Envisioning Valuable Lives:

Moral Imagining, Autonomy and Philosophy in Childhood

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Abstract

Envisioning Valuable Lives: Moral Imagining, Autonomy and Philosophy in Childhood

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This thesis explores the question: How might moral imagining be conceived so as to support the cultivation of responsible autonomy in childhood? It argues that when conceived as a conscious, flexible process, moral imagining may contribute to children's emerging agency by expanding and enriching their envisioned options for what they believe is worth valuing within their current and future circumstances, thereby helping to make their autonomy more responsible. More specifically, it proposes the conception of *deliberate moral imagining*, understood as the purposeful envisioning of a given context from multiple frames of reference in response to a real-world encounter, with the goal of bringing to light possibilities for what seems reasonable to value in order to broaden the moral lens through which lived experiences are approached and assessed. According to the argument advanced, deliberate moral imagining may assist children in confronting some important challenges to responsible autonomy that risk constricting their envisioning of the overarching contexts most influential in childhood: their relation to others (how they view and treat them), their relation to self (how they perceive and value themselves) and their relation to knowledge (how they learn and what they claim to know about the world). Indeed, in response to the respective challenges of narrow empathetic scope, conversion inhibition and inaccurate pseudoenvironments, deliberate moral imagining may help enrich children's "mental landscape" by cultivating relational openness through three crucial autonomy supports, namely empathic engagement, self-efficacy and reasonableness. The thesis draws on three theoretical frameworks— neo-Aristotelian virtue theory, the Capabilities Approach and classical pragmatism—and includes a case study of the Philosophy for Children program as an illustrative example of deliberate moral imagining in action.

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Epigraph

"If you can learn a simple trick, Scout, you'll get along a lot better with all kinds of folks. You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view, until you climb inside of his skin and walk around in it."

—Atticus Finch in *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee

"Don't get me wrong—I have nothing against adults. I am, after all, one myself. But many of us have forgotten how to imagine. That's not to say that adults are incapable of imagining, it's just to say that too many of us don't take the time to do it. We tell children off for daydreaming in class, or tell them to get down from the trees or out of the mud, or to stop playing imaginary football and to do something useful instead. We impose arbitrary rules about what is important to spend time thinking about, as though the mind should be limited and controlled instead of being free to explore and create and delight in the unknown."

—Zana Fraillon, Australian novelist

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Introduction

> I feel like the difference with regular imagining is I think about random things that happen or that pop up in my head in my normal life…but here *I get to imagine on purpose*. It just opens you up to things that you never thought about before and makes you think about different questions…a new space opens, like a new colour to go to. It is different because you get to imagine things from another point of view and it makes you realize stuff. It's nice to have a lot of different thoughts so you can pull it all together—you imagine things and get results.
>
> Sometimes I am lying in my bed for hours just thinking about the things we talked about—things I had not imagined before. I am always trying to imagine what it would be like to be another person…it could be a creature, it could be a boy, it could be a lady bug, it could be an elephant, it could be anything! Let's say I see someone walking on the street: I'll think, "I wonder what they are thinking about." It feels weird but it also feels like I am discovering something different, and then I come back to my own life and I can think about it.
>
> Sometimes I just wonder why I am so lucky to be alive: who am I, what am I, who are humans? In a way, I just want to be every person so I can see what they are thinking, what it would be like to be born in their family, what they do during the day, what they find interesting. It helps me understand them from my own kind of point of view. Sometimes I wish that I had some features that I imagine these other people have, some ways of thinking that they have. And then sometimes, I wish that other people would imagine what I am feeling in some ways and what my point of view is. Whenever we talk about this kind of stuff I always get really into it, and it's like imagining is all I want to do. I am always into it. Like I never want it to end.[1]

These spontaneous, authentic, earnest words from a 10 year-old philosopher capture an intuition I have had over years of working with children: the childhood experience seems uniquely positioned to reveal the potential power of *imagining on purpose*. Time and again in my own philosophical practices with young people, I have learnt—and continue to learn—about the power of imagining; how it can enable children to become attuned to ambiguity and complexity, to grow more comfortable with uncertainty, to take new ideas seriously, to recognise and resist their own biases, and to discover and appreciate the diversity of human experiences and perspectives. I have had the privilege of witnessing firsthand how such imaginative engagement can help them become more thoughtful, articulate and confident versions of themselves, all the while fostering their sense of agency. Yet throughout this time, I have also come up against what I consider to be misconceptions about children that cause adults to dismiss their potential as agents who are able to grow into their ability to reflect on, affirm and enact what matters to them. The doubts stoking these misconceptions seem to amount to a crucial wondering: Can children really think and act autonomously around questions of value?

This thesis represents my effort to address this assumption-laden question through a focus on imagining in childhood. In so doing, my research strives to mirror the two complementary purposes that drive my youth practices: cultivating in young people the ability to make meaning of their lives in ways relevant to their current contexts, while also challenging fundamental assumptions about childhood and what children are presumed capable of doing. In an ever globalising world overflowing with complex issues, it is essential for young people to get to explore issues that matter to them so they may emerge as capable, considerate thinkers with ideas worth sharing. The title of this thesis—“Envisioning Valuable Lives”—reflects this imperative: given that children nowadays are confronted with so many diverse and often conflicting possibilities of living, they need a supportive space in which to collaboratively imagine and wonder aloud about what they deem worthy of their valuing so they then may, in the words of Martha Nussbaum, “form [for themselves] a conception of the good life and engage in critical

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[1] Quotation from a 10 year-old female participant on the importance of deliberate moral imagining, within the context of an empirical study run in partnership with Brila Youth Projects. Please see the third footnote for details.

reflection about the planning of [their] life."[2] Rather than dismiss children's capacity for agency, such an endeavour requires tackling certain questions head-on: What should autonomy in childhood involve? How might adults facilitate autonomy development in children? Can contemporary experiences of childhood enable children to think autonomously about the kinds of lives they have reason to value in the present and as they grow up? And can they learn to enact these valuable lives in ways that are meaningful but also responsible?

In considering such lines of inquiry over the years—either directly in dialogue with children or by virtue of my experiences with them—I have consistently returned to this notion of imagining on purpose. Is it possible to construct a theory of imagining that connects autonomy to responsibility? I want to argue that it is possible, particularly if the deliberate and moral aspects of imagining are emphasised; a purposeful envisioning of values that may help children shape their sense of both agency and accountability. That said, to set off on a metaphorical note, this thesis deals with concepts that cannot stand still. Concepts like imagining, autonomy and childhood have imbued richness and texture into my reflections but have tended not to stick around long enough for direct contemplation; if chased, they move in so many different directions that it seems only definitional dizziness can ensue.

Accordingly, putting these restless concepts in relation is no easy task, and the connections and demarcations this thesis proposes may not satisfy all the queries above, but they will hopefully lessen the conceptual fidgeting. To begin, then, in this introductory chapter, I will present my research question and overall position, as well as the scholarly contributions I hope my thesis can make. This will include an outline of the main steps in my argument and a brief description of my interdisciplinary approach. I will then sketch out my three theoretical frameworks and my case study, which will also act as a summary of my five chapters. Finally, I will justify my focus on autonomy in childhood, taking the time to present my own account of what I am calling *responsible autonomy* and its applicability for children, with references to the existing theories I find most compelling and to ways these may be interpreted to serve young agents.

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[2] Nussbaum, 2011, 34.

Argument overview and scholarly contribution

My scholarly interests are motivated by my passionate concern for autonomy in childhood, specifically the opportunities that children have to envisage and enact the kinds of lives they believe they have reason to value in their present and as they grow up. Broadly speaking, my thesis is guided by the question: How might moral imagining be conceived so as to support the cultivation of responsible autonomy in childhood? As my main hypothesis, I want to argue that when conceived as a conscious, flexible process, moral imagining may contribute to children's emerging agency by expanding and enriching their envisioned options for what they believe is worth valuing—in others, in themselves and in the world—within their current and future circumstances, thereby helping to make their autonomy more responsible.

More specifically, I will be arguing for what I call *deliberate moral imagining*, understood as the purposeful envisioning of a given context from multiple frames of reference in response to a real-world encounter; a process that is intentionally initiated to assist with the goal of bringing to light possibilities for what seems reasonable to value in order to broaden the moral lens through which lived experiences are approached and assessed. Conceived in this way, moral imagining may support the cultivation of responsible autonomy in children by creating a space in time for them to envision the overarching contexts that I deem most influential in childhood: their relation to others (how they view and treat them), their relation to self (how they perceive and value themselves) and their relation to knowledge (how they learn and what they claim to know about the world).

According to the argument I will be advancing, deliberate moral imagining may assist children in confronting some important challenges to responsible autonomy that risk constricting their envisioning of these overarching contexts of relation to other, self and knowledge. These challenges include:

- *narrow empathetic scope*, a term I coined to describe the tendency to empathise to an insufficient degree due to limited frames of reference that oversimplify or misconstrue the circumstances of others—a deficiency that may restrict who children find worthy of their valuing, thus jeopardising their envisioning of the overarching context of relation-to-other.
- *conversion inhibition*, a term I am proposing to denote a psychological impediment resulting from negative judgements about personal worth, which may prevent children from perceiving themselves as agents capable of converting the resources available to them into opportunities and outcomes, thus jeopardising their envisioning of the overarching context of relation-to-self.
- *inaccurate pseudoenvironments*, a term I am adapting to designate the faulty mental constructs based on misinformation and bias that yield stereotyped thinking and misleading value judgements, which may affect children's capacity to think and act reasonably, thus jeopardising their envisioning of the overarching context of relation-to-knowledge.

In response to these challenges, throughout this thesis, I will focus on developing what I propose as the main features of deliberate moral imagining that children may mobilise to enrich their “mental landscape”—a metaphor I will flesh out to capture the intertwined concepts, social imaginaries and personal experiences that make up the scenery of their mind. First, the *acknowledgement of limited perspectives* involves children’s willingness to examine their mental landscape in light of a given situation to see how it may be presenting a limited picture and to envision possible ways of overcoming these limitations. Second, the *recognition of commonality* involves them analysing the aforementioned limited picture to see if there are distinctions, demarcations, distancings—especially prejudicial ones—that are preventing what is shared, similar, symmetric to come to the fore. Third, the *identification of competing considerations* also involves them inspecting the limited picture presented by their mental landscape but in an effort to uncover and appreciate the tensions, inconsistencies and ambivalences that exist notwithstanding the possible commonalities.

In my view, when mobilised with purpose, these features of deliberate moral imagining may enable children to actively envision circumstances they have not yet encountered due to age and experience, which is crucial preparation for thinking and acting autonomously in real-world settings, as I will argue. With practice, this purposeful envisioning may cultivate a trio of characteristics that I deem as crucial supports for responsible autonomy in childhood because of their potential to address the challenges previously mentioned:

- *empathic engagement*, or children’s commitment to taking seriously the perspectives and circumstances of others by extending themselves into their experience with sensibility and judgement, so as to expand their criteria for empathy and overcome narrow empathetic scope;

- *self-efficacy*, or children's belief in their growing competence as agents who can act in the world and exercise control over their lives through genuine effort and gumption, so as to build resilience in the face of adversity and overcome conversion inhibition;
- *reasonableness*, or a judicious orientation toward judgement-formation that allows children to tackle difficult, complex situations using various thinking strategies, so as to be more epistemically flexible in their knowledge construction and overcome inaccurate pseudoenvironments.

My approach in this thesis will be to explore the intersection of these challenges and supports to autonomy in childhood so as to showcase the significant role that deliberate moral imagining may play, specifically in developing what I call *relational openness*, or an increased sensitivity to and awareness of the complexities in their relations with others, with themselves and with knowledge, translating into a more responsible orientation towards their global autonomy.

In terms of knowledge advancement, I see my thesis as making a twofold scholarly contribution at the level of theory and at the level of practice. First, theoretically speaking, it offers a nuanced and multifaceted conceptualisation of moral imagining as a deliberate process activated toward particular ends, thus lending it a specificity and practicability that is lacking in competing accounts. Grounded in research on moral imagination across the disciplines, the three features of deliberate moral imagining I am proposing honour the rich, diverse existing literature on this complex notion while also painting a precise picture of my own distinctive conception.

Fusing moral, political and educational philosophy, my argument draws and builds on three robust theoretical frameworks (outlined in the next section) in an effort to enrich my conceptualisation of deliberate moral imagining through multiple frames of reference. This interdisciplinary commitment reflects the very process I am defending—a research strategy that is deliberately morally imaginative to ensure a broadened moral lens with which to approach and assess my chosen topic. By carefully considering the viability of my proposed conception and its features through different philosophical lenses, my aim is to eliminate some of the ambiguity surrounding the notion of moral imagination so it can be put to better use, notably in the service of children.

Indeed, whereas most accounts are vague with respect to the targets of their analysis, my proposed conception centres specifically on the significance of deliberate morally imagining in childhood. I see this focus as not only original but necessary: since children have recourse to a smaller bank of experiences when they consider what seems worthy of their valuing for their present and their future, deliberate moral imagining may act as a helpful stand-in for the lived encounters they have yet to face. Through their purposeful envisioning, they may be able to envisage and enact their autonomy competence in ways previously denied to them, having cultivated some of the key characteristics necessary, like empathic engagement, self-efficacy and reasonableness.

This possibility stands a chance of placing children on more equal footing with adults when it comes to having their values and concerns taken into account, not only in their everyday lives but also on a wider societal scale in terms of the policies affecting them. My argument is therefore unique in its explicit and sustained linking of imagination and autonomy, specifically how an emphasis on the moral dimensions of imagining may translate into a more responsible expression of autonomy. As such, my thesis has a markedly activist colouring because it calls for more opportunities for children to envisage and exercise their autonomy competence in ways they find meaningful, while seeking to protect them from ageist mentalities that may result in their exclusion or manipulation, as I will further explain at the end of this chapter.

Second, although the argument in my thesis is mainly theoretical in nature, unlike other popular accounts of moral imagination, it has real-world application because it is directly informed by pedagogical practices with children and entails implications for how child-adult relationships should be regarded. My proposed conceptualisation of deliberate moral imagining is influenced in no small part by my extensive work in formal and informal learning settings as a philosophical practitioner and teacher trainer committed to integrating deliberate moral imagining in youth-driven exchanges and interventions. By focusing on the context of childhood, this thesis presents moral imagining's promise via encounters with children—first through hypothetical instances inspired by real events, then through actual instances of youth engaged in purposively facilitated morally imaginative practices.

Throughout, my metaphor of a mental landscape helps to provide a unifying visual counterpart to my inquiry: What is in children's mental landscape and how can it be enhanced, utilised, protected through deliberate moral imagining? I will intentionally be addressing childhood broadly rather than formal education specifically, not only because my own work champions informal learning settings but also because "educative" moments can happen anytime and anywhere, and adults' attitudes toward children can affect them no matter the circumstances.

Finally, my thesis aims to lay the foundations for a conception of deliberate moral imagining in childhood that I hope will be judged worthy of empirical testing: for this reason, I strive to be very specific with the criteria and instantiations I provide of my proposed features so that these may eventually be transformed into research indicators. Further, since this applied dimension of my thesis provides preliminary evidence for the theoretical claims I am advancing, it has the potential to inspire more governmental and institutional support for morally imaginative research and education projects that celebrate and cultivate young people's responsible autonomy.

Theoretical frameworks and case study

In terms of structure, this thesis is divided into five chapters that each contribute to my overall aim of conceiving deliberate moral imagining as a support for the cultivation of responsible autonomy in childhood. The first chapter will provide an interdisciplinary review of scholarly literature on imagination generally and on moral imagination specifically, in an effort to contextualise my ensuing sketch of deliberate moral imagining. Next, as outlined in the following paragraphs, the three main chapters that follow will draw and build on distinct but complementary theoretical frameworks with an aim to refining my initial conception of deliberate moral imagining through immersion in different philosophical perspectives. My fifth chapter will present my case study of the Philosophy for Children program as an illustrative example of deliberate moral imagining in action, as further explained below. Finally, in my conclusion, I will offer a brief critique of my proposed account through an examination of the possible dangers and demands of deliberate moral imagining so conceived.

The bulk of my argument in my main chapters develops through engagement with some central ideas from three theoretical frameworks: neo-Aristotelian virtue theory, the Capabilities Approach and classical pragmatism. I have chosen these frameworks not only because I deem them to offer original, thoughtful philosophical approaches that are concerned with both intellectual rigour and intuitive appeal, but also because I view them as affording unique vantage points from which to examine and extend my conception of deliberate moral imagining, enabling me to be morally imaginative in my very construction of my argument.

At first glance, these frameworks may seem like strange bedfellows given the variance in their regard for imagination, their epistemological bases, their theoretical presuppositions and their perspectives on autonomy. My aim in associating them is not to force a connection but rather to treat them as multiple frames of reference that can broaden my purposeful envisioning of what a conception of deliberate moral imagining might look like. Put another way, these frameworks provide a scaffolding—all three strands are heuristically important to the development of my conception because they uncover angles and expose complexities that might otherwise go overlooked.

And so, the purpose of the main chapters is not a study of the theoretical frameworks as such but an attempt to answer my guiding question through the lens they each afford. I will therefore focus on particular facets of each framework while fully acknowledging that this portrayal does not do justice to the extent of their theoretical reach. For instance, although I concede that all three of them have contributed to ethical, political and educational theory, I have assigned each framework to one of these three perspectives based on how they have stretched my thinking with respect to the challenges and supports to autonomy in childhood I have identified.

Accordingly, the three main chapters succeeding my literature review are divided along these lines: each begins with an overview of a key component from the framework that is relevant to my argument, then introduces the challenge to autonomy under consideration. This introduction is followed by a construal of childhood autonomy based on my interpretation of the framework and a substantial discussion of how deliberate moral imagining may overcome the challenge by fostering the support to autonomy proposed, along with examples of the conception in action and of potential ways to bolster its impact. Through my engagement with these frameworks, I will also strive to fine-tune them by highlighting the potential contributions afforded by my focus on childhood autonomy and deliberate moral imagining.

- ***ETHICAL PERSPECTIVE***: First, I will examine the ethics of deliberate moral imagining in childhood through the lens of neo-Aristotelian virtue theory because I find it illuminates how children may expand their envisioning of the overarching context of relation-to-other—how they view and consequently treat others. Inspired most prominently by Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, this theoretical framework favours a normative approach to morality concerned with examining the character of individuals through their capacity for virtue rather than emphasising their actions. It therefore offers a thought-provoking lens through which to articulate the challenge of narrow empathetic scope as a slight but important deviation of empathy conceived as a virtue.

I will argue that deliberate moral imagining may enhance children's empathic engagement by motivating their acquisition of practical wisdom, or the quality of perception that increases sensitivity to the salient particulars of situations, notably those that call for empathic response. Through this framework, I will be able to consider how deliberate moral imagining may help children to expand their criteria for empathy, identifying more candidates with whom to empathise and perceiving circumstances more impartially than they did previously, particularly when buttressed by narrative aids that model and stimulate its use. My argument will also improve on the framework's bleak view of autonomy and childhood in order to make it more fair to children, in part by underscoring how deliberate moral imagining heightens their nascent practical wisdom and capacity for virtue.

