lipman (2003) makes a compelling case for educational interest: "Piaget is so interested in showing what children cannot do unaided at a given stage that he is unable to focus on how they can be helped to do it" (p. 67). Analogously, it could be argued that one should not speak with children because they are not yet able to speak.

The critique regarding the definition of philosophy can be overcome by distinguishing between philosophy as questioning and philosophy as the practice of academic philosophers. By "questioning" I mean philosophy's potential to create

an attitude, disposition or relationship to oneself or others and the answers (or questions) that ensue. Tuukka Tomperi (2017, p. 238) seems to argue along similar lines by stating that the ultimate justification lies less in teaching ethics, supporting democracy or coaching thinking skills than in affording children opportunities for consummatory experiences of life and growth and enhancing critical-reflective attitudes in educational practices in the hope that these will be passed on to future generations. This was also Lipman's (2014) vision:

The conception of the educated child as a knowledgeable child will have to give way to one in which the educated child is conceived of as knowing, understanding, reasonable and judicious. Once these values are incorporated into the projected goal of the educational process, the appropriateness of mandating philosophy will be much more readily recognized. (p. 13)

White's argument concerning a criterion to be met if something is to be called "philosophy" can at least be problematized by applying this distinction. Indeed, both Lipman and White identify higher-order thinking as a criterion for philosophy; the difference is that while Lipman is willing to use the term "philosophy" in this context, White sees that this may stretch the term in to its breaking point (White, 2012, p. 456). Interestingly, White also agrees that philosophy can have educational significance if it finds "its place within a larger, aims-based, approach to schooling ... not ... confined to a separate slot on the timetable" (p. 457). This, I think, is the main contention of Matthew Lipman's (2003) book *Thinking and Education*, where he writes of "[...] the capacity of philosophy, when properly reconstructed and properly taught, to bring about significant improvement of thinking in education" (p. 3; emphasis in the original).¹⁸ The overall aim of the present thesis, then, is to examine Lipman's contention concerning the challenges and possibilities of properly reconstructing philosophy with educational interest.

A central issue in PFC pedagogy, as in any educational endeavour, is the nature of the relationships formed in the classroom. The next chapter addresses a tension arising between second-generation PFC accounts of the pedagogical relationship and the Continental tradition of educational discourse. This issue serves as a subtle criticism of the second-generation authors and guides the general direction of the thesis.

¹⁸ In the earlier 1991 edition, Lipman uses the term *higher-order thinking*.

3 The pedagogical relationship in transition

The overall aim of this thesis was to examine the educational assumptions behind the PFC movement's view of the pedagogical relationship. This chapter examines recent developments in the movement and especially the views of the second generation on the pedagogical relationship. Although this issue is dealt with to some extent in each of the articles, Study I adopts the most rigorous stance in relation to the assumption of asymmetry in the pedagogical relationship. The rest of the chapter explores the views of several PFC scholars who advocate a paradigm shift in education by arguing in favour of symmetrical encounters. After considering the general lines of argument, I introduce the principle of asymmetry as developed within the Continental tradition of European educational discourse, especially the strand that originates with Herbart.

3.1 Arguments for symmetry

From its very beginning, PFC has promoted the communicative and dialogical aspects of education. However, second-generation authors have placed even greater emphasis on the symmetrical relationship in CPI by explicitly refraining from the idea of modelling and coaching analytical reason, instead emphasising the role of CPI as a mutual exploration of meanings. Arguing for symmetry in the pedagogical relationship implies epistemological and ontological equality between adults and children or, more specifically, between teachers and students.¹⁹ This shift underlines the potential of children as active subjects of action, often contrasted with the view advocating rigid stage theories of child development and curricula. For example, Haynes and Murriss (2013) argued that the latter provides a rationale for viewing children as concrete thinkers preoccupied with fantasy, and that rational thinking comes only with age or physical maturity. A methodological and ontological paradigm shift is therefore required to see the child in his or her own terms, with much to offer the community, and even as an educator of the person designated as teacher (Haynes & Murriss, 2013, p. 246). This new image of the child and childhood is advocated by several second-generation authors; here, I concentrate mainly on the writings of Karin Murriss (2008, 2013, 2016), David

¹⁹ For example, Murriss (2013) asserts that symmetry is attainable in the ontological and epistemological sense but not in the political sense (p. 246).

Kennedy (1995, 2004a,b, 2006, 2010, 2012) and Walter Kohan (2002, 2011, 2014, 2015).²⁰

Kennedy (2006) contended that the subject-object relationship invoked by a standard theory of development privileges Western and adult-centred epistemic orientations. Children are one case of the "voices" silenced by the dominant epistemology of modern science, and overcoming this "childhood colonisation" demands an empathic and dialogic adult-child relationship of "real mutuality". For Kennedy, this would entail a number of changes, including a significant overhaul of hierarchical power structures and total reform of assessment procedures. Similar lines of argument can be found beyond the PFC movement; for example, Jan Masschelein (1991) also distinguished between "talk about" (sprechen über) and "talk with" (Mitsprechen), in which the latter is prior.²¹ The goal, then, is to capture childhood's unique way of being and knowing, and philosophy, by virtue of its dialogic nature, uncovers that uniqueness. As the practice of questioning one's own beliefs and those of others, philosophy serves as an epistemic and curricular wedge, opening the experience of childhood to reflection for both children and adults (Kennedy, 2006). Kohan (2014), another distinguished PFC scholar, wrote in similar vein:

...as the children develop their own philosophies of childhood, the adult hegemony of the field of philosophy is eroded. Children themselves will build their own philosophies, in their own manner. We will not correct the exclusion of children's philosophical voices by showing that they can think like adults; on the contrary, that would be yet another way of silencing them. (p. 51)

²⁰ My reading of Kohan suggests that his thoughts are drawn from Freire's theory of pedagogy, as well as from post-modern thinkers such as Lyotard, Deleuze and Foucault. To specify her position, Murriss draws on Biesta, Burbules and Kennedy. Kennedy in turn draws on Gadamer, Ricoeur and Dewey, as well as general field and systems theory. It also seems that the child-centred tradition of educational thinkers since Rousseau has influenced all of these authors, who can be located on that same continuum.

²¹ More recently, Masschelein (2012) has moved beyond even the Habermasian idea of communicative reason to argue that education may be more about inviting students to speak. Following Vansieleghem, he explains that "[s]peaking, then, is a means by which we explain, prove or pass judgement on something. Understood this way, it is easily associated with ideas of empowerment or of the mediation of information: one directs or commits oneself to a (shared) orientation—for example, to what Jürgen Habermas refers to as 'communicative reason'. It prescribes or presupposes a particular attitude and form of subjectivity; speaking that addresses the listener and the speaker herself in the name of an orientation or particular expertise to which access is claimed [...] by contrast, we would like to explore a different avenue of thought whereby speaking appears rather as an abandoning or exposing of oneself and speaking with, rather than speaking to" (p. 87).

Kohan proposes to think of CPI in the context of a non-formative educational logic. For Kohan (2014), teaching thinking means, first of all, providing an opportunity to experience thinking through encounters with otherness. Kohan (2014) stressed that the encounter requires us to think and creates doubt by forcing us out of our conformity:

Thinking is unpredictable; it is an event, it is the free operation of difference and complex repetition in the realm of the heterogeneous—an uncertain, accidental, unexpected encounter. This means that where there are predetermined forms, ideas or models, philosophical thought will not find its place. (p. 38)

Another line of argument follows the interactionist turn also witnessed in other areas of education (see Siljander 2002). Roughly put, this describes a larger shift in how we depict the "self" in a post-modern world. After the turn, the self is described as the "intersubject",

[an] emergent form of subjectivity in our time which reconstructs its borders to include the other, and which understands itself as always building and being built through a combination of internal and external dialogue. The shift from monological to dialogical discourse is both a product and a producer of the intersubject. (Kennedy, 2004a, p. 201)

Murriss (2013) argued that meaning is not simply transmitted by one subject (the adult) and received by the other (the child); rather, both subjects "constitute the meaning of what is learned". She notes that co-production can occur only when the relationship between subjects is symmetrical. Kennedy (2004b, p. 749) also emphasises meaning-making, arguing that the purpose (*telos*) of education can be described as an immanent drive towards greater meaning at multiple levels: psychological, theoretical, speculative and cognitive.

Clearly, then, second-generation scholars²² are arguing the need to transform the roles of educator and learner in the process of growth. The main target of their criticism is the traditional view of teaching, but they also point to some thinking within the movement that seems biased from their perspective (see Kohan, 2002).²³ The transformation they advocate is that the child should be seen as an active interlocutor whose voice is heard. Viewed as a communal dialogue, philosophy

²² Kennedy, Kohan and Murriss are the most recognised but not the only advocates of the shift within PFC.

²³ A critical take on Lipman's ideas is also advanced by Nancy Vansieleghem (2005).

affords an opportunity for the adult to acknowledge the child's epistemic position and even perhaps the privilege entailed by the chronological advantage of being a newcomer in the world. CPI is the pedagogy that realises this transformation. However, although criticism of traditional teaching focuses mainly on the influence of authority on pedagogical action, there are more subtle arguments in defence of the asymmetry in the relationship between teacher and student.

3.2 Arguments for asymmetry

In the Continental tradition of pedagogical thinking, especially in German-speaking regions and originating with J. F. Herbart, asymmetry is seen as prerequisite for the pedagogical relationship. To understand this position, we must examine the main ideas behind the argument. First, in the Continental tradition, a distinction is often drawn between the educator's activity (*Erziehung*) and the learner's growth process (*Bildung*) (see Stojanov, 2012; Weniger, 2000, pp. 119–122) because this is considered useful in examining the general conditions of pedagogical action (see Kivelä, 2012, 1997, 2000). Growth, in the sense of *Bildung*, is seen as a process that can be actualised only by pedagogical action—that is, by the educator's educative action (see Siljander, 2012, pp. 94–95).²⁴

This distinction has its origins in the nineteenth century and the work of J. F. Herbart, whose thoughts on education were later interpreted in terms of two key concepts: educability (*Bildsamkeit*) and pedagogical causality (Siljander, 2000; Siljander, 2012). Educability is a kind of meta-assumption required as the unwritten point of departure for pedagogical action; in accordance with the views of Kennedy, Kohan and Murriss, it refers to the radically open possibility for self-realisation that emerges in certain historical situations, so excluding any inner developmental stages or abilities (see Siljander, 2012, pp. 91–95). The main difference becomes clear in how educability relates to both *Bildung* and educational influence. To be educable opens the possibility of becoming a subject, actualised through the process of *Bildung*, which requires educational influence (see Siljander, 2000, pp. 29–34). Within the Continental tradition, then, the concept of educability facilitates talk about "pedagogical causality" (i.e., pedagogical influence), referring to a form of pedagogical action that must accompany the principle of educability. In other words, pedagogical causality foregrounds the need for educational interventions in

²⁴ Sutinen (2008) has also analysed Dewey's and Mead's educational ideas based on this distinction.

Bildung and the growth process to optimise the potential (Bildsamkeit) of the individual being educated (Siljander, 2012, pp. 91–95).

At first sight, pedagogical causality seems to entail an obvious instrumental tendency and a kind of subject-object relationship. However, by linking it to educability, causality can be understood in a looser sense, in which the consequences cannot be entirely foreseen. The question concerns the relationship between the process of Bildung and pedagogical action; for the educator to make judgments that are educative, she must adjust her actions according to the special character of the Bildung process. Herbart used the term "fact" to describe the educator's understanding of the connection between Bildung and educational influence. However, the idea that the learner is pre-rational and incapable of being fully acknowledged active agent in the educational encounter, rendering the relationship asymmetrical, stands in stark contrast to the views of Kennedy, Kohan and Murriss.

One difference between the views of second-generation representatives such as Kennedy, Kohan and Murriss and Continental thinkers such as Herbart is that pedagogical causality is grounded in the modern subject-based philosophical tradition while the previously mentioned thoughts question the construction of the child as pre-social and lacking agency in the social realm. Rather than viewing the learner as someone who can become free, she should be seen as already a subject, an active and competent protagonist in her own processes of learning and development. As elaborated above, Kennedy, Kohan, and Murriss question the modern view in calling for a new understanding of childhood and education. By understanding education as a symmetrical process, the epistemic positions of teacher and student are seen to be equal, as both act and construct mutual understanding in the process of growth. Kennedy, Kohan and Murriss construct CPI as a pedagogy in which movement from asymmetrical activity to intersubjective, symmetric activity opens a space for the authentic new to emerge (Kohan, 2002, p. 11).

Asymmetry vs. symmetry

This chapter has outlined basic starting points for two conflicting ideas of the pedagogical relationship. Should it start from an assumption of symmetry or asymmetry? Those advocating symmetry see that the pedagogical relationship should engender a space of mutuality and reciprocity as the only means of enabling the growth of the child to its full potential, and that the prevailing paradigm

prevents this by categorising children as incapable and pre-rational, in turn perpetuating cultural imperialism and political injustice in society at large. The Continental tradition of pedagogical thinking tends to assign greater weight to the accumulated knowledge of tradition and posits asymmetry as a starting point in pedagogical relations to justify and require pedagogical interventions. At the same time, it should be noted that Continental thought views *Bildung* as a process that enables the tradition to renew itself and reserves an important place for transcending existing social structures (Pikkarainen, 2018). On the side of the so-called symmetrists, it should be added that Kennedy in particular also emphasises the importance of analytical reasoning in his more practical writings (see Kennedy, 1994). The demarcation is not clear-cut and dichotomous but represents a tension that can be found in any educational theorisation. In relation to the scholars discussed here, the question is when the learner can be considered ready to play a part in renewing the culture. For Continental thinkers, "it takes a remarkable portion of our life before we learn to live the life of a mature adult human being—that is, before we are regarded as competent to participate in human action" (Pikkarainen, 2018 p. 23). For symmetrists, however, the primary requirement seems to be the capacity to communicate.

As noted earlier in relation to Study I, the issue of the teacher's responsibility in educational relationships influences the ideas of Kennedy, Kohan and Murriss. One could argue that it is immoral to advance the idea of equality between learner and educator, as this may prove harmful for the former if they do not understand the consequences of their decisions. The controversy relates to the nature of democratic society and the question of how democratic principles should structure education; this in turn raises the question of how authority, which involves a certain inequality between individuals, can be reconciled with the principles of autonomy and equality (Rosenow, 1993; Tubbs, 2005). Kennedy (2004a) frames the teacher's ethical dilemma in this way: "How do I intend relation and act relation in such a way that the system remains fluid, emergent, seeking an optimal balance of power between myself and the other-who-is-myself?" (p. 204). In the next chapter, I address Kennedy's question and focus on the nature and role of authority in CPI.

4 The nature and role of authority

One of the key elements that PFC shares with democratic education is a perspective on authority. As the analysis so far suggests, this perspective is obvious in terms of what it rejects: that teachers should not think of themselves as the absolute authority in the classroom. This rejection of what John Dewey called the "traditional" model of education is a necessary step towards creating a democratic space in the classroom, in which students can make decisions, voice their opinions and discover and express their real self.²⁵ On the other hand, this rejection of the traditional model does not indicate how we should understand authority. Does the new model entail a complete rejection of authority? Does it incorporate a new vision of what authority should be? And if so, how are we to understand this perspective?²⁶

This chapter presents the main argument from Study II: that shared authority is the most useful way of thinking about the concept of authority within PFC. To date, the concept of authority has remained a marginal issue in the PFC literature; the co-author of Study II investigated this theme in his doctoral dissertation (Michaud, 2014).²⁷ This chapter briefly discusses the notion of authority and its role in education before elaborating on shared authority as the most appropriate model in the context of PFC.

4.1 Authority in education

Authority is commonly understood as a synonym for *authoritarianism*, where one person dictates a course of action without necessarily providing reasons for their decisions. Looking beyond this commonly held view, there is general agreement in the philosophical literature on the nature of authority, which is usually defined as a relationship in which the inferior freely acknowledges the right of the superior to be superior, as the former sees the latter as legitimately occupying their position (Arendt, 1961b; Harjunen, 2002). In similar vein, van Manen noted that, in an educational context, legitimate authority can only derive from the inferior's

²⁵ I refer mainly to Dewey's idea of traditional education, but this could equally refer to the idea of "banking education" proposed by Paolo Freire (1970).

²⁶ As mentioned earlier, Jan Maschelein (1991) writes about a traditional model of education and identifies an alternative based on Habermas's theory of communicative action.

²⁷ In Finland, Elina Harjunen has studied authority in pedagogical relationships (see Harjunen, 2002). Nathan Brubaker's (2007) dissertation *Negotiating Authority in an Undergraduate Teacher Education Course: A Qualitative Investigation* considers the problem of authority in the classroom beyond PFC but draws on the PFC literature.

acceptance, based on love and affection for the superior (van Manen, 1991, p. 69).²⁸ This definition rules out any use of violence, force or manipulation in causing the inferior to internalise certain beliefs. What structures an authoritative relationship is a moral order shared by all those entering into the relationship,²⁹ entailing the values that led them to see the relationship as something meaningful and good (Arendt, 1961b; Pace & Hemmings, 2007; Weber, 1957).

However, although there seems to be a common understanding of authority in the literature at the general or abstract level, there are differing views about its manifestation in educational settings. These differences relate to the nature of democratic society, how democratic principles should structure education and, in turn, how authority—which involves a certain inequality between individuals—can be reconciled with the principles of individual autonomy and equality (Rosenow, 1993; Tubbs, 2005).³⁰ Within this debate, we can identify three dominant positions: (1) traditional, (2) anarchist and (3) shared authority models.

According to Dewey, the first conception of authority within education is the traditional position, which prioritises the transmission of knowledge as sanctioned by a tradition. Here, the teacher holds authority in the classroom and has power over students because *she is* an authority—that is, her authoritative role in the classroom is grounded in her knowledge, which is judged worthy of transmission to newcomers to society. In the process of becoming adults, democratic citizens and the teacher's equals, the students must acquire the knowledge deemed fundamental by the political community (Arendt, 1961a). The main point of reference for this model is usually Plato, whose idea that knowledge is an absolute value justifies the absolute superiority of teachers in transmitting that knowledge to their students (Rosenow, 1993; Tubbs, 2005). This position links to the discussion in sub-chapter 3.2 about asymmetry as a necessary condition for educational action. Siljander (2012, p. 100) shows that, in principle, raising little children "does not require moral argumentation or the defining of criteria for what is right and what is

²⁸ Like van Manen, Herman Nohl sees the two fundamental structuring elements in a pedagogical relationship as authority and love or, from the learner's point of view, love and respect (Siljander, 1987).

²⁹ In his book *Authority is Relational*, Charles Bingham uses examples to argue against the widely held position that authority is something one can possess. He notes, for instance, that it is useless to talk about the virtues of less wind or more wind, as wind is created by the differing temperatures of land masses and bodies of water. In the same way, it is useless to ask whether more or less authority would be a good thing because this fails to address the question of how authority works as a relationship (Bingham, 2008, p. 4).

³⁰ These differing views are also thoroughly addressed in the Continental tradition of educational thinking. For example, Theodor Litt frames the problem in terms of contrasting concepts such as organic growth and technical manipulation (Siljander, 1987).

wrong...”, and that this kind of argument is only possible when rational argumentation has reached its full potential and the learner is no longer a learner in relation to the educator. Before reaching this level of maturity, the main task is to foster habits deemed valuable by the tradition.