- ***POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE:*** Next, I will examine the politics of deliberate moral imagining in childhood through the lens of the Capabilities Approach (CA) because I deem it as well positioned to elucidate how children may expand their envisioning of the overarching context of relation-to-self—how they perceive and value themselves as agents. Spearheaded by proponents Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum, this theoretical paradigm of human development inquires into the actual freedoms people have to achieve the quality of life to which they aspire by analysing what they are able to be and do, understood as their capabilities and their functionings. It therefore offers a highly pertinent lens through which to work out the challenge of conversion inhibition as an impediment to transforming resources into valued capabilities (opportunities) and functionings (outcomes).

I will argue that deliberate moral imagining, when framed as a complex capability, may foster self-efficacy in children by expanding and enriching what they find worthy of their valuing *in* themselves and thus *for* themselves. Through this framework, I will be able to consider how deliberate moral imagining may equip children with the imaginative resources to perceive themselves as capable of affecting the social settings in which they find themselves, simply by living out and embodying the freedoms they have envisaged and affirmed as valuable, particularly when reinforced by access to conceptual resources, dialogical space and creative expression. My argument will also improve on the framework's hyper-contextualism by making a case for the importance of specific complex capabilities in childhood like deliberate moral imagining, especially given children's more precarious position as a vulnerable segment of the population.

- ***EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE:*** Lastly, I will examine the educative potential of moral imagination in childhood through the lens of classical pragmatism because it strikes me as an appropriate intermediary between the theory and practice sections of my thesis, highlighting how children may expand their envisioning of the overarching context of relation-to-knowledge—how they learn and what they claim to know about the world. Though more of a movement than a unified theory, this theoretical framework captures the common themes that emerge from the philosophies of John Dewey, Charles Sanders Peirce and William James (in spite of their many disagreements), particularly their insistence on inquiry as a mode of learning. It therefore offers an insightful lens through which to describe the challenge of inaccurate pseudoenvironments—a term I adapt from social theorist Walter Lippmann—as faulty mental constructs based on misinformation and bias that interfere with efforts to inquire toward reasonable thought and action.

I will argue that deliberate moral imagining may help children to destabilise the stereotyped thinking and problematic normative claims resulting from their pseudoenvironments by promoting specific learning conditions and dispositions that I see as necessary for developing their reasonableness. Through this framework, I will be able to consider how deliberate moral imagining may benefit from evaluation criteria gleaned from the pragmatist principles of indeterminacy, reflection, habit and community to help ensure its pedagogical worthiness in educational settings. My argument will also improve on the framework's account of inquiry by emphasising the impact of deliberate moral imagining on the epistemological ridigity that may compromise children's inquiry-based learning experiences.

Though this thesis will be largely philosophical in terms of its theoretical frameworks and argument, I will complement my conception of deliberate moral imagining with a case study chapter, in an effort to concretise what a morally imaginative practice with children might look like. The chapter will focus on the Community of Philosophical Inquiry (CPI), a pedagogical model designed by educational philosophers Matthew Lipman and Ann Margaret Sharp as part of the Philosophy for Children (P4C) program, which aims to foster children's multidimensional thought (or combined critical, creative and caring thinking) by inviting them to collaboratively grapple with the contestable questions they deem central to their lives and seek reasonable judgements through structured group dialogue. I chose the CPI because it represents a promising shift in 20th century pedagogy toward an autonomy-facilitating form of education that supports the cognitive, metacognitive, affective and moral development of youth.

Beyond serving illustrative purposes, the inclusion of a case study in my thesis will play an important symbolic role of showing concern for children's own perspectives on deliberate moral imagining and their efforts to hone responsible autonomy in the ways previously outlined and specified in my next section. To this end, the chapter will begin with an overview of the theoretical suppositions and implications, then present my arguments inspired by my philosophical practices in general as well as from specific empirical research data culled from a year-long study I conducted entitled "Imaginative Meaning-Making: Children's Reflections on their Phenomenological Experiences of Philosophical Experimentation."

This study followed the experiences of 25 youth aged six through sixteen engaging in CPI dialogues, notably how they made use of deliberate moral imagining to expand the scope of the reasoning they provided in support of their various philosophical positions and related creative projects.[3] The point of the case study is not to make empirical claims about the method's effectiveness but to offer an example of what “envisioning valuable lives” could look like in the form of a purposeful pedagogical practice.

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[3] Certified by Concordia's Human Research Ethics Committee, the context for the research project was a series of youth programs—including extra-curricular workshops and day camps—that ran from July 2015 to August 2016 through Brila Youth Projects, a registered Canadian educational charity under the Canada Revenue Agency (#82689 1251 RR0001) and a nationally incorporated non-for-profit under Industry Canada (# 544102) that I founded as an endorsed CPI practitioner and as an affiliate of the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (www.brila.org). Children participating in the research project were members of Brila's 2015-2016 youth board, which met semi-regularly throughout the school year and during school holidays to help ensure a "for-youth, by-youth" spirit in the charity's programming. Pseudonymised data was collected both from the youth board meetings themselves—including audio-recorded philosophical dialogues and samples of creative projects (e.g., stories, poems, illustrations, photography, visual art works, performance, and multimedia works)—and from semi-structured face-to-face audio-recorded interviews with the youth participants. These interviews adhered to phenomenological research methods, focusing on the participants' interpretations of their perceptions and understandings of their experience of the CPI model as a morally imaginative practice and how they constructed meaning based on it.

Focus on autonomy in childhood

In addressing my research question and its underlying assumptions, throughout this thesis I will presuppose a specific view of childhood and a particular conception of autonomy that both require justification before moving forward. The account of deliberate moral imagining I will be proposing is focused on childhood—and specifically on experiences of autonomy in childhood—because I deem it an ethical and political imperative to portray young people as capable and deserving of autonomy relative to their life experience and, as I will soon be explaining, to expand their opportunities to envisage and exercise their “evolving autonomy” competence as “emerging agents,” two terms I am proposing and defining below. This focus is not meant to imply that deliberate moral imagining (as I will be conceiving it) is not applicable to adults nor that it is more easily mastered by adults.

On the contrary, as I will explore in my fourth chapter and as my case study will suggest, it could be argued that children may be better positioned to excel at morally imaginative practices due to the particular receptivity that tends to characterise childhood. While I would contend that the ability to morally imagine is important at any age, it has special significance in childhood since children have not lived as long as their adult counterparts so they have fewer (though no less meaningful) experiences from which to draw when they reflect on what seems reasonable to value in their present and for their future—which, as I hope to show, is a crucial part of becoming responsibly autonomous.

And so, the process of children imaginatively building the repertoire of what I will be calling their "mental landscape" has the potential to contribute to the types of living they value and choose to adopt as they accumulate more lived experiences. Too often, it seems children and adolescents are dismissed as candidates for even minimal autonomy because they are deemed unable to empathise, act and reason (among other skills) in the requisite ways for constructive citizenship. As I will be elucidating further below, while developmental and legal limitations cannot be ignored, scholarship on childhood—including the CPI literature—suggests that when such agency-enhancing skills are honed at an early age, these may help to enable children's broader involvement in decision-making affecting their own lives and their social settings.

This thesis therefore proposes an account of deliberate moral imagining as enabling what I view as three necessary supports for cultivating responsible autonomy as of childhood—that is, empathic engagement, self-efficacy and reasonableness, which my subsequent chapters will consider in turn—by enabling young people to actively envision circumstances they may not yet have encountered due to their age and experience. My approach also resists research done *on* young people in favour of research done *with* them: the concept of deliberate moral imagining that I am proposing is therefore directly informed by children's own takes on the significance of this nebulous concept, as embedded in my case study chapter. Within this section, I will specify what I mean by the terms "childhood" and "autonomy," drawing on relevant theorists who share my concern regarding the development of youth agency and the inclusion of marginalised groups more broadly.

My theoretical and applied research thus far has explored how dialogic philosophical practices with youth reveal common biases against childhood—understood as the period between preschool and legal age, so roughly four through 17—especially in terms of their capacities for autonomous thinking and acting. Admittedly, this is a significant age range that represents highly heterogeneous experiences so I will be focusing on elementary school-aged children, with some references to adolescents where helpful to better understand the potential scope of deliberate moral imagining. Nevertheless, I fully grant that even this more centred focus may inadvertently suggest such children share a common experience rather than underline the variation between them on myriad fronts, from socioeconomic factors to neurodiversity to family constellations to personality traits. Though I do not wish to treat them alike without regard for their particularities—and my case study will end with examples of how my own practice honours this distinctiveness—to the extent that they represent a category of people whose capacities and possibilities for agency have been routinely dismissed, it can be helpful to consider them together.

Still, as many philosophers of childhood have noted, the very term "childhood" is laden with cultural and conceptual assumptions that ought to be challenged if the prospects of children's autonomy development are to be taken seriously.[4] In *The Well of Being*, David Kennedy traces the history of childhood as a concept to illustrate how it arrived at its current rendition, borrowing from Philippe Aries phrase "the invention of childhood."[5] Throughout most of intellectual history, "the child is [seen] not just as an incomplete, but an imperfect form of subjectivity…as if they were members of a separate species."[6]

Some scholars have used the term "adultism" to describe the tendency to disrespect young people by categorising them as inferior and unworthy of agency. One such theorist, Joanna Haynes, observes in her book *Philosophy and Education* how contemporary ideas about childhood tend to gravitate around two views: in the first, the child is seen as representing an absence or insufficiency of adult qualities—what philosopher of childhood Garrett Matthews has called the "deficit conception."[7] In the second, the child is seen as a symbol of innocence and playfulness. To defy such strict categorisation, Haynes urges her readers to think back to their own upbringing to see how their perspectives on childhood have been affected by their personal experiences and memories as children[8]. As an initial example of deliberate moral imagining at work, this exercise itself may be described as morally imaginative since it invites us to purposefully visualise the sources of our presumptions and of our metaphors about childhood in an effort to identify how they might be impacting our values and to envision their possible implications for the ways we view and treat children, notably with regard to their exclusion from our social narratives (both current and historical) and to the "impacts of being treated as inferior…the sense of powerlessness, hopelessness and insecurity."[9]

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[4] Given my interest in the Philosophy for Children (P4C) program, the philosophers of childhood I am featuring here are also P4C theorists.

[5] Aries, 1962.

Drawing on his own philosophical engagements with children to problematise childhood-related prejudices, Matthews emphasises their unique stance as wonderers, able to mobilise their puzzlement about the world in ways that adults tend to lose over time, underlining "the need to rethink the child, not as an ignorant being, but as a rational agent who already has the capacity to reason philosophically."[10] On this view, children are not defined by their deficiency in comparison to adults but rather by their unique epistemic vantage point: as Haynes writes,

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[6] Kennedy, 2006, 64.

[7] Matthews, 2008.

[8] Haynes et al., 2014, 125.

[9] *Ibid*, 125.

[10] Matthews, 1980, 172.

"Recognition of children's disposition to wonder and ask philosophical questions points to an epistemic advantage of coming new into the world."[11]

Moving on to my definition of "autonomy" in childhood, in this thesis, children will be depicted as emerging agents who need specific opportunities in their current circumstances to envisage and exercise their evolving responsible autonomy competence. What I mean by "emerging" and "evolving" is important and will become clearer as I lay out my account of autonomy in the following paragraphs and throughout the thesis. While total self-determination may not be possible or advisable in childhood because of developmental and legal limitations I will briefly consider below, children in their various stages of growing up already exercise degrees of autonomy in meaningful ways that should be recognised to ensure they are treated as agents in their own right—that is, as persons able to take an active role in their own lives rather than merely as eventual adults.

Even so, I am not suggesting that children are capable of or entitled to the same levels of autonomy as adults, hence the importance of the qualifiers "emerging" and "evolving" in my account. By way of a metaphor, my proposal is a kind of autonomy with training wheels: as I hope to elucidate, children may get an authentic though mitigated experience of autonomous thought and action thanks to crucial supports designed to introduce them, slowly but surely, to the full "motive power" of their agency.

This notion of an assisted autonomy is important due to two very real sources of constraints on children. First, developmentally speaking, children are "emerging" autonomous agents in the sense of *gradually* coming into their own as active authors of their own lives, because they face certain developmental restrictions in terms of their cognitive maturity and psychological capacities, for instance their reasoning skills, social cooperation, impulse control and emotional awareness.[12] Second, and relatedly, legally speaking, children are "emerging" autonomous agents in the sense of *progressively* manifesting themselves as actors in their social settings since they tend not to be recognised as full members of society in many places worldwide and are therefore not permitted to act as such, usually until they reach the age of majority. Scholars from various disciplines including philosophy, psychology, law and medicine, have argued over whether young children are even capable of certain facets of autonomy, such as goal-directed behaviour, stabilised preferences, expression of such preferences, and basic critical reflection,[13] yet there is growing consensus that children's potential for eventual autonomy competence should nonetheless be nurtured or at least not inhibited.[14]

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[11] Haynes et al., 2014, 130.

For these reasons, numerous countries are beginning to recognise children's voices as emerging agents with respect to major decisions affecting their lives, like child-custody arrangements, medical decision-making (notably involving terminal illnesses),[15] relationship preferences, and issues that form part of the expanding field of family ethics.[16] As such, in my account, autonomy in childhood will be characterised as "evolving" in the sense that it is (all things being equal) growing in its breadth and in its complexity as children age. Of course, the journey toward autonomy competence is not necessarily a straight trajectory so I will assume that autonomy is continuously evolving—and sometimes even devolving—throughout childhood and even well into adulthood.

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[12] See Lerner, ed., 2015.

[13] Matthews and Mullin, 2015.

[14] Feinberg, 1980.

[15] Kopelman and Moskop, 1989.

[16] Baylis and Mcleod, 2014.

If we consider the differences between an “emerging” agent and a so-called “full” agent—notwithstanding the very real difficulties that even adults may face in reaching the latter status, making the issue not solely one of age—we could contend the following: whereas adults have the possibility of being full agents in no small part because they are legally entitled to act independently (unless they have a specific dependence on another due to a physical, mental or psychological need), children as emerging agents may at best act partly independently, as I will explain below. Yet out of respect for their eventual autonomy competence as full agents and their current efforts as emerging agents, they should have more say in situations that directly affect them, like what they study at school, how they spend their free time, the kinds of relationships they get to pursue, and the like.

So what should autonomy mean in the context of childhood? As Gerald Dworkin has noted, autonomy is a term of art in that its characterisation varies depending on the field and usage, making it a notoriously difficult concept to define without compromising the intricacy of the facets of human reality it denotes.[17] While a full survey of autonomy theorists is beyond the reach and purpose of this section, I want to situate my own notion of responsible autonomy under the umbrella term “relational” adopted by feminist philosophers, in an effort to acknowledge the social embeddedness of agents and the effects of “complex intersecting social determinants, such as race, class, gender, and ethnicity”—to which I want to add ageist and adultist views—on their sense of self.[18]

Moreover, relational perspectives of autonomy tend to depict agents not as purely rational, atomistic beings—which has been the tendency with major philosophers following Kant and Descartes—but rather as embodied, emotional and creative individuals, thus underscoring the role of imagination in their autonomy competence.[19] When applied to childhood, a relational account has the potential to acknowledge the impact of our adult practices and of our child-adult relationships on children's evolving autonomy, and unveil how the possibilities for agency that children currently possess are both enabled and limited by the childhood constructs we currently hold within our social settings. Accordingly, the account of responsible autonomy I am espousing stands a chance of being socially disruptive—and, as a result, of seeming extreme to those who do not share my philosophy of childhood—since it calls for more space for children to exercise their evolving autonomy in ways relevant to their circumstances and life stage.

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[17] Dworkin, 1988, 7.

To begin, I should note that my account is largely consistent with that of feminist philosopher Amy Mullin who adopts a relational view of autonomy with regard to children, but I disagree with her on a key point about reflective reasoning that I think is well addressed by relational autonomy theorist Marilyn Friedman, even though her account is not child-focused. I will therefore briefly present Mullin's stance before dedicating the rest of this section to my take on Friedman's theory. In a series of articles on childhood and autonomy, Mullin argues that young children aged three to eight (a range even younger than that considered in this thesis) demonstrate often overlooked degrees of autonomous choice—or *local* autonomy—even though they may not yet be equipped for full self-governance over significant segments of their lives—or *global* autonomy[20].

Though their range of choice is usually narrower, children have what she calls "volitional stability," or moderate continuity in their commitments, that can "guide [their] activities to

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[18] Mackenzie and Stoljar, eds., 2000, 4.

[19] *Ibid*, 121.

[20] Mullin, 2007, 537.

accord with what [they] care about"[21] and "shape the forms their relationships take"[22] through their feeling-laden appraisals of what matters to them, their motivations to pursue certain goals and realise specific outcomes, the supportive guidance of trusted others and their imaginative explorations—an element to which I will return in my next chapter.

Accordingly, childhood is a worthy context for "autonomy support," a term that Mullin adapts from Self-Determination Theory (SDT) to contend that adults (notably parents) ought to give children (as their dependents) room to establish and express their commitments and interests through an "autonomy-oriented paternalism" that seeks to guide them towards what they themselves find meaningful while protecting them from significant harm. For Mullin, such support involves a base level of respect for children's local autonomy commitments and can vary from adults explaining their reasons to children upon request and demonstrating interest in their perspectives, to offering structured opportunities to exercise choice and involving them in decisions that greatly affect their daily lives, like their emotional bonds with family members. She writes: "Good relationships with young children require a combination of respect for children's already existing autonomy, support for their development of skills and capacities which enhance autonomy, and varieties of caregiver behaviour that constrain those activities which appear to threaten (what the caregivers assess as) the children's long-term interests."[23]

While I agree with Mullin's assessment that the prospects of children's autonomy have likely been dismissed in many autonomy theories due to the privileging of an overly rationalistic sense of self-reflection,[24] and that such views underestimate the role of other autonomy-facilitating skills in children notably their imaginative explorations,[25] I worry that she is downplaying the role that self-reflection may play when properly mobilised to support emerging agency in childhood toward not only a local but a global autonomy that is *responsible*.

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[21] Mullin, 2014, 539.

[22] *Ibid*, 542.

[23] *Ibid*, 549.

[24] *Ibid*, 541.

For present purposes, then, "responsible autonomy" will be defined relationally as a process of self-determination that involves, in the words of Friedman, "reflecting on one's deeper wants, values, and commitments, reaffirming them, and behaving and living in accordance with them even in the face of at least minimal resistance from others," without ignoring "the social nature of the self and the importance of social relationships to the projects and attributes of the self."[26] On the whole, what matters is an agent's capacity for *reflective endorsement* with regard to not only local autonomy of choices, but a more global autonomy that affects the overall quality of her life. I am partial to Friedman's account of relational autonomy because it emphasises self-reflection on values: this emphasis aligns with the moral aspects of imagining that interest me and with the child-driven philosophical practices that I view as morally imaginative.