The second conception of educational authority directly opposes this first model. The anarchist position is based on the idea that there should be no authority in education because it necessarily alienates students. From this perspective, a good or legitimate authority is a contradiction in itself, and good education can only exist without authority—that is, where students learn in a context of freedom. Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Emile* (1979) is a classic point of reference for this model; the fictional story portrays a child who need never face the authority of his governor while being educated. Emile learns and grows because he is never subject to an authority figure who tells him what to do or not to do, or what to think or not to think.³¹ Here, authority is seen as the antithesis of proper education, which aims to create a virtuous and free human being. Education without authority is the only worthwhile option, as in the Summerhill school experiment (Neill & Lamb, 1996). By refraining from directly shaping their students, the teacher affords them the opportunity to make decisions, to learn to use their autonomy and to be invested in their learning. If the traditional model was teacher-centred, this model can be seen as radically student-centred.

The third view of authority in the classroom is constructed by rejecting both of the above models. On this view, authority is not to be understood as a possession of the teacher alone, nor should it be completely rejected. This perspective is typically represented in the works of John Dewey. In *Experience & Education* (1938), Dewey rejected the formulation of educational authority as a matter of either accepting the traditional view of educational authority or rejecting it completely. For Dewey, this is a false dichotomy that forces us to choose between two options when there is a third option that eliminates the need to choose. In this case, the third option requires us to grasp how the traditional and anarchist models of authority are simultaneously right and wrong. Instead, he proposes a new vision of authority built on the positive aspects of the first two models while eliminating their defects. From the traditional model, we should retain the idea that the teacher has an important role to play in authorising the collective agency of the classroom;

³¹ In addition to this commonly accepted interpretation of Rousseau’s *Emile*, there are some alternative views. For example, Kimmo Kontio (2012) argues that the governor firmly influences Emile’s growth, if not always visibly.

from the anarchist model, we should accept that education must start from children's interests, insights, perspectives, creative thinking, critical questions and novel desires.

For Dewey, then, authority should not be imposed or abandoned but should instead be co-constructed through a process involving both teachers and students. This becomes possible by grounding the authority and moral order that structure the classroom in the activity in which its members are engaged. In this model, the teacher does not occupy a superior position that would authorise them to shape the students or their educational experience; instead, teacher and students enter into relationships to create a project that structures the classroom and in which all are engaged, so diminishing the distance between teacher and students. On this view, one of the teacher's main functions is to create spaces for students to make decisions, express their opinions, follow their interests and engage in discussion.

In this model, authority becomes more inherently complex than in the traditional model; in the latter, the teacher is the only one directing the classroom life while in the former, the teacher enters an ongoing process of negotiation with the students that can take multiple forms (Gallas, 1998; Oyler, 1996; Shor, 1996). Among its many names, this can most succinctly be referred to as the shared authority model, emphasising that authority is something jointly created by the actors involved. Beyond this, it should be noted that there are many models of shared classroom authority, and what gets shared, or how, may differ. The next sub-chapter elaborates on this issue in more detail in the context of PFC.

4.2 The nature of authority in Philosophy for Children

The primary mission of Study II is to define the nature of authority in the context of PFC. This is a challenging undertaking for two reasons. First, as the concept of authority is not explicitly addressed in the PFC literature, we must extrapolate its significance in CPI from the theoretical literature. A second issue is the vast and diverse growth of PFC in recent decades, as discussed in sub-chapter 2.2 and in greater detail in Study I. Despite obvious important differences within the PFC movement, there seems to be a common vision of authority, and any differences in that respect are more a matter of degree than of kind. While some approaches employ communal inquiry or something very similar, these are not addressed

here.³² In Study II, we claim that the practice of CPI implies a particular form of authority, without which CPI would simply be impossible.

Among the models of authority presented in the previous sub-chapter, the shared authority model is the most useful for understanding how authority functions within PFC. As a first indicator, a PFC session usually starts and progresses from the children's own interests—for example, by letting students choose or at least generate their own questions for discussion.³³ This is one example of how to ensure that students are involved in the process and in constructing the CPI's moral order. At the very least, they can be expected to take an interest in the emerging discussion because they participated in its creation.

The discussion process is a continuation of that initial stage and is based on the same principle. In CPI, the teacher is not there to tell students what to think; rather, children are expected to engage in philosophy by expressing their own ideas on different matters. By the same token, the CPI's moral order continues to be informed by the students' involvement; the centre of power does not reside in one individual, teacher or student, but moves among all those participating in the discussion (Lushyn & Kennedy, 2003).

At the same time, in CPI, the teacher does not refrain as she would in the anarchist model but intervenes at each step in the process—for example, by proposing the text to read or the stimulus to trigger discussion, or by structuring the vote. More significantly, she intervenes throughout the course of the dialogue—the most important step of CPI—by inviting participants to use the skills identified as necessary for progress. These skills are usually categorised as critical, creative and social (Gregory, 2008; Lipman, 2003). For instance, in a PFC session, the teacher may ask students to provide a reason in support of their opinion; to evaluate the validity of the reasons advanced; to envisage an example or counter-example for a claim; or to build on each other's ideas. She may also employ a discussion plan or activity to explore a topic or to lead students to practise certain skills (Lipman, 1992). Additionally, the teacher must make educational judgments in relation to broader educational aims, as explained in more detail in sub-chapter 5.2.

³² Oscar Brenefier is a well known practitioner, but his version of the Socratic method is demanding. In relation to authority, it seems to assign a superior position to whoever has reached an understanding of their own ignorance, in a way that is incompatible with the shared authority model.

³³ Again, some practitioners are at odds in some respects with the model under discussion. For example, Thomas Wartenberg and Peter Worley do not invite children to offer their own inquiry questions, which is an important part of the "sharing" of authority.

In contrast to the radical form of the anarchist model of authority, then, the teacher has a role to play, but she is not in charge of shaping the students' educational experience in its entirety. Here, the teacher's authority position is imbued with a certain complexity. The teacher initiates the CPI with the idea that students should direct the discussion and intervene; in that sense, the intervention is targeted and authorises the students. However, as the inquiry emerges and progresses on the basis of the students' interests, the teacher's authority is not so much imposed as it is part of the process of inquiry, as required by the activity. The teacher's authority, then, resides in her role as the servant of the inquiry procedure, to which everyone involved in the CPI can relate. She is also the educator in respect of that procedure, ensuring that the students learn the skills embedded in the nature and stages of inquiry as understood in PFC. In the early stages of the programme, Lipman, Sharp and Oscanyan (1980, p. 105) referred to the non-authoritarian and non-indoctrinating nature of CPI by emphasising children's interests while respecting the values of inquiry and reasoning.

In that sense, we can speak of the teacher's procedural authority inside CPI as having to be "pedagogically strong but philosophically self-effacing" (Gregory, 2008). Splitter and Sharp (1995) emphasise this point and develop it by stating that the teacher should be "a model of the tools and procedures of inquiry and what might be called scholarly ignorance, that is, the self-conscious display of genuine curiosity and puzzlement rather than a sense of always being 'right'" (p. 140). Again, we can see that procedural authority serves to authorise the students; the teacher has a task to do, but this does not include lecturing or explaining.

This procedural authority of the teacher in CPI is also subject-specific, as CPI does not inquire into just anything but addresses matters of a philosophical nature. In its content and practice, philosophy (at least as understood in PFC) is based on a peculiar relationship to authority because it values uncertainty and fallibility. Because philosophical concepts are irremediably open to discussion, it is impossible to reach a final answer on the subjects discussed (Castoriadis, 1991; Gregory, 2008; Hadot 2002). In PFC, this idea is transmitted in the notion that philosophical concepts are by their nature contestable; we may reach some temporary agreement, but they can be reopened to inquiry over time or in light of new arguments or evidence (Lipman, 2003). The prerequisite for CPI is that the subject of discussion remains open to inquiry; as no teacher or student can ever claim an "ultimate" or "complete" answer, neither can anyone hold authority in that sense. It follows that the teacher's procedural authority is bound not only to the

format of the community of inquiry but also to its content (philosophy), which must not be closed on the basis of authority.

It is often the case that the teacher's authority in PFC is seen to work towards its own disappearance. PFC theorists (e.g., Sharp, 1993) have argued that, over time, the teacher should play a diminishing role in structuring discussions as students internalise the skills and norms necessary for inquiry. I would prefer to say that the teacher's authority works towards the authorisation of every individual, and of the whole collective. In that ideal CPI, the community of students would be in charge of CPI and authority would then be shared among a community of peers.

As reported in Study II, this model of shared authority best describes how authority functions in PFC, and this framework is required by CPI because it was developed within the PFC movement. I also note that the term "facilitator" symbolically designates a shift in the teacher's function; the facilitator is not a traditional teacher who is master of his or her students, nor does he or she disappear in the process. The facilitator role represents an alternative perspective on the teacher's authority that can only be understood by linking it to the idea of shared authority (Gregory, 2008).

However, this term is not without problems. Although it can assist the teacher when guiding the inquiry procedure, it does not provide for the teacher's moral responsibility. Some advocates maintain that PFC is primarily concerned with equipping children to pose philosophical questions. However, as this is not an educational programme, neither does it provide moral education. By systematising PFC as an educational practice, the present goal is to develop an account of moral judgments that the teacher must make in completing the educational task. For example, Siljander (1987) stressed that authority cannot be impersonal because it would remove moral responsibility from the pedagogical relationship. Analysing the work of Nohl and Litt, Siljander (1987) discusses at length the unfolding dialectic between subject and object—that is, between the child and the culture. For Siljander, that moral responsibility has two dimensions. On the one hand, as the child's representative, the educator must foster the unique subjectivity of the child's becoming-adult self. On the other hand, the educator has a responsibility to society and therefore acts as a representative of the culture (Siljander, 1987, pp. 96–107). This dual responsibility forms a dialectic that describes the pedagogical relationship. Glaser and Gregory (2017) also emphasised this in the context of PFC when referring to hermeneutical engagement with tradition. Although concentrating mainly on engagement with religious traditions, they saw that, in the curriculum of Lipman and Sharp, "philosophical voices from the past are

paraphrased by characters in the novels” (p. 187), enabling more direct engagement with the canonical tradition of philosophy. The next chapter applies a wider lens to the moral order that structures PFC pedagogy and any purported educational action. In so doing, it also examines implicit assumptions about doing philosophical work with children in the light of broader educational purposes.

5 Being and becoming a philosophical teacher

Study III focuses on the role of the teacher and the nature of teaching in PFC. The shared authority model articulated in the previous chapter (and in more detail in Study II) proposes that the teacher has a role to play as a "procedural" authority in guiding philosophical manoeuvres in the inquiry process. This conceptualisation is especially helpful in rejecting the anarchist and traditional models of authority and in describing the task of the facilitator in a CPI where authority is shared. In terms of teaching, however, this seems insufficient; if this were all the teacher had to do, they could readily be replaced by a philosopher (who would be more likely to master the procedures needed for fruitful inquiry). This suggests that there is more to say about the role of the *teacher* and the nature of *teaching* in CPI. The conclusions in Study II articulate a certain moral order in CPI, in which students play a role. What remains less clear is the origin and detail of this distinct moral order. Study III tries to capture some of the central qualities and characteristics of the moral order through the MacIntyrean conceptualisation of practice, which I describe here with particular reference to the distinction between literal and actual *telos* in MacIntyre's theory. In general, *telos* is the good of an activity, where a good can be succinctly defined as that for the sake of which we act.

In this chapter, I distinguish between a philosopher and a teacher in order to highlight some aspects of PFC practice that help teachers to form their professional identities. As I see it, this distinction can apply only if PFC is construed within an educational framework. I contend that if PFC is to be a distinct educational programme, it must encompass both the philosophical and educational dimensions of professional identity. This leads on to questions about the teacher's opportunities to achieve agency. Here, my aim is to articulate the agency of a teacher 1) as an interplay of past, present and future; 2) as continuously affected by the environment; and 3) as action rather than as possession of something. For example, Emirbayer and Mische (1998) defined agency as "the capacity of actors to make practical and normative judgments among possible alternative trajectories of action, in response to the emerging demands, dilemmas and ambiguities of presently evolving situations" (p. 970). Their definition stresses that context plays a role in the formation of agency, seen as "temporally constructed engagement with different structural environments" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 970).

5.1 The nature of teaching: Literal and actual *telos*

As discussed in sub-chapter 2.1, PFC pedagogy builds on the notion of a community of inquiry or, more specifically, CPI. The first vital characteristic of a CPI is that it unfolds as a shared experience as the creation of dialogical relations multiplies; when I say something to someone, it is also said to the community as a whole and understood individually by each member. The group aims to uncover something they can jointly agree upon, striving towards a certain epistemic *telos* constrained only by the Socratic notion of "following the argument where it leads" (Kennedy, 2010, ch. 3; Sharp, 1992, p. 168). Although this Socratic principle stresses a strong commitment to following the students' interests, there is also a requirement to make progress towards "the truth". Gardner (1995) noted that without this, one cannot expect the development of

[an] inquiring mind (as such a habit is not seen as fruitful); the capacity to see the complex in the relatively mundane (as there is not sufficient focus nor progress to produce a more comprehensive/complex picture of the issue under inquiry); a deep respect for others as potential contributors to a highly valuable product, i.e., truth (as truth is not the product); a ready ability for self-correction in light of more plausible truth claims (as there is no progress towards truth). (p. 105)

Truth as *telos* remains out of reach and unpredictable because the different ways of moving forward depend on the participants in the communal dialogue (Kennedy, 2010). As a search for truth, it seems that the epistemic quest serves more as a literal aim of CPI, and that an additional or more fundamental *telos* can be articulated. In CPI, the actual *telos* can be described as a disposition to dialogical relations or a wakened desire to understand the other (see Juuso & Laine, 2005). For example, Sharp's (2007) articulation of CPI as an activity that "fosters an ability to put one's ego in perspective" illuminates this internalised ability, which grows out of the dialogue towards "a slow realisation of what it is to be human and live the human predicament" (p. 5). One important proviso is that this disposition to dialogical relations also includes adults or teachers as people who are not yet there but are continuously striving to achieve this relation. For example, Gregory and Granger (2012) contended that CPI may enable the teacher to "decenter from adultism" as their own sense of wonder reawakens. Similarly, Kennedy (2014) suggested that, by moving beyond epistemological "egocentrism", a more radical form hinges "on

a new experience of alterity within the self” (p. 27). The literal aim of truth-seeking is closely related to the movement of the ”decentering ego”.

The nature of substance

The actual *telos* of attending and cherishing dialogical relations between the members of a CPI involves activity with content—that is, with concepts—in a way that relates to the philosophical ”meta” nature of CPI, extending beyond specific subject areas to tackle questions embedded in various practices, including itself. Students are engaged in a conversation that examines and evaluates other conversations occurring in the classroom. This activity of *doing* philosophy by engaging with contestable, common, central and connected questions shapes the nature of CPI-based teaching (Splitter, 2014; see also Splitter & Sharp, 1995). As the requirement for successful inquiry, the experiential landscape must instil a willingness to take risks, preparing for the unexpected and throwing oneself into a state of ignorance to enable more authentic exploration of meanings, connections and relationships between ideas emerging from the dialogue. This fresh and open attitude seems more natural for children; for the teacher, it demands a readiness to abandon the idea of seeing oneself as a traditional authority figure (Kennedy, 2004b, p. 753; see also Haynes & Murriss, 2013). The business of seeking ”the truth” makes certain demands on the community that can easily be overlooked or undervalued, just as the fisherman, who may want to catch the fish in a manner consonant with the excellence of the craft, first and foremost aims to catch a fish.

Both the process and the particular attitude required by the substance entail a particular commitment to a *state of being* that seems worth pursuing (see also Higgins, 2010e). This experiential landscape is something that Higgins (2010d) refers to; as in the distinctive moral phenomenology realised as an experience, it gives meaning to the activity and can be experienced only from the inside out, as what MacIntyre (in *After Virtue*) calls an *internal good*. An internal good is something judged to be valuable to achieve or attend to in practice, and the goods of a given practice are the purposes of action. While external goods can be acquired in multiple ways, internal goods can only be acquired within a particular practice. A more detailed definition of practice and internal good is provided in Study III.

Although the particular commitment to a state of being, once realised, is located in the teacher, its source is in the nature of teaching. To be more specific, the intelligibility derives from the ideal nature of teaching as understood in the practice of PFC. Working through this process, the teacher may begin to notice a

need to change something within them in terms of how they encounter the students and the wider world. This is the first step in entering the practice. The challenge is that this experience—what Higgins (2010e) calls a distinctive moral phenomenology—is hardly observable; instead, it is a gradual development of understanding that leaves an enhanced sense of value or significance in one’s life. It is important to note that this experience is not deemed to be good because it is pleasurable but that it is good for its own sake and contributes to general wellbeing (MacIntyre, 1999, p. 64). The experience of this distinctive moral phenomenology offers its practitioners a vision of how excellent it is to be in a particular world while at the same time providing insight into a way of being in the world (see also Higgins, 2010d).

5.2 The role of the teacher

The above discussion suggests that there is something about the nature of CPI that lends itself to the task of articulating the internal goods of teaching in PFC—that is, pursuing dialogical relations by acknowledging our ignorance and abandoning any egoistic desire to appear clever. As noted above, CPI is controlled and centred by the demands of epistemic progress, attracting differing views about the role of the teacher in PFC because epistemic progress is usually seen as failing or succeeding as a consequence of facilitation.

One current discussion within PFC that touches on this theme concerns the ownership of questioning (see Turgeon, 2015). Some practitioners advocate students’ primacy in questioning and see PFC as a pedagogy grounded in an emergent epistemology in which priority is assigned to fresh and unique ways of “following the argument” (see Kennedy, 2010; Kohan, 2015; Murriss & Verbeek, 2014). Others stress the historical canon of doing philosophy—that is, the demands of logic—and see this as central to PFC pedagogy (Gardner 1995, 2015; McCall, 2009; Worley, 2011). Both views entail important ideas about education, and the next section explores the possibility of reconciling these positions and the implications for the teacher’s role.

Procedural judgments: A framework for epistemic progress

Study III presents a framework of epistemic progress that can be applied without subscribing to a particular epistemic stance. After describing the framework and

making further comments in relation to Study III, I revisit Study I, which concerns the diminishing role of the teacher as educator in PFC.

Facilitating a philosophical inquiry is often characterised as entailing a special *techné* (Greek: skill, art, craft), which unfolds as a series of philosophical judgments (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2011, p. 269). This is essentially the art of deciding the appropriate question to pose at the right moment. According to Lipman, Sharp and Oscanyan (1980), it is "largely a matter of classroom experience, philosophical insight and tact" (p. 124). "Kata ton orthon logon"—to act according to the right reason—is a phronetic disposition that has intrigued educational scholars since Aristotle.³⁴ This skill-like ability is important in 1) promoting more depth in thinking; 2) alertness to signs of a philosophical topic, which some refer to as having a "philosophical ear"; and 3) maintaining direction or focus in relation to a given topic (see Gardner, 1995; Gregory, 2007; Lipman, 2003). At the level of ongoing dialogue, the teacher must make discursive moves such as explicating positions, summarising, asking for clarification or definition, giving or asking for examples, indicating contradictions, or pointing out possible contradictions by generating alternative views (see for example Fisher, 2003, p. 130; Gregory, 2007; Kennedy, 2004b, p. 754). As the previous discussion suggests, implementation of the method depends on differing epistemic views. Typically, those who advocate students' primacy in questioning lean towards the post-modern vision of knowledge as a social construction while those who stress the teacher's role and philosophical competence often subscribe to a universalist concept of truth. In fact, we can identify a continuum within the PFC movement between purely objective and purely subjective epistemic views, where Socratic dialogue represents the tendency to seek true answers in a universal sense (Gardner, 1995; McCall, 2009) and Rortyan conversation represents a dialogue where the only epistemic aim is open and free exchange of ideas (see Golding, 2017).