Of note, Friedman offers a *procedural* account of autonomy that is content-neutral: provided agents engage in the process of reflecting on and acting according to their values, the outcomes of this process are considered autonomous. This procedural account corresponds well with other theorists that I will be examining in this thesis, most famously Amartya Sen whose work on the Capabilities Approach orients the argument in my third chapter: similarly to many feminist philosophers referenced in this section, Sen champions content-neutrality because it accommodates a wide diversity of outlooks on the good life beyond the liberal values that often set it in motion.[27]

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[25] *Ibid*, 546.

[26] Friedman, 2003, 99, 82.

[27] Sen, 1992.

That being said, within my context of childhood, by adding *responsible* to my conception of autonomy, I am opting for a weak/moderate substantive account rather than a procedural one as I think children ought to be protected from expressions of autonomy that are oppressive or marginalising, and thereby threaten their efforts to become responsible actors in their social settings. For Friedman, even if an agent ends up self-reflectively endorsing what she calls "autonomy-devaluing norms"[28] that result in a life of subordination or abuse, the agent has still reached the minimum threshold of autonomous living; on my account, this is insufficient. Such a controversial stance may be justifiable in adulthood, but in my view, children as emerging agents should be safeguarded against experiments with autonomy that risk undermining their self-worth because they already (and regrettably) often occupy a precarious place as dependent, vulnerable members of society. On this point, I favour feminist ethicist Carolyn McLeod's position regarding "weakly" substantive conditions of autonomy that require agents to "recognise [they] are beings with moral worth who deserve to be treated respectfully"[29] by adopting certain self-affirming attitudes about themselves but also, I might add, who deserve to learn to treat others responsibly.

In my view, there is a very real tension between conceiving an account of autonomy relevant to children versus one relevant to adults: as I will show, I am seeking to place moderate constraints—or "training wheels"—on children that I would not impose on adults with the aim of supporting their progression from emerging to full agency; hence my description of this proposed account as moving from moderately to weakly substantive. What might be necessary for emerging agency in childhood—such as aids to develop the aforementioned empathic engagement, self-efficacy and reasonableness—may no longer be applicable once adults have an ingrained sense of their responsible global autonomy. I will elaborate further on the character of my weak/moderate substantive account in subsequent paragraphs and in my next chapter when I present my sketch of deliberate moral imagining.

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[28] Friedman, 2003, 99, 24.

Although Friedman's approach is procedural and her own concerns do not centre around children, I see her relational account of autonomous living through reflective endorsement as relying on key criteria that can be relevant to specifying the nature of evolving autonomy in childhood, namely: i) perspectival identity, ii) the distinction between deep and shallow concerns, iii) differences of degree in agency, iv) social embeddedness, and v) reason. I will briefly describe each of these criteria and explain their relevance to my focus on childhood. First, Friedman stresses that an agent cannot be deemed autonomous merely by living in accordance with categories to which she belongs but does not value, such as her age, gender, race, class and sexual orientation; what matters instead are her combined "wants, desires, cares, concerns, values, and commitments"—or her *perspectival identity*.[30]

According to Friedman, an agent's perspectival identity is characterised by "the features of herself she cares deeply about," which may or may not include the aforementioned categories depending on what she prizes most. She offers the example of herself as a child participating passively in patriotic ceremonies at school, noting that her being American was not part of her autonomy project since she did not reflectively endorse this category despite belonging to it. I see this criterion as important in childhood because even young children can begin to (and often already do) identify features of themselves that matter to them and according to which they can be recognised by others, so they have the potential to start honing this particular dimension of their autonomy competence. Along these lines, I will argue that children should have the chance

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[29] McLeod, 2002, 52.

to determine what will comprise their burgeoning perspectival identity—an opportunity which deliberate moral imagining may help to provide, as I will seek to show—though these features will likely change as they acquire new life experiences. Even at this basic level, their autonomy can start to manifest itself as it continues to evolve.

More specifically still, within the realm of perspectival identity features, Friedman stresses the *distinction between shallow and deep concerns*, noting that only the latter are meaningful enough to "pervade" an agent's autonomous living. I find this distinction particularly helpful to understanding the prospects of autonomy in childhood since children's deep concerns seem too often neglected by adults in their various spheres of activity. Indeed, it could be argued that if and when children do get the opportunity to exercise autonomous choices (or local autonomy), these occasions tend to revolve around shallower concerns—the "ice cream" and "television show" variety of preferences that Friedman discounts as insufficiently meaningful to "ground and pervade many of [an agent's] concerns."[31] Said otherwise, in terms of agency, children may not be getting the opportunities needed to determine and act according to their deep concerns.

While I understand that offering children the opportunity to exercise autonomous choices with regard to such shallower concerns is better than no opportunity at all, it seems inadequate if the aim is for them to practice being emerging agents so that they may eventually have fuller capacities of responsible *global* autonomy. In my view, such an aim requires adults to be asking themselves: "What *are* children's deep concerns?" then go about creating meaningful spaces for children to explore the question for themselves. Which deep concerns should form the focus of their reflective endorsement so that they might begin to enact the autonomy that Friedman describes beyond mere (though still worthwhile) autonomous choice-making?

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[30] Friedman, 2003, 11.

I want to argue that deliberate moral imagining may help with a child's identification of her deep concerns since it expands what she believes she has reason to value despite the fact that she has not lived long enough to determine all the varied but "relatively stable" features that will comprise her perspectival identity and "give her a perspective that is hers."[32] Though she may not yet be able or permitted to live in full or even partial accordance with her deep concerns, she can begin to identify and work through them, which is why her autonomy is evolving rather than wholly achieved and why she is an emerging rather than a full agent.

Additionally, I prefer Friedman's account over many others because it is not binary and thus not exclusionary toward children given it is not overly demanding—it does recognise *differences of degree* in autonomous living. Certainly an agent's autonomy will increase the more she is able to reflect upon and enact her deep concerns despite external obstacles, but she can still attain a minimal level of autonomy as long as she has a basic grasp of her own concerns and "her doings reflect and stem from what she reaffirms self-reflectively as important to her."[33] The features of her perspectival identity are revisable and can change over time but should at least partly determine her actions while they are in effect. In terms of implications for childhood, if children are granted occasions to reflect upon and act according to some (if not all) of their deep concerns—which I will argue is an opportunity that deliberate moral imagining may help provide—they can be deemed to be displaying a minimal degree of autonomy that can evolve as they grow up.

Barring outside impediments that can be extremely debilitating, in terms of capacity alone, I see no reason why children cannot attain this minimal level of autonomous action in at least

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[31] *Ibid*, 6.

[32] *Ibid*, 6.

[33] *Ibid*, 13.

some areas of their life. For example, a child who has reflected upon her deep concerns and affirmed, among other wants, values and commitments, that she is deeply committed to the spirit of team sports, can act in accordance with this value by becoming part of a sports team. Even if this is the only area of her life where she has any agency, the child is nonetheless demonstrating a certain degree of automonous living and in doing so, acting as an emerging agent in her own right.

While this example may seem to solely capture local autonomy since the child's deep concerns are only enacted through the choice of playing a sport, it in fact represents an effort to move toward global autonomy within a constraining context because it expresses broader self-reflection about what truly matters to her as she begins to build her perspectival identity. Indeed, on my view, when children reflect on "the lives they have reason to value," they are manifesting a global concern for their overall existence as emerging agents, even though this concern may only express itself through specific everyday choices.

Moreover, since I am interested in a conception of autonomy that is responsible, as I will further qualify below, Friedman's account is interesting because of its nuanced take on relationality, which I see as retaining an agent's singularity within the bounds of her accountability to others. For Friedman, the deep concerns that shape an agent's perspectival identity toward varied degrees of autonomy are informed by her *social embeddedness*. Her autonomy competence requires that she "recognise alternative options for choice…meaningful options that can be weighed in light of wants, values, or other points of reference…[that] are comprehensible in virtue of shared cultural practices of representation and interpretation."[34]

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[34] *Ibid*, 15.

To my mind, this recognition is a key criterion toward making autonomy responsible and is also where deliberate moral imagining may be of assistance to children. As I will endeavour to show, deliberate moral imagining may help to illuminate these alternative options for children, especially given their more limited (though again, no less valuable) life experience compared to adults. In the words of relational feminist Catriona Mackenzie, "a person's deepest concerns may not be fully clear or delineated until she confronts a wide diversity of types of situations…[and] refines them in response to novel circumstances."[35] Until then, I want to argue that deliberate moral imagining may act as a helpful stand-in, enabling children to explore within their mental landscape what they have yet to experience in the real world. And so, children can reach a minimum threshold of autonomy by reflecting on how the deep concerns they find most intuitively appealing may affect and be affected by others.

Further, in terms of social embeddedness, Friedman stresses that autonomy capacities "must be acquired through learning from other persons already able to exercise them, in social practices involving discourse and modes of self-representation,"[36] which supports my own sense that collaborative morally imaginative practices may be hugely beneficial to children's autonomy development, and specifically on pushing it to maximal levels that they may not be able to reach alone, as my case study chapter will seek to illustrate. On this characterisation, children are emerging agents in the sense that they can (circumstances permitting) be in the early stages of defining their perspectival identity and deep concerns, and ways to live in accordance with them, at least in part through practice alongside others who are further along in the process, including adults but also other children.

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[35] Mackenzie and Stoljar, eds., 2000, 7.

[36] Friedman, 2003, 15.

At the same time, Friedman's relational account of autonomy does not dispense with a certain regard for individuality, which I see as crucial if children are to be seen as worthy of opportunities to practice their evolving responsible autonomy:

> Autonomy involves practices by which physically separate selves, who are already characterised by differentiated nominal identities and spatiotemporal life narratives, may reinforce their distinctness from others and their mutual differentiation by acting on concerns of their own that are distinct from, and may conflict with, those of others…Although autonomy is individuating in its effects on persons, it never loses it social rootedness. Socially deracinated, autonomy would be a pointless and meaningless notion.[37]

Like many relational autonomy theorists, Friedman is wary of autonomous pursuits becoming conflated with excessive individualism, but she also questions the downsides of social embeddedness, asking what sorts of human interrelationships may help and hinder autonomous living. Bothered by oppressive systemic issues, she asserts that the self-reflection so needed for autonomy must not be impeded by "interfering conditions" like coercion, deception and manipulation that can "distort someone's attempts to consider her options in light of what matters to her and to choose what genuinely reflects her own concerns…Oppression may damage someone's capacity to care about what is worth caring about and it may deform the nature of a person's concern for herself."[38] To my mind, this dimension of relationality is hugely important to the prospects of children as emerging agents since their social status can make them particularly vulnerable to such interfering conditions.

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[37] *Ibid*, 16-17.

[38] *Ibid*, 5, 19.

Extended to childhood, I see this worry as taking the form of adults' ill-intended desires to deny children autonomy opportunities out of a need for control or a more inadvertently misguided wish to shelter them through "age-appropriate" experiences that curtail their autonomy competence by imposing what they are permitted to care about. Conversely, even if children do get to develop their autonomy competence, their social settings may not enable them to enact it, as my third chapter will exemplify through the notion of conversion. For instance, children could be involved in a morally imaginative practice like P4C—the pedagogy featured in my case study—but not be able to take it up in their everyday lives through reasoned exchanges with others because adultist assumptions block its exercise.

In these cases, for better or worse, adults' philosophies of childhood may be impacting children's identification of their deep concerns and their possibilities to responsibly act in accordance with them. While difficult to establish all the sources of these limits on childhood autonomy, it is my hope that this thesis will shed light on some of them. I see the deliberate practice of moral imagining as becoming part of an intellectual self-defense strategy alongside the three autonomy supports of empathic engagement, self-efficacy and reasonableness, so it may at the very least equip children with the tools to identify when their evolving responsible autonomy efforts are being threatened and hopefully be in a position to respond accordingly.

Finally, I see Friedman's account as a promising springboard for a notion of responsible autonomy in childhood because she adopts a conception of *reason* that I think can be buttressed to help children better grasp the aforementioned nuanced take on relationality. Through reason-guided reflective endorsement, they could learn to distinguish between appreciation for their social embeddedness and for their individuality—both important but making different claims on them—and between those who support their evolving autonomy competence and those who may be jeopardising it.

At first glance, this notion of autonomous living through reflective endorsement might strike some as objectionable, especially for young children, imposing a cool distancing between them and their deeper commitments in ways that they might feel threatening. Yet for Friedman, and certainly for myself, reason extends beyond mere rational analysis: "What matters in this context is that emotions and desires, as well as imagination, can constitute a kind of reflection on or attention to objects or values of concern. They can involve evaluations of those objects. In so doing, they can thereby contribute to the autonomy of a person's choices."[39]

As we shall see, my proposed conception of deliberate moral imagining actually strives to accomplish the opposite of a cool distancing by inviting children to be generous enough in their envisioning to consider many options for what they might find valuable, thus depicting a "drawing closer together" rather than a "pushing apart." Following such morally imaginative exercises, the reason driving their reflection can then enable them to embrace (or re-embrace) what they find most valuable in the relationally sound ways outline above. Further, as we shall see, on my account, this reflection is not merely one of analytic calculation since it makes room for the aesthetic to play a crucial role: for example, children's reason-endorsed reflective endorsement may take the form of (or result from) the writing of poetry in such a way as to highlight what matters to them most.

So conceived, reason can equip children with the judiciousness required for the difficult decision-making of responsible autonomy by structuring their approaches to thinking and acting. This conception mirrors the type of reasonableness that I argue may be encouraged by moral imagining and morally imaginative practices, as I will endeavour to show in my last chapters. Returning to the metaphor of training wheels, in order to practise reflectively endorsing their deep concerns so that they can progressively live in accordance with them and evolve in their competence for responsible autonomy, children as emerging agents must have opportunities to shape their burgeoning identity according to what they believe is most reasonable to think, be and do. To my mind, this requires a safe "training" space to experiment where the stakes are not so high—a protected zone that enables real experimentation but without dire circumstances. As we will see, Dewey used the image of a "dramatic rehearsal" to make a similar claim with respect to deliberation; I want to propose the idea of a mental landscape in which children can purposefully engage in moral imagining in connection to real-world experiences.

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[39] Friedman, 2003, 10.

On the view I am defending, if a child who is exercising her evolving autonomy believes she has reason to value X, it is because she has weighed its worth in light of her deep concerns and in relation to a host of other possible options, making her reflective endorsement of X not only representative of her burgeoning perspectival identity but also evidence of her growing capacity for empathic engagement, self-efficacy and reasonableness. Yet what might feed, supply and boost this host of possible options to make it sufficiently expansive and guard against an impoverished outlook that might restrict how responsible her evolving autonomy can be?

In this thesis, I want to argue that a deliberate form of moral imagining may make a significant contribution and thus deserves substantive theoretical attention. Each chapter will strive to further nuance this account of responsible autonomy, introducing the major challenges I have identified—namely narrow empathetic scope, conversion inhibition and inaccurate pseudoenvironments—as well as additional traits of the emerging responsibly autonomous child, then examining promising avenues to cultivating responsible autonomy through deliberate moral imagining in the realm of ethics, politics and education, respectively, illustrated through both hypothetical and real-life examples with children.

It may seem that these additional traits and promising avenues are prescriptive, thereby converting my account of autonomy into a strongly substantive one, so let me be clear about their role: I see these traits and avenues as complementary qualifiers rather than supplementary requirements; that is, they represent different ways of achieving the same take on relationality so as to reach a greater diversity of child agents. They can be viewed as some of the temporary "training wheels" that may assist children as emerging agents in retaining their singularity within the bounds of their accountability to others, given the process of enacting autonomy is a demanding one, as we shall see. Once they have internalised the criteria of responsible autonomous living, the wheels will no longer be necessary as they will have achieved motility on their own.

Still, the question of what levels of responsible autonomy is desirable or justifiable to expect in childhood remains open: Is the hope for them to attain the highest possible degree toward maximal agency, notably through both individual and collaborative practices of deliberate moral imagining? In beginning to answer this question, in my next chapter, I will provide a sketch of deliberate moral imagining informed by a literary review of imagination across the disciplines, then turn to my three theoretical frameworks and case study.

Chapter 1: Conceptualising Moral Imagining

This chapter will present an interdisciplinary review of scholarly literature on imagination in order to provide the backdrop for my own substantive conception of what I will be calling *deliberate moral imagining*. I will begin with a concise survey of imagination throughout intellectual history, briefly outlining various leading theorists' impressions of imagination and narrowing in on some of its political and ethical characteristics. I will then identify criteria from various academic disciplines that portray how the notion of moral imagination has been understood in recent years. This review will lay the foundation for introducing a sketch of my proposed concept of deliberate moral imagining—including what I see as its three key features—which I will seek to defend and nuance in ensuing chapters.

Construals of imagination from intellectual history

In this section, I will introduce some of imagination's advocates and critics from intellectual history as well as a handful of key criteria garnered from contemporary imagination theory. I am purposely favouring breadth over depth in order to highlight the range of existing views on imagination so as to contextualise the more focused discussion that will follow on the potential moral dimensions of imagining. To begin, I concur with phenomenologist Edward Casey's assessment that imagination has been "cast into exceedingly diverse roles, ranging from that of mere understudy to that of the leading character in the drama of the mind" and as a result has "come to promise more than it can possibly deliver."[40] For instance, studies done in a vacuum, or detached from the everyday context of living, have painted pictures of imagination that seem removed from how many of us would describe our everyday imaginative activities. A recent case in point: we can undergo experiments of imagining specific objects under increasingly complex circumstances—say, a simple visualisation of a cat followed by a mental image of the same feline with the added supposition that his parents have left him behind to tour France—and learn about our capacity to produce diverse mental images on command.[41]

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[40] Casey, 1976, 19, 1.

Yet such an orchestrated process, while illuminating in some senses, will not necessarily enhance our understanding of the ways our imagination may be quietly colouring our perspectives and world views in the background of our thought by invoking our memory and orienting our reasoning. On the other hand, if imagination is studied within phenomenological experience, it seems too vast to behold, assigned traits and behaviours so disparate that it appears contradictory and implausibly heterogeneous, responsible for sparking everything from our greatest scientific innovations to our finest poetry. With such a diversity of characterisations, imagination becomes difficult to spell out despite the abundant attempts—not all of them charitable—to provide a unified picture. Educational philosopher Kieran Egan has attributed this vagueness of imagination to the "compound of residues of various meanings people have had of it in the past...due in part to its complexity but also in part to its containing a number of elements that do not sit comfortably together."[42]

Historically, imagination has not enjoyed the noblest reputation, routinely being equated with fantasy and frivolity. Plato infamously dismisses imagination as an inferior faculty prone to deceiving us through shadows of reality that can lead our reason astray and result in corrupting artistic pursuits like poetry, which excites our passions and distorts our values.[43] In Greek mythology, the rebellious Prometheus, Titan god of forethought, is described as stealing fire from Mount Olympus to fuel the imagination of humans, enabling creative pursuits once strictly reserved for the divine, then suffering eternal punishment chained to a rock where he is visited daily by a liver-eating eagle.[44] Similar conceptions of imagination as a symbol of resistance to holy command and spiritual upheaval permeate Judeo-Christian traditions, resulting in its being branded as profane and relegated to realms of the occult.[45]

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[41] This example is offered by Dominic Gregory to suggest that our mental imagery is not largely imagistic—some additional supposition-like information can be imagined without contributing anything more to the imagined image. Gregory, 2016, 99.