PFC has formulated some useful frameworks to help teachers and students to monitor their epistemic progress, regardless of differing epistemological views or the epistemological aim of the inquiry. In practice, these differing epistemic views tend to find their implementation somewhere in the middle ground because final and objective answers are never reached (even if one believes it is possible), and

³⁴ It is important to note that I am not making a sharp Aristotelian distinction from praxis, where the end is in the activity itself. The capacity of judgement involves *phronesis* and *poiesis*, where the end is detachable from the activity, and judgment regarding this activity is called *techné*. MacIntyre's concept of practice also refrains from this distinction; for example, he regards both music and architecture as practices (see MacIntyre, 1984, p. 187).

more subjective accounts of truth still retain some accountability to the world. Using the framework, the teacher's judgment of epistemic progress should not focus on how close the community has moved towards truth or consensus but on the criteria that indicate progress through distributed inquiry in moving from the identified issues (i.e., problems) towards the end goal.

Golding (2017) uses the term *milestones* to refer to stages completed along the path of inquiry, describing the associated steps as "articulating a problem as a question, then hypothesising resolutions, then elaborating these possible resolutions and then evaluating the possibilities, before judging which best resolves the problem" (p. 71). Gregory (2007) previously formulated a similar six-stage framework for the purpose of structuring more rigorous dialogue in the classroom.³⁵ According to Gregory, there is an order to these stages, and although the dialogue does not have to follow them strictly, participants should know where they are within the framework and which tasks have been accomplished. The teacher's role, then, is to make these stages visible and to facilitate progress along these steps. According to Golding (2013), epistemic progress towards mutual understanding is indicated by "the degree to which we appreciate the views of the other participants, or the degree to which they are mutually intelligible"; by "consensus about an uncovered assumption in a suggested resolution"; and by "reaching epistemic consensus about the procedures of our inquiry" (pp. 427–434).

The merit of this framework is that it provides tangible indicators for the teacher who may be struggling to assess progress but wants to maintain an atmosphere of mutual recognition, in which different and unique perspectives are valued. This tends towards the actual telos (see sub-chapter 5.1) of CPI in "softening" the truth-seeking process by emphasising the relational and communal nature of epistemic progress. The framework highlights the question of "how to teach" but remains relatively neutral concerning the normative question "Why should I teach this?" The latter is an important question because it directs the teacher's attention to normative judgments about the purpose of one's actions.

The next sub-chapter briefly outlines the arguments in relation to judgments of "why" that the teacher must consider if they are to achieve the internal goods of

³⁵ While Gregory's (2007) framework differentiates between identifying a problem and formulating a question, these steps are combined into one in Golding's framework (2013, 2017).

teaching—that is, to become a wise teacher. The issue is elaborated in more detail in Studies I and III.

Educational judgments: A wider horizon

As discussed earlier, although the differing epistemic views within the PFC movement may affect how the teacher's role is envisioned, we can still identify some common stages in the inquiry process. To this point, the discussion has focused on the teacher's role as a facilitator in CPI. One domain that remains to be addressed is what might be called "educational judgments". This is not to suggest that such judgments constitute a separate realm beyond the philosophical; rather, I propose that educational judgments operate at a broader level than the procedural judgments required to enable communal, epistemic progress. The difference is that while procedural judgments can be morally neutral, educational judgments necessarily entail a distinct moral element (see sub-chapter 4.2).

Educational judgments have a meta-level impact on CPI as judgments the teacher must make when deciding what will help students in their quest for a good life. As described in Study I, the Continental tradition sees pedagogical relationships as asymmetrical because it is the teacher's responsibility to make educational judgments in guiding students along the path of growth. How, for example, is the teacher to decide between the competing views within PFC in relation to the teacher's role? In the course of CPI, should they prioritise students' interests or guide students firmly towards analytical reasoning? These choices are judgments the teacher must make, impacting how they implement CPI. They are educational judgments because, in choosing one approach rather than the other, the teacher determines what is desirable in terms of possible ends. These judgments are at the heart of the teacher's responsibility to their students to opt for educational interventions that will enable them to flourish.

This becomes an issue when envisioning CPI as a structuring element of teaching as a whole, encompassing all aspects of classroom life and therefore demanding consideration of educational purpose at a more general level. Biesta (2010) identified three broad functions of education that seem useful in clarifying the nature of educational judgments; these functions are qualification, socialisation and subjectification. *Qualification* can be characterised as the domain of knowledge and skills, which is commonly regarded as school's main function, providing the skills and knowledge needed in the workforce or, more broadly, as a citizen. *Socialisation* refers to the educational encounter with cultures and

traditions, which may involve deliberate transmission of particular norms and values but also operates in hidden ways. In general, socialisation preserves the continuity of culture and tradition. *Subjectification* refers to education's orientation towards students as subjects of action. Interestingly, subjectification seems to work against socialisation, focusing our attention on ways of freeing students from the established order and constraints and allowing the child to develop as an individual (Biesta, 2012, 2010, ch. 1).

Biesta (2010) viewed subjectification as the most important dimension: "I take the position that subjectification should be an intrinsic element of all education worthy of the name" (p. 75). Subjectification delineates the essential tension between human freedom and educational action. For Biesta, becoming free can be captured in a particular formation of democratic subjectivity. Building on Ranciere, Arendt and Levinas, Biesta adds an existential perspective: the event of appearing independently from the existing order.

It is important to note that Biesta's subjectification is a rich concept with much to reflect on; at this point, I will unpack it only briefly.³⁶ The issue concerns the teacher's educational judgments and their multidimensional character. The teacher is confronted with these judgments when asking educationally attuned "why" questions about their own work. Biesta (2015) describes the work of the teacher in this way:

Three-dimensional thinking and doing also begins to reveal the complexities of even the smallest decisions and moments of action and doing in the work of the teacher ... the specific complexity of teaching, viewed from the perspective of the three-fold character of educational purpose, is that of three-dimensional

³⁶ Subjectification—that is, becoming free—can be variously conceived from different theoretical positions. In this study, I introduce three different ways of understanding subjectification. 1) The Continental tradition of educational thinking views subjectification (or *Bildung*) as the process of becoming a rational and independent thinker. We need such thinkers for the renewal of our social structures, and this is only possible after a fairly long period of educational interventions (*Erziehung*). Roughly put, socialisation comes first, to be followed by the self-determinative subject. 2) For pragmatists, and especially in Dewey's views on educational authority, subjectification seems to occur in the process of encountering a tradition and becoming reflective—that is, acquiring the capacity to reconstruct habits that have evolved over time. Because the development and reconstruction of habits is a simultaneous process, there is no clear distinction between socialisation and subjectification, and the distinction between educational intervention and development is also ambiguous. Biesta's formulation of subjectification differs from the Continental tradition in that he sees subjectification not as an end product of educational intervention but as an event that can appear at any stage of upbringing. This differs from pragmatism in that it attempts to separate subjectification and socialisation and to identify forms of educational intervention that may provide opportunities for subjectification.

chess, where three complete chess games are played on chess board hanging above each other, and where the pieces not only interact horizontally on each of the chess boards but also vertically—so that a move in the "game" of qualification not only impacts what happens and can happen there, but at the very same time "does" something in the "games" of socialisation and subjectification, and vice versa. (p. 5)

These three functions of education address different perspectives on educational purpose. The teacher can remain ignorant of some of these functions or disregard them, but if we are to envision PFC as an overarching educational practice, all of these functions must be addressed. Discussion within PFC concerning the rules of ownership of questioning (see Turgeon, 2015) touches on this very issue. On the one hand, scholars who advocate students' primacy in questioning see PFC pedagogy as offering fresh and unique ways of being and becoming, positioning subjectification as PFC's most fundamental educational aim (see Kennedy, 2010; Kohan, 2015; Murriss & Verbeek, 2014). On the other hand, those who stress the teacher's role are more likely to view analytical reasoning as central. This suggests that socialisation and qualification are the primary goals of PFC pedagogy (McCall, 2009; Worley, 2011).³⁷

If we accept that all three of these functions are at play in education, then it is the teacher who ultimately makes the educational judgments in prioritising these partly conflicting aims, against which the appropriate ends of educational action are judged. As Biesta notes, these are not easy judgments to make; they are never final in that the teacher must continuously re-evaluate their actions. When the teacher acts, it is momentous, as the action cannot be withdrawn or cancelled (see Philström & Sutinen, 2012).

³⁷ All of these theorists give some credence to both aims, but those described here have clear priorities. Lipman (2003) seems to emphasise subjectification in his theoretical writings, although especially in teacher manuals, placing strong emphasis on thinking skills. It should again be pointed out that Dewey's influence on Lipman's thinking makes the distinction somewhat problematic. A pragmatist might say that providing opportunities for dialogical communication on philosophical topics by listening to children's voices is still coaching, as a particular practice that requires certain abilities, skills and understandings. On pragmatist grounds, then it might be argued that analytical reasoning is as essential as language to the ability to exchange ideas in a symmetrical setting, and that logic is built into and derives from the structure of language itself.

Educational judgments in Philosophy for Children

Educational judgments are decisions that teachers must make about desired ends, involving a broader framework than the procedural judgments referred to above. This is not to say that what I refer to educational judgments do not entail procedural considerations; both domains share some commonalities with the practical wisdom acquired mainly through experience—that is, with the experience of confronting such judgments, indicating an ability to learn from the everyday situations that inform more wide-ranging judgments.

Although necessarily ambiguous, distinguishing between these domains of judgment helps the teacher to become aware of their distinctly educational dimension. Biesta's (2010) account of multilayered purpose articulates the different domains that are (or should be) addressed in the teacher's work. While procedural judgments and interventions centre on the epistemic aim of CPI and can be addressed by anyone participating in the inquiry, educational judgments operate at a broader level. These judgments require the third "why" and cannot be expected from students, although it is not impossible that a student might make such a judgment. For example, the first "why" asks the reason for a particular action, such as being someone's friend. The second "why" asks about the grounds for this particular judgment about friendship, so entering a deeper level of judgment. The third "why" asks about the reasons for this inquiry and takes account of the students' growth. This would mean considering the stated reasons for being a friend in terms of socialisation—for example, thinking about how friendship can be limited by a particular social context.³⁸ Here, educational judgments can be seen to include a sense of when to intervene with a critical question or an outside example (that is, beyond the students' lived experience), and when it seems most important to patiently develop the concept in question from the students' ideas. One might say that this describes advancing subjectification, in this case opening a space for students to question existing understandings of friendship. In every inquiry, the main concern is not to learn "for" but to learn "from" the situation, and in a sense, every inquiry should contribute or facilitate subjectification. The main point here is that the teacher should be aware of all these domains in play in the classroom in order to assess what is going on educationally. The next sub-chapter discusses how these judgments might be better informed.

³⁸ A friendship might be limited because of religious background or because it includes adults and children or animals and human beings, or the earth and human beings. It is worth noting that children can and do raise questions of this sort.

Self-study and educational judgments

To begin to ask "third why" questions, the teacher must study the world around them. On the one hand, the teacher must consider knowledge and skills related to philosophy. The PFC literature rarely discusses issues of teaching philosophical content (such as who said what in the history of ideas) but rather emphasises the doing of philosophy to cultivate certain philosophical habits of mind, or dispositions.³⁹ In the PFC literature, this domain is often referred to as "thinking skills" (Lipman, 2003) or the "tools of thinking" (Cam, 2006). The teacher needs to be acquainted with various tools, such as falsification (counter-examples), analogies (creative thinking), criteria (the grounding of beliefs) or examples (providing evidence) before they can assess the suitability of such tools in the shifting moments of classroom life. In addition, the teacher needs to fully internalise these skills in order to select a tool from their intellectual cabinet that is appropriate in the moment. While there are differing views on how many philosophy courses are needed in order to master these skills, it seems undeniable that the more familiar one is with the skills required for powerful thinking, the better the educational judgments one can make about their use in the classroom. One merit of PFC is that the vast literature on teaching thinking skills is made relatively accessible, even without majoring in philosophy.

The dimension of socialisation requires judgments based on critical reflective engagement with traditions and cultures. For example, according to Judith Suissa and Darren Chetty (2017), "the vigilance and humility required of white educators ... means reminding ourselves of the moral and political context in which our educational efforts make sense, reflecting on our own racialised identities and those of the people in our classrooms" (p. 16). Elsewhere, Chetty (2017) continues to emphasise the teacher's responsibilities:

The argument for listening and learning from students can sometimes produce the outcome that teachers racialized as white resist their responsibility to educate themselves about racism and the philosophy of race, instead opting to outscore that intellectual and emotional labour to racially minoritized children. (p. 475)

To fully grasp the function of socialisation, the teacher should enter into a dialogue on human development and participate in conversations with cultivated thinkers,

³⁹ It is harder to make the distinction between historical and present inquiry in philosophy because philosophical questions from the past remain under scrutiny.

both past and present (see Higgins, 2010c). Deepening one's understanding of the history of humankind can yield fresh perspectives on the explicit and hidden ways in which traditions are presented to children and young people. In PFC practice, there seems to be a growing suspicion that anything that in any way transmits certain established values or norms should be excluded from CPI. However, even if one consciously decides not to aim for socialisation in one's pedagogical practice, this is simply not possible, as certain social codes or goods form continuously in communities that interact on a regular basis. For example, some teachers are socialised into the PFC movement, which promotes certain values (some of which are elaborated here). What one can and must do is to become critical and reflective in relation to the workings of socialisation and the goods deemed desirable in the community in which one is imbedded, as well as in other communities and, ultimately, in oneself.

Finally, the teacher should be alert to how his or her actions impact the student as a person. What possibilities might engagement with CPI offer in terms of being and becoming a unique subject (see Biesta, 2010)? In accommodating a Socratic epistemic condition, this domain of education seems well acknowledged in the PFC literature and in the practice of philosophy more broadly. Affirming only not-knowing seems to afford more opportunities for addressing this domain; in particular, the articles examined in Study I appear to strongly promote subjectification.⁴⁰ According to Karin Murriss (2016, p. 26), to acknowledge this function of education, the teacher should first seek to understand what a child can be expected to achieve (for example, morality and reasoning) but not what a child is or should become. The teacher should also entertain the idea that being a subject is an act of coming into presence as an individual, which manifests only in relation to others and is therefore necessarily bounded by the actions of others. In this sense, subjectivity is more like an event than a property or essence and depends on difference and plurality (Biesta, 2010, p. 21; Murriss, 2016, p. 24; see also Biesta, 2013a). In this way, perceived subjectivity cannot be a product or outcome of our educational efforts and, in the end, the teacher can only hope for the best. This does not mean that there is nothing to be done in terms of subjectification. Biesta (2010) considers that the teacher can provide opportunities for such events but cannot

⁴⁰ This is not to say that Biesta's views on subjectification—or, for example, those of Kennedy, Kohan and Murriss—are unitary in all respects. In his writings, Biesta emphasises an encounter with something that is radically different as a condition for a political understanding of freedom in which the subject appears as a unique person. Kennedy grounds his thoughts in systems theory and pragmatism, where subjectivity does not exist within the individual.

produce them. One way of facilitating subjectification is to enter a conversation with different "voices". This is close to what Ann Sharp, intrigued by Arendt, meant when she talked about visiting in concrete otherness. This is not the same as being a tourist, who wants to preserve their own comfortable space, or "moving in" as in total settlement in otherness. Visiting means spending time with a concrete other by talking and listening attentively in order to understand the other without becoming other or destroying the other in the concrete other (see Sharp, 2007).

Kennedy and Kohan (2017) refer to refusing the idea of the transformation of childhood into adulthood as a primary pedagogical project. They consider that education should be a process that "fosters, nurtures, cares for and or restores the experience of childhood itself" (p. 50). Kohan (2014) urges us to prepare for a different form of reason, a different theory of knowledge and a different ethic; in this conversation, excellence lies in how we respond to the courageous but fragile inquiries of children, ensuring that they are not swallowed by the totality or sameness of the other (most often, the teacher).

Becoming aware of these different functions of education and constantly seeking a deeper understanding of them allows the teacher to exercise the fundamental moral decisions they confront in daily classroom life. This unfolds another internal good of teaching in PFC that can be characterised as a distinct biographical genre, a distinct way of life informed by the practice. MacIntyre refers to the good of a certain kind of life; while a painter can live her life in different ways, writing her own unique life narrative, there is still meaning in living a *painterly* life (MacIntyre, 1984). Within a practice, the biographical genre is a narrative structure that links past, present and future in a meaningful way (see Higgins, 2010e). Seeking reasons that inform educational judgments means participating in dialogues in a broad sense, giving some idea of the philosophical teacher's life, which not only informs the teacher professionally but also imbues and characterises the whole person.

Symmetry versus asymmetry (again)

This chapter elaborated the nature of teaching and the role of the teacher in PFC. To describe this role, I applied MacIntyre's concept of practice as the first context of internal goods in PFC. Based on this definition, I located part of the internal goods in the practitioner as a disposition towards dialogical relation and a certain openness to a state of ignorance, shaped by the nature of CPI. Other internal goods were located in the teacher's work or performance, drawing a distinction between

procedural and educational judgments in philosophical inquiry. If we accept this distinction, it would seem that the pedagogical relationship is symmetrical in the epistemological sense. However, as the teacher cannot refrain from educational judgments, especially in the context of primary school education, it seems that both terms reveal something important about the pedagogical relationship.

Asymmetry unfolds not as an instrumental or controlling affirmation of power but as the crucial element of care for the growth of the student. This is first and foremost about helping students in their quest for a good life and caring about the *ways* in which this quest is enacted. In answering the question of "how to educate", the teacher must balance this multidimensional purpose, adopting the role of tragic protagonist in making everyday judgments.

6 Challenges and possibilities in Philosophy for Children

The theme that recurs throughout this dissertation is the pedagogical relationship in CPI and the connections and tensions between asymmetry and symmetry, subjectivity and intersubjectivity, teacher-centredness and student-centredness, traditional and anarchist models of authority and objective and subjective epistemological aims. These tensions arise largely in an environment where the PFC movement, and educational theory more generally, has witnessed the "intersubjective turn".⁴¹ Second-generation PFC, especially the work of Kohan, Kennedy and Murriss, promotes a new way of being that reflects twentieth century change.

At the same time, it is important to bear in mind that assigning all these thinkers to the same category oversimplifies the origins of their thinking. In particular, it is appropriate to mention that many of Kohan's thoughts are drawn from Freire's theory of pedagogy, and he in turn draws largely on post-modern thinkers such as Lyotard, Deleuze and Foucault. Murriss refers to thinkers like Biesta, Burbules and Kennedy in support of her positions. Kennedy's sources include Gadamer, Ricoeur and Dewey, as well as field and systems theory.