[42] Egan, 1992, 9.

[43] Book VI of *The Republic* in Jowett, 1999, 258-264.

In the hands of seventeenth century philosophers of science, imagination has not fared better, with Bacon describing it as a mere pleasure of art with no scientific potential,[46] and Descartes viewing it as "nothing more than to contemplate the figure or image of a corporeal thing,"[47] engendering "blundering constructions" and "misleading judgements" that negatively affect our knowledge acquisition.[48] In the field of psychology, Freud conflates imagining with fantasising, daydreaming and hallucinating, attributing it no special role besides "constructing composite images"[49] that express our inner desires and drives, whereas Piaget confines it to a phase of "symbolic play" and make-believe in child development that evolves into fuller cognitive capacities with age.[50] On these accounts, it is as if imagination is being analysed from too close a range, with theorists focusing on the ways its image-creation can distract us through flights of fancy that distance us from what matters, revealing our hubris and immaturity; yet this perspective neglects the broader potential for imagination to assist with meaning-making by offering new modes of envisioning.

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[44] Adapted from Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* in Blackie, 1850: "The secret fount of fire I sought, and found, and in a reed concealed it; Whence arts have sprung to man, and life hath drawn rich store of comforts. For such deed I suffer these bonds, in the broad eye of gracious day,

here crucified."

[45] Egan, 1992, 13, 16-17.

[46] Francis Bacon in Spedding et al., eds., 1864-74, 406.

[47] René Descartes in Tweyman, ed., 1993, 53.

[48] René Descartes in Haldane and Ross, eds., 1931, 7.

[49] Freud, Standard Edition, IV, 324.

[50] Piaget, 1962, 212.

In contrast, theorists that offer a wider lens of analysis have tried to pinpoint some of imagination's essential qualities without straying too far from the significations we tend to attribute to it in our lived experience. Kant's account of imagination distinguishes between reproductive and productive types, arguing that the former works to mentally represent items that are not currently accessible to our senses and help to name them, whereas the latter involves the spontaneous "free play" of ideas toward our greater understanding of experience, notably through artistic expression and aesthetic appreciation. Meanwhile, Hume maintains that the imagination facilitates our generation of ideas—which he understands as images—to connect with our impressions of the world, thereby helping us understand our experience and build knowledge accordingly.[51] These mental representations have an emotional counterpart since, as he writes, "the imagination and affections have a close union together...nothing which affects the former can be entirely indifferent to the latter."[52]

Romantic thinkers push this emotional connection further, extolling imagination's capacity to draw on our feelings to freely express and shape our thoughts, with Coleridge viewing it as a "mediator between reason and understanding,"[53] and Wordsworth referring to it as "reason in her most exalted mood"—[54]a vital source of personal meaning. From an existentialist standpoint, imagination is associated with the very formation of selfhood: Sartre claims it is through imagination that "consciousness discovers its freedom"[55] and shapes identity. In the words of

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[51] Warnock, 1976, 15, 26.

[52] Hume, 1896, 424.

[53] Warnock, 1976, 94.

[54] Wordsworth in De Selincourt and Darbishire, eds., 1940-1949, 192.

[55] Kearney, 1988, 227.

Sartrean scholar Jonathan Webber, “We can imagine the world or any part of it being different from the way it in fact is. This ability is necessary to motivate changing the world.”[56]

Last but not least, Dewey (whose ideas form much of the focus in chapter four) offers a wide angle perspective on imagination that points to its far-reaching effects: for him, “all conscious experience has of necessity some degree of imaginative quality.”[57] Because it couples meanings from our previous experiences with our current lived circumstances, imagination can be seen as “the conscious adjustment of the old and the new”—[58]a faculty required for any human production, from engineering and technological invention to the artistic realm where it thrives best. On these accounts, imagination appears boundless and positive in its energy, though it needs harnessing to enable productive endeavours like idea generation, emotional expression, identity formation and aesthetic innovation.

And so, from the pages of intellectual history we are left with the “compound of residues” described by Egan, which have paved the way for a handful of assorted, contestable criteria in contemporary imagination theory—as the next paragraphs will seek to itemise. In recent accounts, imagination is described as the “action of forming ideas or mental images”[59] which are multi-sensory and “can cover visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory, etc., imagery.”[60] This process can be active or passive, conscious or unconscious, formed or formless, but any visualisation it enables will lack the “phenomenal oomph”[61] of perceiving objects in real-time through the senses. We can envision abstractedly or in an “egocentric visualised space”[62] from a particular perspective: either we are subjects in the imagined scene or we envisage it from a set vantage point, like from the side or up above.[63] Put another way, we may engage in acentred or centred imagining, where the former represents a scene in detail with no particular point of view while the latter represents the specific, involved perspective of a protagonist experiencing the scene, whether ourselves or someone else whose eyes we attempt to see through in a kind of internal theatre.[64]

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[56] Webber, 2004, xxvi.

[57] Dewey, 2015, 283.

[58] *Ibid*, 283.

[59] Gregory in Kind, ed., 2016, 97.

[60] Nanay in Kind, ed., 2016, 125.

[61] *Ibid*, 128.

When we visualise objects and circumstances coming together to form a state of affairs, we are *imagining-that*, whereas when we envision ourselves experiencing something we have not undergone—the actions, thoughts, feelings that might be involved—we are *imagining-how*.[65] The contents of our imaginings can also be nonimagistic: we can “talk quite properly of imagining reasons, differences, dilemmas and lies, of imaginary wants and happiness, of imaginable caution and torment, of imagining what, why and how...yet none of this is imageable.”[66]

Moreover, imagination is distinct from belief though it shares some of its motivational force: we can imagine X without having to believe it since “we intend our beliefs to be true, while we have no such intention regarding our imaginings.”[67] Yet while our imaginings are not true, our experiences of them are nonetheless real: “The contents of imaginings are fictional propositions in the trivial sense that they are to be imagined, not in the ordinary sense that they are a species of falsehood."[68] Compared to other mental activities, imagination is uniquely accessible: "it is nearly always available to us as an alternative to whatever else we may be doing at a given time, whether it be perceiving, remembering, reflecting, or whatever," and with enough concentration, we can freely choose what and how we want to imagine.[69] In terms of focus, then, imagination is concerned with possibility—it explores the possible without assuming its realisation, making it "a fallible guide."[70]

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[62] *Ibid*, 125.

[63] Gregory in Kind, ed., 2016, 125.

[64] Wollheim in Mackenzie and Stoljar, eds., 2000, 127.

[65] Casey, 1976, 42-45.

[66] White, 1990, 6.

[67] Sinhababu in Kind, ed., 2016, 120.

Still, some argue that "the patently impossible cannot be imagined"[71] since our imaginings are composed of pre-existing knowledge, but within that repertoire, the capacity to be imaginative entails "being inclined and able to conceive of the unusual and effective"[72] in an effort to enrich human endeavour. On current ontogenetic accounts, imagination through pretend play is no longer seen merely as a phase, like Piaget suggested, but rather as "the first indication of a lifelong mental capacity to consider alternatives to reality,"[73] one that enhances our decision-making skills by enabling us to think through the implications of possible courses of action.

More recent accounts of imagination have stressed the social and political dimensions it has acquired in contemporary philosophy that make it compatible with the theoretical frameworks I have selected to construct a moral conceptualisation of imagining relevant to the childhood experience. Beyond the more analytic angles of imagination already mentioned, the process of imagining possibility also lays the foundation for our dispositions for compassion: when faced with an uncertain future, we need to "envisage possible but perhaps non-actual states of affairs...imagine how [our] tastes, aims and opinions might change and work out what would be sensible to do or believe in the circumstances" and we can use our "ability to imagine in order to yield an insight into other people without any further elaborate theorising about them."[74]

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[68] Kieran and Lopes, 2003, 4.

[69] Casey, 1976, 6.

[70] Ninan in Kind, ed., 2016, 276.

[71] Vendler, 1984, 105.

[72] Barrow, 1990, 108.

[73] Further, Paul L. Harris argues "that the capacity to imagine alternative possibilities and to work out their implications emerges early in the course of children's development and lasts a lifetime." 2000, 28, xi.

By extension, imagination has sociopolitical dimensions since it empowers us to envision the world differently for ourselves and for others—it makes possible "a view of society as an ongoing process of self-constitution through the continuous opening up of new perspectives in light of the encounter with the Other."[75] Engaging with the imaginary further helps us to resist problematic social codifications—it is "both a medium of experience and an interpretation of that experience in a way that opens up new perspectives on the world."[76]

This sociopolitical role of imagination has been especially important in certain areas of feminist theory that have sought to link imagination with the type of relational autonomy competence I am upholding. One example among these is Mackenzie's article "Imagining Oneself Otherwise," in which she notes that some feminist philosophers view oppressive social systems as resulting from a restriction on the imaginative repertoires of citizens and, by extension, on the imaginative enactment required to enable their self-understanding and, in turn, their agency.[77] She argues that imagination—conceived as representational imagistic thinking—greatly contributes to self-reflection, which she describes (similarly to how I am) as a necessary though not sufficient criterion for autonomous living. She does add two distinctive insights worth mentioning: On the one hand, when we engage in what she calls counterfactual speculation, we imagine how our lives may have played out had we made different decisions in our past, whereas on the other hand, in what she calls future-directed fantasy, we represent to ourselves a different destiny than the one we believe we are likely to live.

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[74] Heal, 2003, 13.

[75] Delanty, 2009, 13.

[76] *Ibid*, 15.

[77] Mackenzie, 2000, 124.

Through such representational imagining, "we present aspects of ourselves to ourselves for reflection and evaluation, not only directly or indirectly in the content of the representation, but also because their cogency enables such representations to provide a window into our own emotional states, our points of view, and our self-conceptions…[that] can abstract us from our habitual modes of understanding ourselves and our relations with others…hold[ing] certain elements of ourselves stable and play[ing] around with others."[78] Yet these very representations may be hindered by the "dominant cultural imaginary," especially in political systems that seek to repress and marginalise rather than liberate and emancipate.

In Mackenzie's words, "given the connection between an agent's sense of self-worth and social recognition, there is a strong incentive for agents to identify with those cultural representations of their identities that seem to afford greater social recognition and to incorporate these representations into their self-conceptions and their imaginative projections…even if these representations are oppressive, in the sense that they present agents with severely curtailed avenues for achieving social recognition."[79] To my mind, as I have intimated, children are particularly susceptible to this dominant cultural imaginary since their status as a vulnerable population further intensifies their need for social recognition: They can often only think and act to the extent recognised and sanctioned by the adults in their lives since they are not considered developmentally or legally equipped to think and act for themselves in the responsibly autonomous ways I am proposing.

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[78] *Ibid*, 2000, 138.

[79] *Ibid*, 2000, 157.

This susceptibility can apply even during playtime. Mullin notes how children are particularly adept at imaginative exploration through make-believe games and role playing, which represents early experiments with autonomy: when they test different kinds of relationships by pretending to be a parent or an antagonist, they create space to "try out different ways of relating to one another, and help them decide about the kinds of relationships they want, and don't want, to have."[80] As I see it, the range of possibilities to which they have access, even during such seemingly benign imaginary explorations, is crucial because of its possible effects on their burgeoning perspectival identity and on the reflective endorsement of certain lifestyles over others, raising their awareness of the complex intersecting social determinants that influence their shallow and deep concerns. The concern over the sociopolitical status of imagination as an enabler of autonomy therefore points to the importance of a *moral* conceptualisation of imagination able to support an evolving autonomy in childhood that is responsible, as I will soon be elaborating. The question becomes: What theories of moral imagination are pertinent to children's experimentations with autonomous living? In the next section, I will outline some of these theories to then determine how they might inform my own conception of deliberate moral imagining.

Moral imagination across the disciplines

Though defined in great and varying detail by many of its proponents both inside and outside of philosophy, like many philosophical concepts, moral imagination remains a vague and imprecise notion. The term is thought to have first been used by Edmund Burke in the mid-1800s in an essay on the French revolution that speaks to the importance of "the wardrobe of a moral imagination, which the heart owns, and the understanding ratifies" to enhance society.[81] Since then, accounts of moral imagination have differed in quality from shallow treatments that use the term in passing or as an alluring title only to never mention it again, to deep and thoughtful engagements like those of Martha Nussbaum, John Dewey and Mark Johnson, who form the focus of subsequent chapters. Before delving into their significant theoretical contributions, in this section, I will briefly survey some perspectives of moral imagination across varied disciplines—namely law, medicine, cognitive sciences, business, art, education, social anthropology and philosophy—in an effort to glean what I deem as the criteria most pertinent to orienting my own conceptualisation of deliberate moral imagining.[82]

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[80] Mullin, 2007, 545-546.

Since the disciplines I am surveying do not provide a unified picture of moral imagination, I am highlighting the perspectives that seem most representative and insightful for my purposes. I should note that these accounts of moral imagination do not focus on children specifically, with the exception of a few educational perspectives dealing with pre-college students, but they nevertheless present some interesting angles worth considering with respect to the prospects of evolving autonomy in childhood.

—*Perspectives from law*

From a legal perspective, moral imagination is viewed as contributing to judicial decision-making by making judges more accountable to their interpretations of indeterminate law, more considerate of the global circumstances of litigants, and more aware of their biased inclinations. It has been defined as the "ability to understand one's own limitations, the limitations of perspective, the range of values at stake, and the possibilities for change inherent in the situation…a way out of arid formalism and closed systems."[83] Moral imagination facilitates the foresight necessary to account for unanticipated consequences and avoid misapplied empathy because it acts as "a guard against human shortsightedness and narrow-mindedness; against our natural tendency to focus on what is immediately before us and familiar and overlook more remote or unusual possibilities and consequences."[84]

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[81] Burke, 1864, 515-516.

—Perspectives from medicine

From a medical perspective, moral imagination is believed to help doctors better identify with their patients—notably those whose lifestyles have been drastically altered by their conditions—so they can make more effective treatment decisions. It is understood as a facilitator of empathetic and analogical reasoning, as the proclivity towards "imagining what it would be like" to live another's life: though it is logically impossible to "transpose one's identity into another being…there are enough core similarities between various kinds of human experience to ensure we have something to learn from the experiences of others, and that we can, with some help, imagine what many varieties of human experiences are like."[85]

Moral imagination helps with problem-setting by enabling healthcare practitioners to better assess the "metaphors that influence [their] perceptions of particular moral issues"[86] so as to create more innovative, helpful ones with the potential to increase understandings of complex bioethical topics like abortion and assisted dying. In terms of teaching medical ethics, moral imagination is depicted as a kind of "vicarious introspection" that develops over time and

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[82] This survey is not meant to be exhaustive but rather representative of some of the main ideas in each discipline under consideration.

[83] Bandes, 2001, 124.

[84] Hasnas, 2012, 30.

[85] Elliott, 1991, 173-174.

requires close association: it “demands an obligation for understanding what a patient or family member is saying, or wants to say, at a moment of crisis.”[87] However, while moral imagination contributes to a better discernment of the similarities and differences between medical cases, studies have found that its constructive use becomes more difficult the less doctors have in common with their patients, notably those with permanent mental impairments that are hard to envisage from an outsider’s point of view.

—*Perspectives from cognitive sciences*

From a cognitivist perspective, moral imagination is understood as integral to the creative reflection of ethically sensitive and creative people, enabling them to transform their moral understandings and their moral character. It is described as “a good technique for reflecting on, and sharing, mental representations of ethical dilemmas,”[88] increasing awareness of our mental models so we can adapt them appropriately to the demands of new circumstances. Triune ethics, a theory that combines moral psychology and affective neuroscience, “posits neurobiological roots of the moral imagination in which individuals engage the prefrontal cortex to self-regulate, prevent harmful behaviours…and engage in reflective abstraction,”[89] relying on multiple intelligences to help develop flexible thinking and sensitivity to the various morally relevant aspects of a situation.

On this account, nurturing in infancy plays an important role in the development of morally imaginative capacities, particularly factors like near constant touch, free self-directed play and

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[86] Jung, 1993, 84.

[87] Hart, 2016, 434.

[88] Sunstein, 2005, 551.

[89] Narvaez, 2014*, 7*.

positive expectation.[90] At its optimal heights, moral imagination has been shown to help agents attend to strangers and marginalised groups so as to move from a "detached" stance of agency where they have little world engagement to a "communal" one characterised by positive collaborative interaction: "During the highest forms of moral imagination there is a double aim of valuing community-wide interests and maintaining respect for individual autonomy."[91]

—*Perspectives from business*

From a business perspective, moral imagination is regarded as alleviating the "moral muteness" of corporations that lack ethical sensitivity in their practices by helping them acknowledge ethical dilemmas and address them through the "discerning of 'practically realisable' actions."[92] It is defined as "a reasoning process thought to counter the organisational factors that corrupt ethical judgement"[93] and "involves a thorough consideration of the ethical elements of a decision."[94] Accordingly, moral imagination enhances the decision-making of business leaders by providing them with a more innovative way to critique the status quo, illuminating the conventional scripts that limit their frames of reference.

Patricia Werhane, the first to adapt moral imagination for business ethics, describes it as "an awareness of the various dimensions embedded in a particular situation—in particular, the moral and ethical ones...the ability to understand one's situation from a number of perspectives."[95] Her work has inspired empirical research in various corporate contexts, notably the effects of moral imagination on employers and employees. A study of "moral myopia" in advertisers portrays moral imagination as the capacity "to see and think outside the box, envisioning moral alternatives that others do not," suggesting that people who are not morally imaginative may deny others empathy due to a "distorted moral vision that results largely from rationalisation or from an unwillingness to focus on the problem so that it is seen clearly."[96]

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[90] *Ibid*, 11.

[91] *Ibid*, 15.

[92] Hargrave, 2009, 310.

[93] Moberg and Seabright, 2000, 845.

[94] Caldwell and Moberg, 2007, 193.

Relatedly, a study of stigmatized work groups considers how moral imagination might transform the job stances of so-called "dirty workers" by making them aware of how social stigma misconstrues their profession and pressures them to adopt values different to those they would otherwise endorse.[97] According to a Turkish study on management styles, this transformative potential of moral imagination owes to the social imaginary it creates within organisations: as "the ability to develop fresh interpretations and imagine unconventional alternatives in order to achieve what is more virtuous and desirable," moral imagination can take many forms, varying from integrity, affection and diligence to trust, gratefulness and justice,[98] and in so doing, it generates idealist narratives on issues as varied as employee rights, workplace diversity and social responsibility.[99]

A study on the collective action model of institutional change presents a similar conclusion, indicating that moral imagination is not an individualised cognitive process but a social one, through which "the moral perspectives that come to be shared among a field of actors emerge from lived tensions between contradictory perspectives."[100] Interestingly, business ethicists have also analysed possible predispositions to moral imagination: one study of personality types found

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[95] Werhane, 1999, 3.

[96] Drumwright and Murphy, 2004, 17, 11.

[97] Roca, 2010, 138.

[98] Karakas et al., 2017, 732.

[99] *Ibid*, 742.

[100] Hargrave, 2009, 91-98.

that the proactive category—characterised by innovativeness, initiative and perseverance—is likeliest to promote morally imaginative tendencies,[101] while another study on gender in corporate management determined that women tend to exhibit greater moral imagination because they "reframe the problem from different perspectives…weigh different interests…emphasise the importance of just social relationships…[and] develop novel alternatives to a problem that can be morally justified by others outside an organization."[102]

—*Perspectives from art*

From an artistic perspective, moral imagination is considered to share with art making the capacity to expand moral seeing and encourage self-transformation, allowing us to feel the world differently and reassess our vantage points. It is described as "a basic awareness of the possibilities of difference, and a willingness to wonder about and explore the inner worlds of others and how they might relate to our own,"[103] as well as "the application of creative reflection to situations, topics, propositions, and emotions that are morally significant."[104] Moral imagination is therefore tasked with enhancing judgement and with "corrective" perspective-gaining that can transcend narrow-mindedness: "the creation of mental scenarios as to how one possibility or another might play out in any given situation...creates images of the future and allows the future to illumine that present."[105]

Inspired by the writings of Iris Murdoch, some literary theorists have depicted moral imagination as an avenue to explore our "messy reality" with complexity rather than a reductionist stance: “Murdoch’s essential thought was that, hard as it can be, people ought to grow up and recognise each other’s realities as reality, a place we create together in both conscious and unconscious ways.”[106]

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[101] Yang, 2013, 167.

[102] Yurtsever, 2010, 521.

[103] Hart, 2003, 12.

[104] Mullin, 2004, 250.

[105] Collier, 2006, 308, 314.

Literary fiction and poetry are generally seen as powerful means of nurturing moral imagination, particularly when they represent moral judgements in rich and inventive ways.[107] Of note, Lionel Trilling describes the novel as “the most effective agent of the moral imagination…its greatness and its practical usefulness lay in its unremitting work of involving [us] in the moral life…It taught us, as no other genre ever did, the extent of human variety and the value of this variety.”[108] Moreover, literary engagement enables us to detach ourselves from the present in an effort to better perceive it: “Through imagination we create the distance and contextual richness needed for insights into immediate experience.”[109]

For these reasons, some theorists have drawn parallels between aesthetic consciousness and ethical sensibility, regarding art as an important site for morality: “we must account for how the bodily encounter with art can contribute to this development of an ethical consciousness…it is through the body that art informs us and, therefore, might inform our moral imaginations as well.”[110] And yet, while moral imagination in art can support morality, notably through “imaginative identification with others,”[111] it is viewed as problematic when exposure to certain artworks presents us with questionable moral views we would otherwise reject, a stance that will be revisited in the critique section of my concluding chapter.

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[106] Roberts et al., 2010, 11.

[107] Clausen, 1986, x, ix.

[108] Trilling, 1950, 222.

[109] Bates, 2010, 3-6.

[110] Blumenfeld-Jones, 2016, 70.

[111] Stohr, 2006, 2006.

—Perspectives from education

From an educational perspective, moral imagination is believed to help students appreciate life's ambiguities and examine them more carefully, "enriching the process of moral deliberation" so they "understand the murky logic of the swamp, where people are emotional, social creatures, not logical machines."[112] It is deemed capable of offering moral insights into complex situations by forming mental images that expand discernment—"a process whereby we gather the concrete and abstract aspects of human experience...this interplay permits [students] to look more deeply at what they know and even to form a vision of what they know that is based on imaginative interrelationships."[113]

Here too, literature is prized as a means of bolstering moral imagination in students, notably through time-honoured children's stories and literary classics featuring flawed characters who fail on their journey toward becoming more morally imaginative: "The moral imagination is not a thing, not even so much a faculty, as the very process by which the self makes metaphors out of images given by experience and then employs these metaphors to find and suppose moral correspondences in experience…The richness or the poverty of the moral imagination depends on the richness or the poverty of experience."[114] This morally imaginative process aligns the cognitive and the affective, constituting "the place where reason and heart desire, envision, evaluate, and choose a worthy telos…not only a storehouse but also an intelligent guide."[115]

Beyond student learning, moral imagination is also seen as playing a crucial role in teacher education, notably by highlighting the ethical dimensions of teaching. One study found that integrating moral imagination helped pre-service teachers with "taking on the role of student-advocate and then using this position as a reference point…[exhibiting] the willingness to take the child's side."[116] However, some educational theorists are more cautious in their appraisal of moral imagination, noting that many accounts overemphasise the future at the expense of the past: "These descriptive definitions might aptly be summarised by the phrase 'anticipatory moral imagination,' since they are mostly future-oriented and basically anticipate and evaluate outcomes of alternative possible actions. Significantly, however, this orientation toward the future proceeds from a present frame of reference that goes largely uncriticised, at least in any etiological sense."[117] On this account, Freire's notion of *conscientiza* is mobilised to illustrate the risk of moral imagination maintaining politically repressive societal circumstances over and above democracy if not properly oriented to evaluate the imaginative repertoires of the past and their effects on the present.[118]

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[112] Von Weltzien Hoivik, 2004, 1, 7.

[113] Craig, 225.

[114] Guroian, 1998, 24.

[115] Bohlin, 2005, 29.

—*Perspectives from social anthropology*

From a social anthropology perspective, moral imagination is depicted in political terms as a "source of resistance" and an antidote to "complacent self-regard" that enables us to extend justice to a stranger rather than only to those in our immediate social circles.[119] Varied empirical research in the field has sought to confirm these claims: in a study on indigenous Colombian communities, moral imagination is likened to a moral imaginary that shapes new critical discourses and strengthens political agency—"where participants have been able to successfully control their own immediate environment, they have been able to put their moral imagination to practical use in the ways that they have related to each other as well as to the representatives of external institutions and organisations."[120]

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[116] Chapman et al., 2013, 140.

[117] Rivage-Seul in McLaren and Lankshear, eds., 1994, 44.

[118] *Ibid*, 50.

[119] Bromwich, 2014, 27, 38.

Similarly, a South African study has linked moral imagination with the notion of *ubuntu* (or humanness), claiming that it "can engender dignified and human action, evoke the potentialities of people, and cultivate a community of shared fate."[121] On an aesthetic level, moral imagination is seen as provoking the use of narrative, metaphors and symbols in ways that promote restorative justice and equity[122], and of unveiling everyday paradoxes and collective vulnerability, thus reflecting "the fellow feeling and empathy active in the moral imagination when people perceive certain threats as poisoning their shared existence."[123] Most famously, Paul Lederach has argued that moral imagination can promote peacekeeping through its three main properties: first, "attentiveness to more than is immediately visible," second, "the capacity to give birth to something new that in its very birthing changes our world and the way we see things," and third, transcendence "of what appear to be narrow, shortsighted, or structurally determined dead-ends."[124] On this view, the power of moral imagination lies in its ability to help us avoid dogma and envision our enemies' fate, thus alleviating violent tendencies in favour of more harmonious ones.

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[120] Gow, 2008, 2, 252.

[121] Waghid, 2014, 70.

[122] Levad, 2012, 215.

[123] Werbner, 2016, 86. Through an ethnographic approach, the study explores moral imagination in divinatory Tswapong poetry. Werbner calls for more focus on the aesthetic dimensions of moral imagination, specifically "an anthropology of ethics that overcomes the usual division of labour between the study of ethics and aesthetics, between our appraisal of the active direction of moral understandings, on the one hand, and our critical knowledge of aesthetic pleasure, of the creative artfulness in poetics, on the other."

[124] Lederach, 2005, 26-27.

—*Perspectives from philosophy*

From a philosophical perspective, recent accounts of moral imagination by philosophers have seriously considered what it should mean to qualify imaginative activity as *moral*, noting that its outcomes may do as much bad as good if not well guided. This is in part because it influences our moral images, which in turn "organise our moral lives…[and] have immense pragmatic value for guiding and illuminating human conduct."[125] Moral imagination is viewed as contributing to perception by countering the under- and overexposure of a situation's morally relevant particulars, and enabling us to take up another's point of view to determine how they ought to be treated.[126]

For some, this treatment should extend to non-human life forms as well: unless applied researchers are willing to refine what counts as morally salient, their recommendations will inevitably be limited—"arriving at an adequate empirical understanding of the lives of human beings and animals in ethics thus imposes distinctive demands for moral imagination."[127] By sensitising us to suffering in others, moral imagination helps us to "see our culture as simply shifting webs of vocabularies in transition, forever open to alternative descriptions and redescriptions."[128] In a similar vein, John Kekes speaks of the *exploratory* and *corrective* functions of moral imagination: while providing us with "a basis for contrast and comparison" that broadens our reflections about the future, it also retroactively sheds light on past errors so "we can guard against their recurrence in situations we presently face."[129]

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[125] Hilary Putnam in Alexander, 1993, 377.

[126] Gibert, 2014, 299, 130.

[127] Crary, 2016, 91.

[128] Richard Rorty in Alexander, 1993, 380.

[129] Kekes, 1995, 64.

More specifically, Mavis Biss characterises moral imagination as “the operation of imaginative capacities by agents in pursuit of moral ends; the qualifier ‘moral’ is meant to restrict the concept to morally motivated imaginative thought…[in order to] isolate the often overlooked or obscured contribution of imaginative thought to agents’ moral competence and excellence.”[130] In her view, moral imagination can fill the gap between moral perception and moral judgement on one end, and ethically sound conduct on the other, through its “capacity to generate possibilities for morally good action in response to well-perceived moral circumstances.”[131] Drawing on historical and literary narratives, she argues that moral imagination bolsters practical reason in ways that other moral capacities cannot: we may perceive and judge the morally relevant particulars of a situation but unless we are imaginatively engaged, we risk not being able to envisage how to act accordingly.[132]

Moreover, in terms of epistemic justice, Biss identifies with other feminist philosophers who argue for a *radical moral imagination* that can challenge dominant ethical discourses by complexifying moral concepts so they better capture varied lived experiences. She gives the example of the fictional character Yentl who “reimagines her moral concepts such that claiming the right to live a freely chosen life expressive of one’s nature counts as morally good,”[133] in order to demonstrate how “the exercise of radical moral imagination can alter an agent’s real moral possibilities by making some actions newly intelligible as virtuous.”[134]

In contrast, Mark Coeckelbergh is less confident about adding the “moral” qualifier to imagination, though he does grant its important role in helping us to envisage our future and social impact, and nuance our moral metaphors and artistic expression.[135] He prefers to think of moral imagination as "a capacity, the use of which is only part of what goes on in moral reasoning,"[136] alongside the proper use of ethical principles. In his view, most accounts of moral imagination are consequentialist in spirit, suggesting that we are morally required to anticipate the repercussions of our actions though this imaginative activity is closer to an art form than a dry calculation: "My hypothesis, then, is that imagination allows moral movement: it allows us to move to the other and to the future."[137]

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[130] Biss, 2014, 2.

[131] *Ibid*, 8.

[132] *Ibid*, 12-14.

[133] Biss, 2013, 940.

[134] *Ibid*, 937.

—Interdisciplinary criteria of moral imagination

On the whole, this brief survey of moral imagination across the disciplines highlights how various fields have contributed to a growing understanding of and appreciation for moral imagination, despite disparate portrayals and perceived purposes. I want to end this section by gleaning from this survey what I deem as the insights most pertinent to orienting my own conceptualisation of deliberate moral imagining as a support for evolving responsible autonomy in childhood. In light of the insightful but also conflicting contributions of the diverse perspectives surveyed above, I am therefore distilling what I see as the key defining attributes of moral imagination into the following interdisciplinary list of criteria:

- awareness of complexity, diversity and ambiguity;
- apprehension of limited frames of reference;
- careful exercise of forethought;
- assessment of existing and past social imaginaries;

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[135] Coeckelberg, 207, 3.

[136] *Ibid*, 3.

- sensitivity to moral salience;
- vicarious engagement with other ways of life;
- creation of new opportunities for virtuous action.

Moving forward, I will keep in mind these criteria as well as this chapter's historical impressions and varied characterisations of imagination as I propose a sketch of what I will be calling deliberate moral imagining.

A sketch of deliberate moral imagining

In this section, I will begin to paint a picture of my own account of moral imagination with respect to responsible autonomy in childhood, including (i) a description of its inner workings through the metaphor of a mental landscape, (ii) an initial explanation of its three main features, and (iii) an illustrative example that highlights its distinctiveness. For starters, in my view, Casey offers an important insight when he insists in *Imagining: A Phenomenological Study* that "imagination as a fixed faculty is indeed dead...but imagining is very much alive."[138] To my mind, as a potential enabler of agency, moral imagination functions better as a verb—or more specifically as a verbal noun—since it ought to be performed, carried out, practised, and this with express intention. For this reason, in this thesis I will be talking not about moral imagination but about a deliberate form of moral *imagining*. What I am calling *deliberate moral imagining* will be understood as a conscious, flexible process of meaning-making that is carried out in a mental landscape but in response to an actual phenomenological experience, and that is purposefully initiated to assist with achieving a particular goal, notably *bringing to light possibilities for what seems reasonable to value*.

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[137] *Ibid*, 14, 20.

Such deliberate imagining is therefore *moral* not because it seeks to be prescriptive but because it deals with values—by illuminating them, connecting them, juxtaposing them, nuancing them. These values need not necessarily be moral values; they can be epistemic or aesthetic—the point is they are being illuminated for their potential to colour deep concerns that affect autonomous living, and thus have moral implications at least to the extent that agency involves impacts on individual selves and their environments, including human beings and other life forms. This conception therefore excludes deliberate imagining that is *immoral*—for instance, the purposeful bringing to light of possibilities for harm or wrongdoing with an aim to realise nefarious activities. But it also rules out deliberate imagining that is *amoral* in that the envisioning in no way deals with values—and by extension with deep concerns that affect agency—but focuses instead on detached visualising, as we see in exercises within analytic philosophy that involve picturing an object in the mind's eye.[139]

Moreover, on my proposed conception, the process of deliberate moral imagining is pre-critical: it is concerned with exploring possibilities in the here and now but not yet making judgements about the meanings it seeks to elucidate, whether they be existential, ethical, political or societal. I think Egan is right to describe such an intentional act as "a particular flexibility which can invigorate all mental functions":[140] given my portrayal of children as emerging agents, I see deliberate moral imagining as supporting (rather than taking over the mandate of) the reason-driven reflective endorsement needed for cultivating their evolving responsible autonomy. As mentioned previously, I am concerned with the enrichment of childhood mental

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[138] Casey, 1976, 3.

[139] Examples of such visualisations can be found in the first sections of *The Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy of Imagination*. Kind, ed., 2016.

[140] Further, Egan argues that "imagination is an intentional act of consciousness rather than a thing in consciousness; it is one way in which our consciousness works, rather than a distinct part of it that might be studied separately." 1992, 36.

landscapes—a metaphor that I will soon be elaborating—and how these colour what children believe they have reason to value in light of their deep concerns. Since children's reserve of life experiences is limited by their age, their mental landscapes may exert a significant influence on their evolving autonomy, making the process of deliberate moral imagining crucial as a stand-in for the lived encounters they have yet to face. To borrow the words of Maxine Greene, in this iteration, the role of imagining "is not to resolve, not to point the way, not to improve. It is to awaken, to disclose the ordinarily unseen, unheard, and unexpected."[141]

Further, since it connects to actual phenomenological encounters, I consider deliberate moral imagining to also be an aesthetic practice in the widest sense of the term, without requiring artistic pursuits per se, as it is "primarily concerned with material experiences, with the way the sensual world greets the sensate body, and with the affective forces that are generated in such meetings."[142] Though the process deals with the immaterial as its objects of consideration (imagined possibilities, alternatives, undersides, fringes, latitudes), because these immaterial considerations are oriented toward the construction of meanings and values that shape deep concerns, deliberate moral imagining remains an embodied and affectively charged experience with appreciable sensory, stimulating, stirring qualities—especially when done with others—which infuses it with an important aesthetic dimension, as I will explore in my case study chapter.

With this said, I am proposing an initial sketch of deliberate moral imagining while granting that it will be nuanced and rendered more robust by the three theoretical frameworks and the case study I will be presenting in the following chapters. As a starting point, I am defining it as the *purposeful envisioning of a given context from multiple frames of reference to ensure a*

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[141] Greene, 1995, 28.

broadened moral lens with which to approach and assess lived experience. The terms in this preliminary definition will be clarified in due course within and beyond this section.

By way of illustration, I will flesh out my metaphor of a mental landscape to better represent deliberate moral imagining at work in childhood. In the field of geography, a landscape can be understood as the "totality of all aspects of a region, as perceived by man,"[143] grasped in a single view, however fallibly, through the powers of human perception. Similarly, in my conception, a mental landscape—or mindscape—designates the vast expanse of intertwined concepts, social imaginaries and personal experiences (symbolised by memories, beliefs, feelings) that make up the scenery of the mind. Children may not be fully conscious of their mental landscape's contents—especially those elements that enrich it and those that pollute it—and they may see some of its components more clearly than others without realising it, yet because they conjure up this living, fluid repertoire reflexively when they think and act, its effects on their evolving autonomy should not go unnoticed.

Extending the metaphor, deliberate moral imagining becomes a kind of mental landscaping (perhaps one of many), in the sense that it alters the existing design with a particular goal in mind, checking over roots, locating pollutants and planting new seeds. Used purposefully at a specific moment, it can provide a snapshot of the mental landscape in its current rendition (however flawed), producing a detailed yet coherent composition. Yet its larger goal is to enable a panoramic, pantascopic lens on the situation at hand—to capture a wide angle, a nuanced view of the whole, so that children may metaphorically see the bigger (moral) picture. As this ensemble of multiple frames of reference is added to children's mental landscapes, it can begin to enlighten their deep concerns, which in turn may affect what they believe they have reason to

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[142] Highmore in Gregg and Seigworth, eds., 2010, 121-122.

value. Once reason-driven reflective endorsement lends its critical eye, helping them to consider these concerns, reaffirm them, and determine how they might live in accordance with them, children's evolving autonomy may be activated in more responsible ways so that when they face new experiences in real life that engender new meanings in their mental landscape, the process comes full circle.

Of course, like the art of actual landscaping, deliberate moral imagining fares better when informed by an understanding of the terrain—its cultivation needs, its native flora, its invasive species—which may be refined through training. In the context of childhood, then, I will talk about a imaginative *curatorship* of children's own mental landscaping as referring to the purposive facilitation of morally imaginative practices—like the CPI educational model explored in my case study—where deliberate moral imagining is modelled and exercised with pedagogical integrity. While a child's mental landscape could grow and flourish on its own without such careful intervention, or in spite of haphazard handling and even poisonous substances, since I am concerned with creating meaningful opportunities for children to envisage and exercise their evolving responsible autonomy, I want to concentrate on morally imaginative "landscaping" practices that are more attentive and intentional, notably in terms of their relational impact, the dimensions of which I outline below.