While these broad distinctions scarcely do justice to the uniqueness of these thinkers' contributions, the conclusions they draw from their partly overlapping sources are sufficiently uniform for present purposes. All of them subscribe to the view that the self can no longer be viewed as a discrete entity or that there is any fundamental difference between self and other: "I am only half what I feel and think I am and half how I actually behave; only half what I tell myself about who or what I am and half what the culture and the historical moment tells me" (Kennedy, 2004a, p. 202). This can be seen as an evolutionary step towards self-correcting and self-organising open systems. They all understand truth not as "the truth" but as a narrative construct, which has become more visible because of the many changes over the last hundred years.

Increasing personal and cultural intervisibility and alocalism through dramatic innovations in electronic communications and transportation, global

⁴¹ Within philosophy the "intersubjective turn" is one way to describe a paradigm shift, where the explanatory entity of educational theorisation is no longer individual subject. This is usually understood as a synonym for the "interactionist turn", but this term emphasizes a particular way of being; instead of only describing communication.

economies, massive interdependent systems (food, water, power, transportation, etc.), global media, birth control and sexual revolution, psychoanalysis, religious syncretism, the decline of patriarchy, evolutionary theory, Einstein's theory of relativity and the Whiteheadian metaphysical revolution, field and systems theory in both the natural and the human sciences, and universal education. (Kennedy, 2004a, p. 201)

These changes in turn open new possibilities for a pedagogy that decentres and reconstructs power relations. The philosophy of childhood developed by Kohan, Murriss and Kennedy on the basis of their observations provides valuable input for PFC and for the development of an educational practice that clearly rejects coercive practices involving "totalising" powers. Kennedy, Kohan and Murriss stress the non-formational logic of their educational philosophy, viewing CPI as an experience that should create something new and unique through encounters with different voices silenced in modern educational thinking.

6.1 Subjectification in the event

As I argued earlier, the work of Kennedy, Kohan and Murriss resonates with Biesta's ideas about the educational domain of subjectification, which directs our attention to ways of freeing students from the established order of the society and allowing the child to emerge as an individual (Biesta, 2012, 2010, ch. 1). Interestingly, a speech at the International Council of Philosophical Inquiry with Children (ICPIC) conference in 2017,⁴² Biesta focused on the educational significance of PFC and the possibility of subjectification in PFC practice. He began by calling into question the (mostly) accepted educational aim of PFC: the development of thinking skills.⁴³ Biesta did not argue that this well-articulated aim is something to be avoided or put aside, but he did ask whether it is enough—that is, whether it is possible to go further. In this regard, he discussed encounters with plants and animals, which require patience, attention and care, but in which "higher-order" thinking is irrelevant. His main question concerned how PFC practice positions the child in the world. His subtle criticism questioned the constructivist idea that students

⁴² On the conversation that followed Biesta's speech, see the account in the *Journal of Childhood and Philosophy*, 13(28).

⁴³ The thinking skills promoted in PFC were first elaborated by Lipman and Sharp, who began from critical and creative thinking and subsequently added caring thinking. SAPERE, the educational foundation promoting philosophy in schools and communities in England, added a collaborative dimension to the typology of thinking.

largely construct their own meanings, competences and skills, which engenders an egological state of being, as the world is seen as an object to be comprehended, made sense of and controlled (Biesta, 2017a, p. 31; Biesta, 2017b, p. 427).

Biesta (2017b) developed the idea that the teacher plays a particular role in "arousing the desire in another human being for wanting to exist in and with the world as subject, that is, in a grown-up way" (p. 431). He maintained that this role involves the interruption of desire so that children and young people could achieve and maintain a decentred, non-egological position—an "interruption of being-with-oneself ... suspending the focus on the immediate so that there is time to encounter the world, encountering one's desires with regard to the world, and providing sustenance" (Biesta 2017b, p. 432). The many critical responses to his presentation addressed the concept of grown-upness, his critical take on pragmatism and his own positioning as an educationalist rather than a philosopher (see for example Kohan & Kennedy, 2017; Laverty & Gregory, 2017). This third point was the most interesting, and the many questions raised by Kohan and Kennedy in their reply were included in a dossier assembled after the conference. In their reply, Kennedy and Kohan (2017) asked "In what sense can a philosophical undertaking—one that has philosophy in its very title, and which identifies itself in terms of the introduction of philosophy in the education of childhood—be approached outside philosophy? Why?" (p. 496). In his reply, Biesta (2017c) chose to answer with an analogy, saying that although he had learned to play the oboe, he did not become a professional player; in that sense, he said, he did not want to locate himself in the rational community of oboists. Elsewhere, in a discussion with Steven Stolz, Biesta disclosed more about his views in this regard. He spoke about Continental construction and how education is seen to have a particular identity in the same way as other disciplines. He contrasted this with what he called the "Anglo-American approach", which views education as a phenomenon to be studied from different angles. According to Biesta, Continental construction is "identified as a distinctly educational interest. It is an interest, roughly, in ways in which children and young people can be and become individuals who can act and think for themselves" (Stolz & Biesta, 2018, p. 58). The idea of thinking and acting for oneself might describe the observed interest in PFC practice across the board. While this gives us little to work with, the issue as I see it relates more to the ways in which this interest is played out. In this study, this issue is addressed in the discussion of educational judgments in CPI (see sub-chapter 5.2). In the concluding remarks that follow, I will consider how this interest is conceived in the writings of Kennedy and Kohan, and how this overlaps with or differs from Biesta.

Philosophical inquiry with educational interest

How can PFC address Biesta's idea of coming to exist in the world, with the world as a subject, without putting oneself at the centre of the world? One important feature of this observation is that it shifts our attention from "what" to "who" will emerge in a CPI. In *Beyond Learning*, Biesta refers to communities whose members have nothing in common (Biesta, 2006, ch. 3). He distinguishes these from what he calls "rational" communities, drawing in part from Lingis (1994). In the rational community, what matters is what is said, and insights can be assigned to universal categories, detaching these utterances from the individual who first formulated them. A rational community creates rational agents when members begin to master the common discourse. This sounds very reasonable, especially from a "common sense" view of education. In contrast, Biesta invites us to consider a subjectivity that has nothing to do with the rational community but is quite the opposite, where students are free from the very beginning and capable of adding something to our shared existence. This is impossible if we try to correlate their words and deeds with existing ways of speaking, but by attending to and affording equal status to the "noise" that springs from these strangers (in this case, children), this can become a voice, once someone is ready to hear and respond to it.

I believe Kennedy (2014)⁴⁴ is developing a similar idea in seeking to move beyond epistemological "egocentrism". Similarly, Kohan (2014) urges us to prepare for a different form of reason, a different theory of knowledge and a different ethic. Kennedy (2010) also refers to the nature of dialogue as interplay: "boundaries are continually being reconfigured—not just conceptual boundaries, but intersubjective and social ones as well. There is no such thing as just a dialogue of ideas" (p. 42). This, I believe, is also Biesta's point: not to live in an idea of the world but in the world. To do this as adults, we need to ask what the child or the student is asking of us (as in the cases of the plant and the animal).

Addressing this question, Kennedy and Kohan (2017) characterise education as an experience that fosters childhood itself. Although I believe the notion resonates well with Biesta's concerns, this also illustrates one aspect of demarcation, where Biesta uses the term grown-upness to designate the de-centred or non-egological way of being in the world. In their response to Biesta, Kohan and Kennedy express suspicion of this term, as it implies a movement from infantile to

⁴⁴ Kennedy uses the term "intersubject", which he defines as an "emergent form of subjectivity in our time which reconstructs its borders to include the other, and which understands itself as always building and being built through a combination of internal and external dialogue" (Kennedy 2004a, p. 201).

grown-up existence, from which they seek to distance themselves (Kohan & Kennedy, 2017). Instead, they affirm that PFC involves fostering a particular relationship to questions—a sort of questioning/answering being in the world (pp. 499–500). Kennedy (2010) describes philosophy as the epistemic and curricular wedge that opens the experience of childhood to reflection for both children and adults. Additionally, Kohan and Kennedy (2017) join many others in noting that philosophy as a way of living “cannot but be educational, and education cannot but be philosophical” (p. 497). This, I think, is the crucial difference in the present context; while Biesta acknowledges the separation between process and action and between *Bildung* (growth) and *Erziehung* (educational action) Kennedy and Kohan find no place for this distinction.⁴⁵ The interest that Biesta describes as distinctly educational can be seen in the separation of process and educational interventions to enhance the process of subjectification (and other dimensions of educational purpose). Biesta also attempts to articulate subjectification as an aim or something that one can strive for.

This is the key distinction I have tried to capture in discussing educational judgments in CPI. In the present study, the main issue is the educational significance of doing philosophy for and with children. Biesta’s distinct educational interest is apparent in his efforts to articulate the educational task the teacher must consider in order to understand what is at stake in their decisions. In Biesta’s speech, this related to the dimension of subjectification, and his interest in PFC practice suggests that PFC can bring something to the concrete application of Biesta’s ideas about education. The present study has focused mainly on the tension engendered by education’s multi-layered purpose, within which subjectification is one important and often overlooked domain. In the next sub-chapter, I offer some concluding thoughts on the teacher’s own process of subjectification amid the tension of conflicting educational purposes—that is, teaching as an expression of the person who teaches.

6.2 Teaching as an expression of the person who teaches

The question that permeates every inquiry into the task of the teacher ultimately relates to conceptions of truth. Kohan, Murriss and Kennedy seem to share the view that rather than seeing themselves as mediator of the truth, or even truths, the teacher should be committed to problematising the existing relationship to truths

⁴⁵ Importantly, Biesta does not subscribe to the ideas underpinning *Bildung*.

that are already fixed. This invites teachers to promote equality of intelligence, even beyond the Socratic ideal of being intelligent in understanding one's own ignorance, by affirming a superior position to anyone who has reached this understanding (see Kohan, 2011). This defines the potential of PFC for the professional and personal development of the teacher both as the designated educator of future generations and as a person who teaches. To become a person who teaches, one must begin by problematising one's own truth, the truth of others and the truth of the curriculum, leading ultimately to problematisation of the good.