This notion of a curatorship further underscores why I am opting for a weak/moderate substantive account of autonomy that emphasises responsibility: children's mental landscapes ought to be protected so as to not yield polluting contents that end up compromising their early attempts at living autonomously in relationally sound ways. For instance, I think it reasonable to want to insist on mental landscaping practices that aim to prevent children from believing that

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[143] Alexander von Humboldt in Ludomir, 2008, 217.

the lives they have reason to value are ones of cruelty at one extreme or of submissiveness at the other. Their burgeoning perspectival identity—the budding features about themselves that they care deeply about—ought to be fuelled by a rich enough mental landscape that they do not settle for qualities that undermine their self-worth to the point that they make themselves reckless or further vulnerable. Less dramatically, on the view I am defending, it also seems objectionable that children reflectively endorse their current lifestyle simply because they grew up with it and take solace in its familiarity. Rather, to be considered responsibly autonomous in the ways I am suggesting, they must first problematise their stance by comparing it to a host of other possibilities for valuable lives, reflect on which aligns best with their deep concerns, reaffirm these and determine how they might act in accordance with them. So how might such competence be trained in childhood?

I want to argue that my conception of deliberate moral imagining offers a promising path, as it may help children to steer clear of autonomy-devaluing norms by allowing them to work through their envisioned options for the lives they believe are worth valuing within their mental landscape before committing to any of them in real life; and this process not only shapes their deep concerns but also their sense of responsibility for these concerns and the ways they act in accordance with them. Deliberate moral imagining may thus support children's experimentations with the reflective endorsement so needed for autonomy competence by illuminating it with new possibilities and creating a space—a pause—to purposefully envision a given context that is unfamiliar or complex to them. In bringing to light options for what seems most reasonable to value, this imaginative process may affect their relation to others (enabling their *empathic engagement*, the focus of chapter two), their relation to self (enabling their *self-efficacy*, the focus of chapter three) and their relation to knowledge (enabling their *reasonableness*, the focus of chapter four).

The resulting relational openness in children, characterised by an increased sensitivity to and awareness of the complexities in their relations with others, with themselves and with knowledge, could translate into a more responsible orientation towards their global autonomy. Metaphorically speaking, while each child has her own distinct mental landscape, it is not wholly disconnected from that of others: they access each other's mental landscapes indirectly through their interpersonal engagements—their shared concepts, social imaginaries, beliefs, memories and feelings form links between their respective repertoires in ways that can even empower (or disempower) others to become landscapists of the scenery of their minds, for better or worse. Relationally, then, since the focus of this thesis is evolving responsible autonomy in childhood, the hypothetical examples I will include will also point to ways that children, on the one hand, may become sources of nutrients or toxins for others' mental landscapes (by succeeding or failing in their attempts at deliberate moral imagining) and, on the other hand, become invigorated or victimised by the sources of nutrients or toxins that others may become for them.

More specifically, on my account, children as emerging agents may learn to enrich, extend and protect their mental landscapes through three key features of deliberate moral imagining that I will strive to further develop and concretise throughout the thesis. Though I do not want to claim that these features represent a turnkey solution that can be followed in a step-by-step sequence, it may be useful to see them as interconnected acts that make up the purposefully initiated process of moral imagining toward the goal of bringing to light what seems reasonable to value. I will briefly describe each of them, then provide a representative example to illustrate their use with children:

- *Acknowledgement of limited perspectives*: This feature of deliberate moral imagining involves a willingness to examine one's mental landscape—the intertwined concepts, social imaginaries and personal experiences that make up the scenery of the mind—in light of a given situation to see how it may be presenting a limited picture, and then to envision possible ways of overcoming these limitations. Specific acts related to this feature include, for instance: becoming aware of the ways in which current conceptual frameworks may be excluding relevant viewpoints; calling to mind a different set of possible vantage points to diversify and problematise existing perspectives; moving beyond the familiar by considering unusual or foreign possibilities and consequences; finding alternative readings and interpretations of history, religion, culture and science; etc.
- *Recognition of commonality*: This feature of deliberate moral imagining involves analysing the aforementioned limited picture to see if there are distinctions, demarcations, distancings—especially prejudicial ones—that are preventing what is shared, similar, symmetric to come to the fore in one's mental landscape. Specific acts related to this feature include, for instance: identifying overlaps in lived experiences between self and others; being attuned to common weaknesses and vulnerabilities among humans and also other life forms; striving toward a more complete view of another's needs, goals, motivations and obstacles; refraining from dismissing as "other" what is simply foreign or misunderstood; seeking out art and narratives that depict shared struggles and joys; etc.
- *Identification of competing considerations*: This feature of deliberate moral imagining also involves inspecting the limited picture presented by the mental landscape but in an

effort to uncover and appreciate the tensions, inconsistencies and ambivalences that exist notwithstanding the possible commonalities. Specific acts related to this feature include, for instance: being receptive to significant differences and clashes between world views; noticing the complexity of a situation rather than imposing a clearcut, black-and-white reading of it that risks collapsing important dissimilarities; being sensitive to values in their plurality and variation, and thus to possible conflicts arising between them and to incoherences in their application; detecting frictions between personal priorities and the interests of others; anticipating the varying or contrasting effects of a new theory, invention or service on individuals and communities; attending to such differences as they affect issues of social justice and inclusion; etc.

At first blush, these features of deliberate moral imagining may strike some as onerous in the context of childhood: when taken together, they seem to describe a moral exemplar that can appear unattainable even in adulthood. Yet I take them to be aspirational in the sense that they are part of an ongoing—and we could even say lifelong—cultivation of responsible autonomy which may be scaffolded through morally imaginative practices aimed at curating children's mental landscapes as they grow in their confidence and competence as emerging agents. To see this, let us consider a scenario involving deliberate moral imagining in response to the phenomenological experience of perceived unfairness, one that seems quite typical in many stages of childhood.

To those who regularly interact with children, the interjection "That's not fair!" can seem like a ubiquitous reaction in the childhood struggle to negotiate a world they are inheriting from adults yet often find perplexing. I myself have encountered it countless times in my work as a philosophical practitioner with children and will draw on actual events in constructing this example. At the same time, it is a representative example not only because it is a characteristic statement of many children in the age range I am considering, but also because it connects with issues of autonomy. When a child exclaims that a given situation is unfair, it is often because she has perceived it as an affront to her deep concerns (even if not yet categorised as such) or as a threat to what she believes she has reason to value. Moreover, sometimes the given situation may involve an attempt on her part to enact her autonomy: she is wanting to behave in ways that reflect her perspectival identity (again, even if not yet understood as such) by doing or acquiring a certain thing as an emerging agent, and she feels she is being restricted—being told that she cannot, being made to feel that she should not. Further still, such a reaction demonstrates that she is able to detect complex concepts operating in her lived experience—she can discern the manifestation of a lack of fairness or an injustice—but her conceptual understanding may be limited.

To be more specific, let us suppose an eight-year old child retorting "That's not fair!" to her parents' request that she help out with family chores by spending her free time after school cleaning up the play room. She had planned to do a scientific experiment from one of her activity books since she cares about understanding biology and she is frustrated by how little science she does in class—she wants to be a biologist when she grows up but doubts if she has what it takes. Plus, she has only a week left before she is supposed to be helping the kindergarten group in the school's science fair; she was picked as their student-mentor so she cannot let them down, even though the responsibility is making her anxious. Her free time is precious! Worsening matters is the fact that while she is busy tidying up, her mother gets to have a nap because she had a rough day at work. In her estimation, the situation is plainly unfair.

Though her disappointment is understandable, the child's fairness radar seems not to be functioning properly: hers is hardly a situation of great injustice yet she is indignant at having to interrupt her important personal project to help out. Her feelings of entitlement and uncertainty are distorting her sense of fairness, preventing her from seeing beyond her particular perspective. She assumes there is but one way to view the situation—her own—so she concocts a self-serving narrative as an exploited daughter; she perceives her circumstances as unfair because she cannot compare them to other instances of injustice. In this case, her mental landscape is rather arid.

To anticipate arguments I will be making in upcoming chapters, we could say that her take on the situation reveals a failure of moral imagining that challenges her responsible autonomy: she empathises with the kindergarteners who risk losing out on her mentorship yet she does not see her exhausted mother as worthy of her empathy (a challenge I call "narrow empathetic scope" and explore through neo-Aristotelian virtue theory in chapter two); she doubts her ability to fulfill her obligations as mentor despite being recognised as having the knowhow to realise the outcomes she values within a supportive atmosphere (a challenge I call "conversion inhibition" and explore though the Capabilities Approach in chapter three), and her reasoning is skewed by a stereotyped concept of justice that oversimplifies the picture and affects how she approaches knowledge in her situation (a challenge I call "inaccurate pseudoenvironments" and explore through classical pragmatism in chapter four).

Yet if she were to engage in deliberate moral imagining through a purposeful envisioning of this given context of perceived unfairness—imagining a host of possible considerations in her mental landscape even if she has not necessarily experienced many instantiations of injustice in her own life so far—she may overcome such challenges. For instance, she could acknowledge her limited perspectives by willingly envisaging other meanings of justice, not simply those that are synonymous with equality ("Equal free time for all family members!"), imagining her way beyond her context to genuinely consider alternative vantage points. She could also recognise commonality, imagining similarities between her needs and those of her mother who, though older and more mature, might still be in need of help at times, thus learning to more fairly appraise herself and others. Lastly, she could identify competing considerations by realising that her circumstances are more complex that they originally seemed: her self-doubt may be clouding her perception of herself as capable of dealing with both the stress of a first mentorship and her share of family responsibilities. Further, she could see that her experience of unfairness is not the only element that matters: the value of justice is running into other equally important values like kindness, mutual aid, perseverance and the like.

Through her purposeful envisioning, she may come to realise that it is all a matter of perspective, and a little humility can go a long way in removing the blinders blocking her moral lens from seeing different possible considerations. As my case study chapter will show, if she were involved in a collaborative morally imaginative practice that is embodied and affectively charged, she could push this process even further through deliberate reflection on her reasoning alongside peers, asking herself: What is her basis for comparison in judging her situation as unfair? How else might her situation be perceived? Is she making snap judgements or hasty generalisations? What might be the consequences of thinking and acting this way?

And so, thanks to deliberate moral imagining, a very genuinely felt phenomenological experience such as this one could be envisioned from multiple frames of reference and the resulting moral lens—that is, the panoramic view of the range of possibilities for what seems reasonable to value—could be broadened. More generally, the ways children approach and assess their current lived experience—that is, how they think, act and make meaning, and how they determine the expression of their evolving autonomy—as well as the ways they approach and assess past and future circumstances that confront them with a similar issue, may become more conscious and flexible, with a greater relational openness (an expansion of the aforementioned relation to other, self, knowledge) and a stronger sense of responsibility for their deep concerns and how they might act in accordance with them.

Returning to my survey of moral imagination across varied disciplines, my proposed conception of deliberate moral imagining and its three features also encompass the interdisciplinary list of criteria previously identified. Indeed, by being both past and future oriented in terms of the broadened moral lens it affords, and by concerning itself with both commonality and difference, my proposed conception seeks to help children gain awareness of complexity, diversity and ambiguity, while apprehending their limited frames of reference. Rather than adopt an adultist stance that posits a deficit view of childhood, this conception hypothesises that since children may not be constrained by the mass of life experiences that adults have, if given the space to practice deliberate moral imagining through careful forethought and vicarious engagement with other ways of life within their mental landscape, they may actually be better positioned to assess existing and past social imaginaries, and develop sensitivity to moral salience, enabling them to create more promising and novel opportunities for virtuous action.

Yet an important question remains: Is deliberate moral imagining too hard for children? Though not yet proven empirically, my practice suggests that such purposeful envisioning is feasible in childhood with a careful curatorship in place, not least because the children with whom I have worked seem to spontaneously morally imagine in the sense I am proposing when engaged in meaning-making through philosophical dialogues, so it stands to reason they could learn to do so more deliberately. That said, I do take this issue very seriously. While I will be revisiting it in my conclusion by considering the dangers and demands that my conception may entail, for now I will assume it is possible despite the challenges I will explore, starting with an analysis of the ethics of deliberate moral imagining from the perspective of neo-Aristotelian virtue theory.

Chapter 2: Moral Imagining Within Neo-Aristotelian Virtue Theory

This chapter will examine the ethics of deliberate moral imagining in childhood through the lens of neo-Aristotelian virtue theory. To be clear, since I am interested in a relational form of autonomy appropriate for children, for the purpose of this chapter, the focus on "ethics" is simply intended to zero in on how they view (and consequently treat) the people in their lives. I am concerned that evolving responsible autonomy in childhood may be challenged by a tendency to empathise too restrictively—what I am calling "narrow empathetic scope"—which could affect who children find worthy of their valuing. This is ethically significant because of the potential impact on their deep concerns and how they may choose to think and act in accordance with them. I want to argue that deliberate moral imagining may help children to enhance their empathic engagement—or their commitment to taking seriously the perspective of others—by enlarging the sphere of their moral concern (who they empathise with and why), which may expand what they believe they have reason to value as emerging agents.

To my mind, despite some tensions that I will seek to address, the theoretical framework of neo-Aristotelian virtue theory offers an insightful angle through which to consider the ethics of deliberate moral imagining because of how it conceptualises virtue and the quality of perception needed to become virtuous. According to the argument I will be advancing, if the virtue of empathy is to support the cultivation of evolving responsible autonomy in childhood, then deliberate moral imagining is required to ensure an empathic engagement that is broad enough to encourage children's active envisioning of circumstances they may not yet have encountered themselves due to their age and experience. And so, we could say that children's envisioning of the overarching context of relation-to-other is broadened by these imaginative efforts, resulting in a relational openness characterised by a more discerning perception of people in all their complexity, which enriches the reasons driving their reflective endorsement.

I will begin this chapter by outlining the notion of virtue drawing on Aristotle's thought in *Nicomachean Ethics* and address a recent critique of empathy as a moral guide. I will then present my proposed challenge of narrow empathetic scope, contending that children with such a limited frame of reference lack a certain quality of perception that neo-Aristotelian virtue theorists call practical wisdom, which increases sensitivity to the salient particulars of situations, notably those that call for empathic response. Subsequently, I will address the framework's negligible emphasis on autonomy and childhood agency, and complement my account of responsible autonomy with additional traits of the emerging responsibly autonomous child that may contribute to portraying children as capable of virtue. After considering what a virtue-oriented conception of autonomy might look like, I will argue that deliberate moral imagining is uniquely able to assist with the acquisition of practical wisdom in children—building off key ideas about perception from Martha Nussbaum—and may thus contribute to their hitting the target of empathy as virtue, notably when supported by a specific set of narrative aids.

Virtue in context

To illuminate the ethical dimension of deliberate moral imagining, neo-Aristotelian virtue theory has much to offer as a normative approach to ethics concerned with examining the character of individuals rather than emphasising their actions. Whereas moral conduct forms the focus of other leading ethical approaches like consequentialism and deontology, virtue theory underlines the importance of the agent herself and the life she endeavours to lead.[144] This emphasis on virtuous character can illuminate the role that perception may play in childhood, specifically how children view (and consequently treat) the people in their lives, notably through their empathic engagement. But what should it mean to speak of empathy as a virtue?

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[144] Although this chapter draws on virtue theory as its theoretical framework, there is no reason to think that other leading moral theories like consequentialism and deontology would not share the concern over what I am calling "narrow

For many individuals across various fields, empathy seems to be the new panacea for moral ills, supposedly encapsulating the desirable traits of a rising global citizenry. Though much has been said about the pivotal role empathy can play in childhood, I think the difficulties associated with enhancing empathic engagement tend not to receive the attention they deserve. The concept of empathy has gained appeal in many child-focused initiatives in recent years, notably in the charitable sector. Non-profit organisations like the Canadian-based Roots of Empathy program and the international Ashoka "Start Empathy" project are dedicating their efforts to developing innovative child-friendly programming that educate for empathy, with the overarching goal of fostering responsible citizenship at an early age.[145]

While this gradual shift toward empathic engagement in childhood is a promising and valuable development, it also reveals conceptual confusions: as a moral concept, empathy is defined rather broadly, making it difficult to decipher what set of attitudes and behaviours it designates, and how to determine its successful implementation, particularly with respect to

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empathetic scope." For example, in "Are Empathy and Morality Linked?" Giuseppe Ugazio et al. consider a similar formulation of empathy from consequentialist perspectives, noting that when placed in a utilitarian thought experiment like the trolley dilemma, individuals tend to show stronger empathy for ingroup members than outgroup members (revealing what could be described as their "narrow empathetic scope"), suggesting that empathy "ultimately motivates morally dubious behaviour by causing a person to show partiality toward the 'more human' peers in her ingroup" (170). See Maibom, ed., 2014, 156-171.

[145] The Toronto-based charity Roots of Empathy (www.rootsofempathy.org) was founded in 1996 by child advocate Mary Gordon to help develop empathy in children by allowing them to regularly witness and analyse the loving interactions between an infant and parent, and practice taking on each other's perspectives through careful listening. Launched in 1980, the international social entrepreneur network Ashoka's Start Empathy initiative helps young people use empathy to better resolve conflict, work collaboratively and listen effectively, motivating them to become positive change-makers (empathy.ashoka.org). Other non-profit organisations with similar mandates include PeaceFirst (www.peacefirst.org), which teaches empathy as one of its "peacemaker skills," and ChangingWorlds (www.changingworlds.org) which uses empathy to enhance cross-cultural understanding.

children.[146] As a result, it has recently faced a barrage of critiques, notably from psychologist Paul Bloom, whose ideas I will consider shortly. Accordingly, this chapter aims to help salvage empathy from oversimplified characterisations through a depiction of its potential as a virtue within the context of childhood when supported by deliberate moral imagining, drawing on central ideas from neo-Aristotelian virtue theory.

In the words of John McDowell, a major proponent of neo-Aristotelian ethics, "according to this different view, although the point of engaging in ethical reflection still lies in the interest of the question 'How should one live?' that question is necessarily approached via the notion of a virtuous person."[147] Correspondingly, when considering childhood, the question "How should one live empathetically?" can be illuminated by exploring the notion of a virtuously empathetic child. Though my later section on autonomy will present the adultist assumptions that I see as clouding Aristotelian thought, for now I will assume that children as emerging agents are capable of becoming virtuous, at least to some degree. Before offering my own conception of empathy as virtue, I will first outline the meaning of virtue within this framework, then tackle an initial objection to empathy as a moral guide.

If we follow Aristotle's definition of virtue as a "purposive disposition" that can be acquired through the habitual performance of virtuous acts, then it follows that to become empathetic, a child must engage in empathising.[148] Yet habituation alone is not enough: the virtuous child must also know what balance to reach, using her reason and emotions in correct measure. She must avoid both the excess of empathising too much and the deficiency of empathising too little (two extremes that I will soon describe) by achieving the mean condition—hitting the "target" of empathy rather than falling short of it.[149] A moral virtue is thus a "mean between two kinds of vice, one of excess and the other of deficiency,"[150] and can be determined through practical wisdom or *phronesis*, which Aristotle interprets as the quality of perception that enables virtuous people to grasp the particulars of each set of circumstances they face and make sound, equitable judgements accordingly.

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[146] For instance, Roots of Empathy defines empathy as "the ability to identify with another person's feelings...to see and feel things as others see and feel," while Ashoka's Start Empathy characterises it as "the ability to understand what other people are feeling and to guide one's actions in response."

[147] McDowell, 1979, 332.

[148] Aristotle writes: "Anything that we have to learn to do we learn by the actual doing of it: people become builders by building...Similarly we become just by performing just acts, temperate by performing temperate ones, brave by performing brave ones." Thomson, 2004, 32.

It is in this sense that he writes about the "mark of virtue" as having "feelings at the right times on the right grounds towards the right people for the right motive and in the right way is to feel them to an intermediate, that is to the best, degree."[151] In Nussbaum's words:

> For Aristotle, each of the virtues is an organised way of cherishing a particular end that has intrinsic value. Taken together, the virtues, and their orderly arrangement, represent a set of commitments to cherish all the valuable things, and to organise them all together, insofar as one can…Virtue is a mean concerning both passion and action, because Aristotle expects that the passions, as well as choice, can be crafted by reason until they themselves embody virtue.[152]

Through consistent commitment over time, a virtue becomes ingrained in an agent's sense of identity and turns into a meaningful quality for which she is accountable.[153] And so, it follows that if a child is committed to empathy as a virtue, she will judiciously engage in empathising until it becomes ingrained in her as the quality of being empathetic.

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[149] *Ibid*, 40-41.

[150] *Ibid*, 41, 154-156.

[151] *Ibid*, 40.

[152] Nussbaum, 1999, 183.

[153] Zagzebski, 1996, 104.

Yet by simply labeling empathy as a virtue, I am infusing the term with a moral dimension that may seem controversial to some. Let me therefore address one possible objection before presenting my own definition. In the recent book *Against Empathy*, psychologist Paul Bloom claims that although empathy can lead us to live happier lives by strengthening our personal relationships and prompting us to do good,[154] it is not a reliable guide in moral deliberation because it tends to skew our reasoning toward our biased preferences. Setting aside cognitive empathy, which he dismisses as an amoral tool of social cognition devoid of affective investment,[155] Bloom concentrates instead on what he calls empathy as an emotion—as "the act of feeling what you believe other people feel."[156] He compares this emotional act to a spotlight that casts light on certain areas while blacking out others, making us shortsighted to the long-term effects of our actions: for example, we will donate money to local charities at the expense of faraway aid relief missions because the beam of our empathy does not shine beyond our neighbourhood.[157]

Though he concedes that empathy can be improved,[158] he rejects it as an impracticable moral guide, not least because he deems it impossible for us to empathise with more than a few people at a time.[159] He writes: "If you are struggling with a moral decision and find yourself trying to feel someone else's pain or pleasure, you should stop…[it] might give you some satisfaction, but it's not how to improve things and can lead to bad decisions and bad outcomes. Much better to use reason and cost-benefit analysis, drawing on a more distanced compassion."[160]

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[154] Bloom, 2016, 49.

[155] *Ibid*, 3.

[156] *Ibid*, 3.

[157] *Ibid*, 87.

[158] *Ibid*, 18. Interestingly, Bloom suggests in passing that imagination could help enhance empathy: "It can be nurtured, stanched, developed, and extended through the imagination."

[159] *Ibid*, 33.

Bloom's spotlight analogy points to concerns that are captured by the challenge of narrow empathetic scope I am presenting in the next section, though my argument predates his and is rooted in quite a different definition of empathy. As we shall see, empathy is not a feeling on my view—it may involve solicitude but is more about extending outward into another's experience than sharing in their emotional response. By characterising empathy as a virtue, I avoid the problem that Bloom bemoans since his depiction of empathy would plainly be a failure to hit the target, representing the deficiency of empathising too little that I will soon explain. What he is critiquing is the problematic application of empathy, not the viability of empathy itself, and his proposed alternative—a rational compassion that is more "diffuse" in its reach[161]—lacks elucidation and justification.

I do not see how reason or compassion are any less vulnerable to bias and misapplication,[162] so I prefer to salvage empathy by submitting it to the specific standards of virtue theory so that it may, with the help of deliberate moral imagining, become a more reliable moral guide. I am interested in what risks happening if empathy is promoted in childhood without this sort of specification: What if the empathic engagement encouraged is too narrow in its scope, with children falling short of the empathy target by empathising with too few people for the wrong reasons? How might this affect the reflective endorsement necessary for their evolving responsible autonomy? In the next section, I will examine this challenge of narrow empathetic scope, drawing from interdisciplinary research on empathy and neo-Aristotelian views on practical wisdom.

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[160] *Ibid*, 39.

[161] *Ibid*, 40.

[162] *Ibid*, 52.

The challenge of narrow empathetic scope

Current research across the disciplines abounds with interest in empathy, and this abundance has contributed to conceptual confusions surrounding the term, notably in the context of childhood. Depending on the field and the definition, empathy appears to involve both cognitive and affective dimensions, require aesthetic perception, and encompass many moral orientations, including kindness, justice and sympathy, which with it is sometimes conflated.[163] At times it seems as though there are as many definitions of empathy as there are scholars interested in the concept. While a full survey of these conceptualisations is beyond this section's reach, before analysing empathy as a virtue, I want to consider a few relevant definitions from leading empathy theorists in the fields of ethology, psychology, and neurobiology, respectively. I will then discuss the virtue of empathy, defining narrow empathetic scope as a minor deficiency of empathy that requires careful examination because of its threat to evolving responsible autonomy in childhood, and I will elucidate the role of practical wisdom in addressing this deficiency by imparting in children this quality of perception, the acquisition of which I will later argue may be motivated by deliberate moral imagining.

In his extensive studies of the evolutionary origins of cooperation and mirror neurones, Dutch ethologist Frans De Waal suggests that "empathy offers direct access to 'the foreign self.'" He argues that though "we cannot feel anything that happens outside ourselves...by merging self and other, the other's experiences echo within us."[164] Based on this definition, the empathetic person can be characterised as extending herself outward into another's experience.

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[163] For a comprehensive overview of empathy within the field of philosophy, please see Stueber, 2012.

Further, for psychologist Carl Rogers, founder of the humanistic approach to therapy, empathy requires a certain sensibility. He describes the empathic process as "entering the private perceptual world of the other and becoming thoroughly at home in it...being sensitive, moment by moment, to the changing felt meanings which flow in this other person...temporarily living in the other's life, moving about in it delicately without making judgements" but also "without ever losing the 'as if' condition."[165] On this account, the empathetic person is able to extend herself into the other's experience, all the while recognising that this experience is not her own; she preserves her own sense of agency.

Additionally, according to neurobiologists Jean Decety and Philip Jackson, the empathetic agent also maintains a sense of discernment; her empathic process does not have to turn into sympathetic concern since she can remain as impartial as humanly feasible. They define empathy as "the capacity to understand and respond to the unique affective experiences of another person" though this understanding "does not necessarily imply that one will act or even feel impelled to act in a supportive or sympathetic way."[166]

From this interdisciplinary angle on empathy research, I propose to define the empathetic person as one who extends herself outward into another's experience with sensibility and discernment, without losing her sense of agency or her impartiality. So while empathy involves being sensitive to salience, the emotion required is a type of wholehearted commitment to this process of extending oneself outward into another's experience; it is not a sharing of the other's feelings but a recognition of these feelings as part of the situation's salient features. A fitting example is hearing a baby crying while on an airplane: the empathetic person can extend herself into the baby's experience to understand how flying can be frightening, uncomfortable, worrying and the like, without for a moment feeling the fear, discomfort or worry herself, instead remaining calm and collected while appreciating the baby's feelings as salient to the situation at hand.

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[164] De Waal, 2009, 65.

[165] Rogers, 1975, 3-4.

[166] Decety and Jackson, 2006, 54.

And so, applied to childhood, when done genuinely, this wholehearted commitment is what leads to *empathic engagement*: the child who can empathically engage in a situation is not only capable of such outward extension but can commit to doing it as sensibly and impartially as possible. The definition I am proposing therefore points to more than just cognitive empathy: certainly children must have a theory of mind to empathetically engage to the extent that they can attribute, as Susan Bandes has argued, "thoughts, desires, and intentions to others"[167] and apprehend their feelings without automatically experiencing them, but they must also go beyond detached perspective-taking by recognising the dignity of the person into whose experience they are committed to extending themselves.

With reference to often overused but still ambiguous analogies of empathy, my definition leans towards "seeing through another's eyes" rather than "putting oneself in their shoes": whereas the latter would entail a child determining what she would do if she were in the other's place—or striving to understand the other's situation but in order to make it amenable to her own worldview—the former is about taking seriously the other's perspective and how it colours their situation and their choices within that situation.

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[167] Bandes, 2011, 9.

Returning to Aristotle's conception of virtue, this characterisation offers a starting point for thinking about the "target" of empathy with respect to children. If the mean of empathy is, as described above, a discerning outward extension into another's experience, then the excess of empathy—one of the corresponding vices—would be a child extending outward to the point of losing herself: she conflates her own feelings with those of the other and distances herself too much from her own burgeoning perspectival identity due to her hypersensitivity; what I will henceforth call *self-alienation* for short. On the other end of the spectrum, the deficiency of empathy—the second corresponding vice—would be a form of tunnel vision: a child extending outward with a limited point of view induced by egoism or indifference, searching in the other what she herself values and thus misconstruing their experience; what I will henceforth call *self-seeking* for short.

Within the context of childhood, it seems clear that these vices could jeopardise evolving responsible autonomy as I have been defining it so far, notably if children only apply empathy in relation to their current sensibilities or life experiences. The risks posed by this excess and deficiency are captured well in a quote by Jeremy Rifkin, whose book *The Empathic Civilization* offers a revisionist account of human history from an empathic viewpoint: "The empathic observer does not lose his sense of self and fuse into the other's experience, nor does he cooly and objectively read the experience of the other as a way of gathering information that could be used to foster his own self-interest."[168]

Of course, as virtue ethicist Rosalind Hursthouse rightly points out, virtue possession is a matter of degree and "blind spots" can derail even a fairly virtuous person, without necessarily leading them completely off course into the territory of vice.[169] Aristotle notes that "the man who deviates only a little from the right degree, either in excess or in deficiency, is not censured—only the one who goes too far, because he is noticeable."[170] With respect to empathy, I want to call this slight deviation, or this minor deficiency, *narrow empathetic scope*.[171]

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[168] Rifkin, 2009, 13.

In my view, narrow empathetic scope is a failure to hit the virtue "target" but it does not constitute the full vice of self-seeking: instead it involves a child empathising to an insufficient degree because her limited frame of reference causes her to misconstrue the circumstances of others. I argue that this problem involves two dimensions: the "who" of empathy—its *objects*, the people to which the child directs her empathising; and the "why" of empathy—its *circumstances*, the particulars justifying a child's reasons for empathising with particular people. To my mind, though much has been lauded about empathy, less has been said about these objects and circumstances. Who should be deemed to deserve empathy? How are these people chosen or preferred over others? How can these choices be mistaken and even prejudiced? Empathic inclinations alone are not enough to ensure moral character since their application can be destructively biased—on this point, I find Bloom's spotlight metaphor helpful.

According to the view I am defending, if a child has narrow empathetic scope, she may empathise with fewer people for inadequate reasons that caricature or trivialise the situation in question. For instance, she may only empathise with people who share her worldview or with a minority group whose circumstances she misreads as pitiable. In either case, her scope of empathy is constricted. This tendency to empathise too restrictively may challenge her evolving responsible autonomy by constraining who she finds worthy of her valuing. Though she has not collapsed into the full vice—the deficiency of self-seeking—her current perspective points to a partial vice since it restricts the degree to which she can embody the full virtue of empathy, though this restriction is not intentional on her part.

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[169] Hursthouse writes: "Possessing a virtue is a matter of degree, for most people who can be truly described as fairly virtuous...still have their blind spots—little areas where they do not act for the reasons one would expect." Hursthouse, 2012.

[170] Thomson, 2004, 49.

[171] For reasons of space and focus alone, this chapter will focus on the deficiency of empathy. It is certainly worth considering the equally important excess of empathy—or self-alienation. For a detailed discussion of the excess of empathy as a kind of extreme perspective-shifting that threatens personal agency, see Goldie's "Anti-Empathy" in Coplan and Goldie, eds., 2012, 302-318.

Aristotle argues that acts of virtue and vice are voluntary, meaning their "originating cause lies in the agent [herself], who knows the particular circumstances of [her] action."[172] One might say that the child with narrow empathetic scope voluntarily acts in an empathetic way but misreads her particular circumstances, which risks negatively affecting how she enacts her evolving autonomy competence. As an emerging agent, she is not deliberately doing the wrong thing, which would make her plainly vicious, but rather falling short of the target because she lacks a certain quality of perception, namely: practical wisdom.

Neo-Aristotelian virtue theorists have greatly contributed to conceptualising practical wisdom. For David Wiggins, it involves a careful reading of contexts. "The person of real practical wisdom," he writes, "is the one who brings to bear upon a situation the greatest number of genuinely pertinent concerns and genuinely relevant considerations commensurate with the importance of the deliberative context."[173] For her part, Sabina Lovibond describes practical wisdom as "that comprehensive grasp of what matters in life," adding that it entails "good judgement about the relative practical urgency or 'saliency' attaching, from moment to moment, to different ethical considerations."[174] Similarly, Martha Nussbaum depicts the practically wise person as “cultivating the sort of flexibility and perceptiveness that will permit [her]...to ‘improvise what is required.’”[175]

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[172] Thomson, 2004, 54.

[173] Wiggins, 1998, 233.

[174] Lovibond, 2002, 27-29.

As I see it, practical wisdom is therefore what enables virtue since it makes us more perceptive of, and thereby receptive to, the various situations we encounter and what they demand of us, notably what particular virtues they may necessitate.[176] Applied to childhood, it follows that to become virtuous, a child would have to start exhibiting such a sensitivity—or as McDowell phrases it, “a distinctive way of seeing things,”[177] which would make her more responsive to the salient particulars of situations, notably those that call for empathic response.

Correspondingly, the child who does not act virtuously lacks this quality of sensitivity in her perception—she does not possess practical wisdom. Now, a child who has narrow empathetic scope may be aiming for virtue but not be perceptive enough to see and be sensitised to all the salient features of the circumstances, so she fails to hit the target, despite succeeding at empathising to a certain (albeit inadequate) degree. For this child, empathy is not yet a full virtue; it is not, as Linda Zagzebski convincingly puts it, “a deep and enduring acquired excellence of a person, involving a characteristic motivation to produce a certain desired end and reliable success in bringing about that end.”[178]

In my view, the child may be unaware of a tendency toward bias that could be leading her to empathise exclusively with people to whom she can relate or to interpret people’s conditions in a one-sided manner. Unbeknownst to her, this narrow scope of empathy could be impacting her evolving autonomy competence, diminishing possibilities for what she believes she has reason to value and thus limiting her reflective endorsement. Those who are committed to virtue, as Aristotle underlines, must therefore "notice the errors into which [they are] liable to fall" based on their own natural tendencies, and "drag [themselves] in the contrary direction."[179]

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[175] Nussbaum, 1990, 71.

[176] Further, Aristotle argues that “the possession of the single virtue of [practical wisdom] will carry with it the possession of them all.” Thomson, 2004, 166.

[177] McDowell, 1979, 246.

[178] Zagzebski, 1996, 137.

Additionally, they must learn to distinguish between virtues and dispositions that appear similar but are not equivalent. The oft-used examples of misapplied honesty and courage suggest that a single virtue does not suffice to ensure moral character: if children are interested in becoming virtuous but have not yet internalised the virtues, they can misuse them. Just as many traits may parade as courage but actually entail a different disposition altogether, I see the virtue of empathy as having her share of impersonators.[180] Personal distress, for example, though instigated by another's situation, is ultimately self-centred: a child may react with intense anxiety in response to seeing someone suffer but, as neurobiologists Decety and Jackson rightly observe, "the focus would then become [her] own feelings of stress rather than the other's need."[181]

All things considered, for the child as emerging agent, acquiring practical wisdom can be a painstaking, error-prone process. So where does this leave children and the tall order of enhancing their empathic engagement? How might their potential for virtue, and practical wisdom more broadly, support the development of their responsible autonomy competence? Prior to considering the role that deliberate moral imagining might play, I will first address the barriers to childhood autonomy inherent in neo-Aristotelian virtue theory.

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[179] Thomson, 2004, 166.

[180] Aristotle identifies five dispositions that resemble but do not constitute courage: civic courage, experience of risk, spirit or mettle, sanguineness or optimism, and ignorance. Thomson, 2004, 70-73.

[181] Decety and Jackson, 2006, 57.

Childhood autonomy and virtue

The acquisition of practical wisdom seems vital to empathic engagement in childhood since it may sensitise children to the salient particulars of situations that call for an empathic response. Yet according to Aristotle and some other virtue ethicists, notably Hursthouse, children lack the life experience for such quality of perception—they have not confronted a wide enough range of circumstances to read the contexts they do encounter with enough thoroughness and sensitivity. While I agree that full practical wisdom may not be realisable in childhood, I believe a move toward its attainment is not only possible but crucial, especially given that this theoretical framework deems it as a necessary and sufficient requirement for being virtuous. Just as children's autonomy is evolving, their competence for practical wisdom may be similarly nascent, with certain experimentations with virtuous action bolstering it and others undermining it.

When it comes to empathy as a virtue, in my view, children as emerging agents may not perceive all the relevant considerations in a situation and thus misconstrue it, resulting in a narrow empathetic scope that excludes certain people or distorts their experience, and thus threatens both their nascent practical wisdom and their evolving autonomy. Further, this tendency may follow them into adulthood: as Aristotle highlights, our bad habits will affect our resulting dispositions, "so it is a matter of no little importance what sort of habits we form from the earlier stage—it makes a vast difference, or rather all the difference in the world."[182]

So how might narrow empathetic scope be addressed so as not to undermine children's evolving responsible autonomy? Before examining how deliberate moral imagining might address deficiencies of empathy in children by motivating their acquisition of practical wisdom, I will first consider neo-Aristotelian virtue theory's bleak perspective on the prospects of autonomy in childhood in order to contextualise my more hopeful interpretation that offers three additional traits of the emerging responsibly autonomous child, drawing on theorists who share my concerns regarding children and virtuous agency.

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[182] Thomson, 2004, 32.

Interestingly, neo-Aristotelian virtue theory does not offer an explicit account of autonomy. As such, it may seem like a strange choice of theoretical framework for this chapter in light of its negligible emphasis on the ethical dimensions of autonomous living and, as we shall see, on children's capacity for virtuous agency. While I do not want to minimise this negligence, it can be explained in part by Aristotle's historical context: the modern liberal values commonly associated with autonomy were simply not tenable in ancient Greece, where only a select few in society were deemed capable of attaining the one idealised model of human excellence that he espoused. For Aristotle, flourishing, or *eudaemonia*, is achieved when these select individuals fulfill their various potentialities excellently by means of reason and virtue—it is the good which they "always choose…for its own sake and never as a means to something else."[183] While they are responsible for their eudaemonist pursuit, and for acquiring the practical wisdom that will guide them from habituation to reasonable self-directed judgement and action, they are not autonomous in the extreme liberal sense of being the independent, self-sufficient authors of their own distinctive lives.