The challenge of PFC as presented here relates closely to this idea of problematising the truth. While the teacher must problematise their own inherited beliefs and values, this does not mean avoiding commitment to a belief or value. The goal is not to remain valueless but to find a better value. As an educational practice, CPI enables teacher and students to search for the different and sometimes conflicting ideas of the good embedded in the tradition they inhabit. By introducing CPI to their practice, the teacher can begin to construct a meaningful and coherent life narrative, grounded in judgments about differing and often competing views of what is good in a particular practice or tradition. Higgins (2010a) identifies a number of questions that can refresh teacher's professional and personal life:

Why teach? Why is this practice worth putting at the centre of my life? What is the life of the teacher and how does this relate to my sense of what makes life worth living? What are the goods internal to the practice of teaching and how does this inform my sense of what it is most worthwhile to experience, excellent to achieve, and admirable to become? How does tending to the growth of others advance my own growth? (p. 341)

As a practice, PFC invites the teacher to embark on a journey of personal and professional development by addressing philosophical questions wherever a CPI is formed. Beyond students in the classroom, these inquiries might involve faculty members. In this way, the teacher can cultivate the internal good of PFC—that is, a disposition to dialogical relations and openness to a state of ignorance, shaped by the nature of CPI. Whether for professional development or excellence in applying Aristotelian terminology, PFC practice can provide opportunities to exercise educational judgment and may eventually yield educational wisdom. As an educational approach, CPI provides a fruitful platform for exercising this phronetic virtue.

The PFC literature does not explicitly address the tension between the domains of socialisation and qualification on one side and subjectification on the other,

which is inevitably present in educational judgment (see Juuso, 2007, ch. 9). I believe this is in part because a majority of advocates of PFC maintain that the facilitator should adopt a neutral approach to their task. Granted that we carry our values with us into the classroom, these observers believe that we should keep our personal views to ourselves while facilitating an inquiry. Even seemingly obvious moral stances such as "bullying is wrong" should not be presented as the "right" response. It is commonly held that the task is to arrive at a conclusion after considering examples that are not one-sided or clear-cut but are approached from multiple perspectives. It remains an open question whether this helps students to become morally good persons, but certainly they think for themselves in arriving at a conclusion.

This consideration applies only to the procedural domain of judgment and does not take into account what I have characterised as educational judgments. I agree with the position that, to be considered a genuine philosophical dialogue, CPI should not impose "right" answers from the start, and that the teacher should conceal his or her personal views. However, these views and their origins should not be unknown to the teacher, as it is their responsibility to notice any inequalities (such as subtle forms of racism) that lurk silently in the community. Self-study (see sub-chapter 5.2) can help the teacher to be sensitive to such moments and to promote careful inquiry into uncontested beliefs. Additionally, questions concerning our own growth can link our professional pursuits to more personal questions of living well.

While the emerging teacher-subject is not a self-determined actor in the Kantian sense, it is useful to recall the definition in Chapter 5 of an actor who makes "practical and normative judgments among possible alternative trajectories of action, in response to the emerging demands, dilemmas and ambiguities of presently evolving situations" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). Here, agency is achieved *by way of* the environment rather than *in* the environment. This educational framework provides a horizon that enables the teacher-subject to evaluate and re-evaluate their judgments; more importantly, the teacher-subject comes to realise that things can be thought and done differently. In so doing, it becomes possible to escape the notion of schooling as an input-output machine, where students are seen as material to be worked with and the goal is to deliver the curriculum as perfectly as possible (as measured by examinations and test scores).

Standing at the crux of this tension, the teacher must balance multidimensional purpose when making everyday judgments, choosing what seems the most desirable end in a particular moment, often at the expense of some other goal. This

challenge is the force that drives the philosophical teacher, and PFC pedagogy can serve the greatest good: the student's growth. The philosophical teacher can address this telos by sustaining the quest for the good beyond practice, which MacIntyre (1984) characterises as the good life: "the good life for man is the life spent in seeking for the good life for man" (p. 219). In other words, the unexamined life is not worth living or teaching.

6.3 Evaluation of the study process

The overall aim of this doctoral thesis was to conceptualise PFC as an educational practice. As well as being of interest to PFC practitioners and scholars, I hope the work will contribute to the improvement of educational practices. More generally, my primary goal was not to prescribe normative guidelines for teachers but to capture and articulate the qualities considered crucial in PFC pedagogy, including the dimensions that are important or necessary for PFC as an educational practice. During this process, I have been obliged to make many choices, including the selection of relevant theories and the method to be employed. These choices have limited the study in certain respects, and these limitations are discussed below, along with possible directions for future research.

Limits of philosophy

As discussed in sub-chapter 1.3, I adopted a philosophical method to guide the research process. Philosophical theorisation has certain limitations, and one question that can reasonably be asked concerns the objectivity of the process. A philosophical approach is necessarily confined to systemising, analysing and articulating the concepts under investigation,⁴⁶ excluding any closer contact with empirical reality. This research presents only a first-person point of view—in other words, although I was directly exposed to the reality⁴⁷ of reading, conversing and working in classrooms, everything reported here is filtered through me. Two examples of related studies that take account of empirical reality are Elina Harjunen's (2002) doctoral thesis *How Does a Teacher Construct Pedagogical Authority? Extracts from a Teacher's Everyday Life*, and Joe Oyler's (2015)

⁴⁶ Clearly, there is no unified understanding of philosophical method. For example, the analytical and Continental traditions differ in their views about theory building.

⁴⁷ In the sense of common-sense realism.

doctoral thesis *Expert Teacher Contributions to Argumentation Quality During Inquiry Dialogue*. These works confirm that the phenomena under investigation could equally have been approached using empirical methods. However, I would argue that the specific research questions warranted philosophical examination, and I have tried to be well informed and critical in posing those questions. In the end, the successes and failures of this process will be judged by the reader, and future empirical research related to this study remains a possibility. For example, the framework for procedural and educational judgments elaborated in the current study could be tested in separate empirical research. For example, an empirical study might ask teachers whether they recognise or are aware of the distinction elaborated here, and whether those who are aware teach differently or have reflected on how to teach differently. This information would improve our understanding of the relationships and their ongoing reconstruction in communities of philosophical inquiry.

Selecting the theories

The relevance of the theories selected for this study can also be questioned. In choosing the Continental tradition of educational thinking, the most important criterion was its relevance to questions of pedagogical action, which is again closely related to the pedagogical relationship. The Continental tradition also contrasted with second-generation PFC scholars such as Kennedy, Kohan and Murriss as one central dialectic in this study. Because PFC pedagogy is rooted in pragmatism (see sub-chapter 2.1) and as Kennedy, Kohan and Murriss draw on the ideas of first-generation authors, we can say that pragmatism is the breeding ground for all of these thinkers,⁴⁸ entailing a larger dialectic between the traditions of Continental thought and pragmatism. The difficulty in bringing these theories into the discussion was that, although there is some common ground between them, there is also a range of differing ideas and interpretations within these traditions (see Kivelä, Siljander & Sutinen, 2012). Based on the commentaries on relationships and historical contacts between them, we can see that the thematic links between the two traditions extend beyond the lines of demarcation, and the task of navigating these traditions felt overwhelming at times.

The theories of Biesta and MacIntyre were selected only after in-depth analysis of PFC pedagogy and the Continental tradition, based on the outcomes of the first

⁴⁸ Kennedy is the most explicit in connecting his ideas to pragmatism (see, for example, Kennedy 2012).

part of the study. The reason for choosing these authors and their theories in my quest to articulate the task of the philosophical teacher can be traced to the earlier phases of the study. As I came to realise that the tension between different takes on the pedagogical relationship related to larger shifts in scientific paradigms—that is, modernism and post-modernism—I considered it useful to select thinkers whose views seem to fall somewhere between the two. In his emphasis on history and teleology, MacIntyre is commonly seen as overly traditional and old-fashioned, but his interest in the social origins of moral authority positions him as a relativistic thinker (Higgins, 2010e). Like MacIntyre, Gert Biesta's work, at least in relation to Kennedy, Kohan and Murriss, seems to highlight the tension arising from the Kantian pedagogical paradox: How it is possible to cultivate freedom through coercion? He seems to align with modern educational thought, and especially the Continental tradition examined here, in stressing educational interventions focused on subjectness during the growth process. However, his takes on autonomy, rationality and freedom differ from the Bildung theorists in neglecting the idea that self-determination can be achieved through education. Indeed, Biesta entirely ignores the notion of self-determination in the Kantian sense (see for example Biesta, 2013), coming closer to the post-modern views of Kennedy, Kohan and Murriss.

During the research process, I learned that Biesta and MacIntyre have attracted increasing commentary.⁴⁹ However, these choices always entail limitations, and other directions might have proved equally fruitful. For example, it may have proved interesting to select only one thinker for analysis in relation to the research questions. By adopting this widely used approach, I would have been able to immerse myself more fully in a particular line of thought.

⁴⁹ On Biesta, see, for example, the special issue of the *Journal of Childhood and Philosophy* 2017. On MacIntyre, see, for example, special issues in the *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 2003 and 2010.

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Original publications

- I Väilitalo, R., Juuso, H., & Sutinen, A. (2016). Philosophy for children as an educational practice. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 35(1), 79–92.
- II Michaud, O., & Väilitalo, R. (2017). Authority, democracy and philosophy: The nature and role of authority in a community of philosophical inquiry. In M. Gregory, J. Haynes & K. Murrin (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of philosophy for children* (pp. 27–35). New York, NY: Routledge.
- III Väilitalo, R. (2017). Internal goods of teaching in philosophy for children: The role of the teacher and the nature of teaching in pfc. *Childhood & Philosophy*, 13(27), 271–290.
- IV Väilitalo, R. (2017). Considering subject positions with Biesta. *Childhood & Philosophy*, 13(28), 557–566.

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