Relationships, whether familial, political, communal or amiable, are crucial to Aristotle's notion of human flourishing: in the words of Hursthouse, "we do not always act as 'autonomous', utterly self-determining agents, but quite often seek moral guidance from people we think are morally better than ourselves."[184] This stance echoes one of the key elements I am adapting from Friedman's theory, namely the nuanced take on relationality that retains an agent's singularity within the bounds of her accountability to others.

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[183] *Ibid*, 34.

While individualism and pluralistic views of the good life may seem at odds with Aristotle's ethics, the notion of choice is not wholly absent: he does speak of virtues as "modes of choice," stating "it is in our power to be virtuous or vicious."[185] Some have suggested that these ideas about virtuous agency paved the way for modern thinking about individual rights and self-rule, as well as to eudaemonist psychological approaches—like the self-determination theory that Mullin favours with respect to children[186]—though even among neo-Aristotelian theorists, "how central autonomy is in fact to human perfection and flourishing remains a contested issue."[187] For instance, political philosopher John Gray contends that human flourishing may not require autonomy in its liberal guise and thrive just as well in collectivistic societies,[188] whereas care ethicists like Carol Gilligan have questioned whether autonomy should be prized if such emphasis is at the expense of other arguably more feminine and morally oriented virtues like nurturing and self-sacrifice.[189]

Despite these debates, even if autonomy could be reconciled with a neo-Aristotelian virtue theory framework, it would almost certainly not be seen as extendable to children due to the residual influence of Aristotle's ideas about human maturation. On his view, ethical sense and conduct, as well as the human flourishing they enable, are not innate to humans but rather learned through modelling by others, meaning adults can hope to achieve virtuous agency whereas children simply have not yet developed the rational abilities to gain control over their desires and orient them towards nobler eudaemonist pursuits. Here we see the beginnings of what Mullin bemoans as an overemphasis on rationalism that excludes children from consideration as emerging autonomous agents. Aristotle goes on to claim that children "cannot be happy, for they are not old enough to be capable of noble acts."[190] In his estimation, they are born unprincipled, but owing to their humanness, they have the potential to become virtuous through education: by obeying their moral tutors, they progressively gain the self-discipline necessary to overpower their desires with rational principles.

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[184] *Ibid*, 28.

[185] *Ibid*, 28.

[186] Waterman, ed., 2013.

[187] Miller, 1995, 377.

[188] Gray, 1995, 357.

[189] Gilligan, 1993, 129.

For Aristotle, "the child's life must follow the instructions of his guide, so, too, the appetite part must follow reason…the appetite for pleasure is strongest in childhood, so that if it be not disciplined and made obedient to authority, it will make great headway."[191] We may eventually have what could be called an autonomy of choice—or local autonomy—over the virtues we use in our judgements and actions, but "as we are not born choosers, we must learn to choose,"[192] and our success depends in large part on the quality of the experiences we have as children and the proficiency of our educators, which explains why Aristotle described learning as a "painful process."[193] And so, returning to empathy as virtue, the notion of a virtuously empathetic child would likely seem outrageous to Aristotle and his contemporaries, while the excess of self-alienation and the deficiency of self-seeking would seem inevitable, given their perception of children as incapable of embodying practical wisdom.

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[190] Chambliss, 1982, 35.

[191] *Ibid*, 36.

[192] *Ibid*, 38.

[193] *Ibid*, 38.

This adultist stance seems not to have lessened over time: even current neo-Aristotelian theorists like Hursthouse are adamant about starkly differentiating childhood from adulthood. “In the moral sphere,” she writes, “we do assume there is a distinction between being mentally a child and mentally an adult”—namely, the capacity to act from reason.[194] She argues that virtues like justice, honesty and charity, though worth teaching and identifying during childhood, are “too thick for a child to grasp,”[195] which is partly why we do not assign moral responsibility to children since their “doings” cannot be considered actions until issued from reason.

In terms of philosophy of childhood, then, Hursthouse can be viewed as assuming the view of the child (and even the adolescent) as a symbol of innocence: whereas children cannot exhibit culpable ignorance until they have reached the age of reason,

> an adult can’t just say to herself, ‘I am preserving my childish innocence, acting only from inclination with no thought of whether I am thereby acting well,’ and make that true by saying it. On the contrary, this would count as, culpably, being inconsiderate, feckless, and self-indulgent, as acting that way not ‘from inclination’ but from choice, having decided (for some reason) that acting in accordance with one’s inclinations was, in general, acting well.[196]

From this neo-Aristotelian stance, “childish” is an almost derogatory term, with children being compared to the “severely mentally handicapped [who] are not, by and large, capable of having their own values” or of acting reasonably “because they think it’s right.”[197] Hursthouse goes so far as to say “there is something absurd about attributing such deep, value-embodying reasons to children."[198] On this account, if children are not capable of the reason that drives the virtues—including empathy—it follows that they cannot be responsible for themselves and thus cannot be deemed capable of autonomy, even of the evolving kind I am espousing.

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[194] Hursthouse, 1990, 15.

[195] *Ibid*, 31.

[196] *Ibid*, 81.

[197] *Ibid*, 92, 111.

In this light, neo-Aristotelian virtue theory paints a very bleak picture of the prospects of autonomy in childhood as it relates to their potential for virtue and practical wisdom; a picture that I find dangerously pessimistic if we consider the sustained influence of Aristotle's ideas on contemporary thought. I agree with Garrett Matthews' critique: while I too concur that children need guidance, I believe he is rightly concerned that the Aristotelian conception of childhood continues to affect the child-adult relationship to this day, especially with respect to our willingness to recognise the "goods of childhood"—the capacities and stances particular to children's current life stage that are worthy of consideration regardless of the potential they also have as future adults.[199] One example of this oversight and of Aristotle's sustained influence can be found in J. J. Chambliss' analysis of children, in which he contends that "their dispositions need *pruning*,"[200] a term that recalls my metaphor of mental landscaping but on a much more intrusive level: cutting away to remove unwanted parts and gain control over growth—a far more paternalistic intervention than what Mullin seems to recommend in terms of balancing autonomy supports with harm reduction.

By contrast, as my case study chapter will endeavour to show, the P4C-friendly view (of which Matthews is a major proponent) demonstrates how the Aristotelian proposal of educating toward virtue is not at odds with the possibility of reason-driven reflective endorsement in childhood. To see this, let us revisit the example of perceived injustice from the previous chapter: the seven year-old's indignant response may reveal a lack of nuance in her appraisal of fairness as virtue, but this very reaction is evidence of efforts to at least minimally exercise autonomous thought and action by attempting to take an active role in her life by endorsing what she believes she has reason to value in her current stage. Clearly she needs more guidance but such educative interventions could help her improve the reasoning driving self-reflection about her deep concerns in the here and now, not only for some eventual future of virtue that is beyond her current grasp.

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[198] *Ibid*, 92.

[199] Matthews and Mullin, 2015.

[200] Chambliss, 1982, 37.

Indeed, my own philosophical practices with children lead me to hypothesize that a tendency to misunderstand or misapply virtues is not an age-specific problem, but one that affects humans generally when they lack the kind of practical wisdom training championed by Aristotle. Anecdotal evidence from my P4C work as well as empirical research in argumentation literacy suggest that children are often as strong as (and at times stronger than) adults at judging and acting from reason when they have had a prolonged exposure to philosophical inquiry because they have grown accustomed to explicitly constructing reasonable positions informed by a diversity of perspectives.[201]

Returning to Hursthouse's critique, to my mind, the language of reason that she uses is misleading: what is absurd is not the attribution of "deep, value-embodying reasons" to children, but the notion that any human can be expected to acquire virtue in an effective and enduring way if they are not assigned responsibility for determining reasons for their actions until they are adults. How can anyone claim to be teaching virtue to children if they are never deemed accountable for their thinking or their acting as emerging agents? Such responsibility is a key part of the reason-driven reflective endorsement that characterises my account of evolving autonomy. In light of these considerations, I propose a more hopeful interpretation that I will argue is justifiable on this framework's grounds yet may also make room for the notion of a virtuously empathetic child.

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[201] Reznitskaya and Wilkinson, 2017.

Fortunately, although Aristotle and his more faithful contemporary proponents may question the value of autonomy and of childhood agency, other scholars have reinterpreted neo-Aristotelian virtue theory in ways that I find more age-inclusive and therefore helpful to fortifying my account of evolving responsible autonomy as well as my portrayal of children as capable of virtue. I will briefly present three perspectives I find especially useful when placed in relation to one another. From these, I will interpret traits that further qualify the child as an emerging responsibly autonomous agent, using language specific to this theoretical framework.

First, Andrew Stables' understanding of childhood as presented in his book *Childhood and the Philosophy for Education* is consistent with mine in that it resists the notion of children as mere "people in formation." Adopting what he calls an "anti-Aristotelian" perspective, he rightly argues that in terms of agency, "we should be wary of attributing a one-dimensional, all-or-nothing character to childhood…such a reductionist view is in the interest of neither 'child' nor adult."[202] In stark contrast to Hursthouse, he offers a non-ageist perspective that promotes the kind of shift in the child-adult relationship that I too espouse. As humans, he claims, we are drawn to interpreting the world and making meaning regardless of our age or experience levels, which points to the underlying root similarity between adults and children:

> Based on the premise that 'living is semiotic engagement,' if living can validly be conceived as semiotic engagement, and if children are fully alive, then children are as fully 'semiotic engagers' as adults. At the crux of what it means

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[202] Stables, 2011, 5.

> to be human, therefore, children are not incomplete, unprepared or lacking purpose. This begs an Aristotelian reconception.[203]

I think Stables offers an important insight when he recommends that we re-conceive children as "more 'different from' than 'less than' adults, albeit the lack of many competences,"[204] since this stance problematises the deficit view of childhood that I see as pervading Aristotelian thought. Given children interpret the world as much as adults do, however differently, I agree they are no less agents in pursuit of virtue, notably in their attempts to perceive which particular virtues should be activated in each set of circumstances they encounter. The implications for wider society include social and educational policies that "regard children as 'already fully engaged' rather than 'not yet ready'"[205]—that is, as capable of agency albeit to a different degree.

On my interpretation, then, as a trait that further qualifies the emerging responsibly autonomous child, semiotic engagement reminds us that meaning-making is a possibility for humans at any age, no matter how qualitatively different the interpretive involvement, and requires (in order to be reliable) the kind of sensitivity that is associated with practical wisdom. This position is important since it underscores the claim I have been making that children have fewer though no less meaningful life experiences from which to draw when they reflect on what seems reasonable to value in their present and for their future. If they are already interpreting the world and involved in meaning-making, the emphasis should be on assisting them in their efforts, not dismissing these as insignificant, lest their nascent practical wisdom—and, by extension, their evolving autonomy—be undermined.

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[203] *Ibid*, 4.

[204] *Ibid*, 176.

[205] *Ibid*, 4.

Second, I think the argument that Andrew Komasinski makes in “Ethics is for Children: Revisiting Aristotle’s Virtue Theory” is well equipped to further portray children as capable of virtue. Seeking to “rehabilitate” Aristotelian ethical ideas from their exclusionary tendencies in an effort to make space for children as virtuous agents, he provides a critique of Aristotle’s conception of childhood that also echoes the deficit view I have outlined previously, in which the child symbolises a mere insufficiency of adult qualities. In Komasinski’s view, children are deemed incapable of participating in what he calls the ergon-excellence-eudaemonia model of ethics because they are seen as transitory potencies rather than finished finalities, as lacking the voluntary, deliberative decision-making procedures needed for moral agency, and as unable to engage in *theoria*—that is, in coming to know and contemplating divine essences through reason—which Aristotle, following Plato, considers as the central human function of moral living.[206] “Aristotle rejected children as moral agents in his virtue theory, because their function is to become something else, they are not self-controlled enough to deliberate for the good,” he writes. “Instead, Aristotle recommended they be taught right conduct first and receive an explanation only when and if they are ready.”[207]

I agree with the inconsistencies and tensions that Komasinski points out in Aristotle, including his insistence that eudaemonia is not reducible to *theoria* and that a rigidly separate category of childhood fails to adequately represent children’s progressive loss of dependency as they grow into their potential for virtuousness. To my mind, children are surely capable of virtues like friendship—even the excellent kind that Aristotle reserves for the most enlightened adults; they may, as Komasinski rightly observes, even "be freer than adults in showing loving affection to others."[208]

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[206] Komasinski in Bahler and Kennedy, eds., 2017, 40.

[207] *Ibid*, 41.

Further, in my estimation, some morally-impactful virtues may be better manifested in childhood precisely because they defy mental "pruning": virtue theorist Linda Zagzebski notes that excellences like originality and creativity represent "a class of virtues that do not seem to be acquired by habit at all…but they seem to flourish only in the absence of it."[209] I think Komasinski is also right to suppose that children may be capable of flourishing with respect to other virtues like justice and wisdom if granted the space to do so: interestingly, he cites the superior moral imagination of the child characters in *The Chronicles of Narnia* as exhibiting varied excellences of character once released from their hindering "status as nonadults" and recognised as moral agents.[210]

On my interpretation, what is required for responsible autonomy on this perspective—for children and adults alike—is an openness to multidirectional influences that bolsters practical wisdom by nuancing how virtue is perceived and applied. Children will certainly be affected by the adults in their lives, but because the opposite is just as true, as Komasinski persuasively asserts, "children should be taken as partners in inquiry."[211] As a trait that further qualifies the emerging responsibly autonomous child, an openness to multidirectional influences not only colours the deep concerns that can affect virtuous agency but also ensures against overly rigid categorisations of human experience that lead to ageist attitudes within the child-adult relationship.

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[208] *Ibid*, 47.

[209] Zagzebksi, 1996, 123.

[210] Komasinski in Bahler and Kennedy, eds., 2017, 48.

[211] *Ibid*, 49.

Finally, as an emerging agent, a child who is semiotically engaged and open to multidirectional influences shows potential for practical wisdom and thus for virtue because, in enacting her evolving autonomy, she can strive—even if she does not always succeed—to make sound, equitable judgements regarding which ends are most virtuous. I glean this trait of teleological orientation from Rachel Halliburton's book *Autonomy and the Situated Self*, in which she defends a view of neo-Aristotelian virtue theory as uniquely positioned to support autonomous agency. Though she does not focus on children, I think Halliburton is correct in arguing that to foster human flourishing, an ethical conception of autonomy must justify the value of free choice through the value of the things freely chosen, and that Aristotle's approach provides a "clear basis for judging whether the things we desire and believe to be valuable are genuinely so, and whether or not their achievement will contribute to our flourishing."[212]

Drawing on Joseph Raz's criteria of autonomy as non-individualistic and pluralistic, she describes autonomous agents as socially connected, concerned with determining the morally valuable things in life through their engagements with others[213]—a stance that closely resembles my own take on Friedman's social embeddedness criterion. Applied to childhood, as I see it, children as emerging agents in pursuit of eudaemonia in their respective life stages are driven by ends, and these ends can be deemed virtuous if they reflect accountability to others' ethical outlooks and, through their realisation, help to define what values are worth holding. And so, "the virtuous human being, then, is teleologically oriented."[214] Though a difficult task, with the right kind of mental landscaping practices—examples of which I will be exploring later—children can learn to orient themselves in this purposive way. On my interpretation, as a trait of the emerging responsibly autonomous child, teleological orientation promotes virtuous agency since it involves the careful, discerning weighing of values chosen from among a broad range of options, and this process is in line with the evolving autonomy I see as plausible in childhood.

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[212] Halliburton, 2014, 195.

[213] *Ibid*, 184.

[214] *Ibid*, 173.

To sum up, according to this more hopeful interpretation of the prospects of childhood autonomy within neo-Aristotelian virtue theory, complemented by perspectives from theorists who share my concerns regarding children and virtuous agency, the child as emerging agent is capable of virtue in that she can semiotically engage with the world, open herself up to multidirectional influences that subvert restrictive categories of human experiences, and orient herself teleologically towards valuable ends that are authenticated by her social interactions. I think such a construal is justifiable on this framework's grounds because its extolled ideal is human flourishing and the means to achieve it is virtue—both of which are considered to be threatened by bad habits and impoverished early life experiences. And so, even if full practical wisdom is unrealisable in childhood, a move towards it is not only possible but highly desirable: just as I have used the metaphor of autonomy with training wheels, children face a similar preparatory stage in honing their potential for virtue, but they need meaningful opportunities in their present so as to improve their current life stage, not merely some unfathomable future stage.

In further qualifying the emerging responsibly autonomous child, the traits of semiotic engagement, openness to multidirectional influences and teleological orientation also add subtlety to my take on Friedman's theory of autonomy as reason-driven reflective endorsement. Here the notion of a virtuously empathetic child begins to take shape: as I see it, the experiences that children have as semiotic engagers who actively take part in transactional socialisation with adults can affect their deep concerns and shape their burgeoning perspectival identity, which contributes to orienting them teleologically towards more virtuous ends, including the possibility of enacting virtues like empathy in a more responsible way.

And so, despite some significant barriers to childhood autonomy inherent in neo-Aristotelian virtue theory, the tensions within the framework can be reconciled so as to offer an insightful angle through which to consider the ethics of deliberate moral imagining. If practical wisdom is required to address narrow empathetic scope, how might children be motivated to acquire it in light of their current life experience? To my mind, deliberate moral imagining provides a very promising avenue, one that I will now explore.

Moral imagining as a motivator of practical wisdom

Having considered what a virtue-oriented conception of autonomy might look like in childhood, in this section, I want to suggest that deliberate moral imagining may be uniquely able to motivate the acquisition of nascent practical wisdom in children by refining the perception needed for enhanced empathic engagement. The notion of deliberate moral imagining as a source of motivation is inspired by Aristotle's argument about being rightly motivated toward virtue by learning to become attuned to contextual considerations that would otherwise go unnoticed.[215] Though children have clearly not lived as long as adults, I will argue that morally imaginative children, even at a young age, may be more motivated than their unimaginative peers to discern the ethically salient features of situations and to empathically engage with others because they are better positioned, through deliberate moral imagining, to envision contexts they have not yet had the opportunity to encounter in their lived experience.

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[215] Julia Annas in Zagzebksi, 1996, 30.

To review, I have been defining deliberate moral imagining as the purposeful envisioning of a given context from multiple frames of reference to ensure a broadened moral lens with which to approach and assess lived experience. Narrow empathetic scope, then, can be interpreted as a failure or dearth of moral imagining because it constrains this moral lens by only including a select few frames of reference when approaching and assessing lived experience. Ethically speaking, this failure is significant because of its potential impact on children as emerging agents: if empathic engagement is at least a contributing factor in their evolving responsible autonomy, then any restrictions on it will affect how they perceive others when they reflectively endorse their deep concerns and strive to live in accordance with them. So how might deliberate moral imagining address narrow empathetic scope so as to not let it undermine children's evolving autonomy? To help present my argument, I will begin with a hypothetical case, then revisit my three features of deliberate moral imagining in light of this scenario, linking these to Nussbaum's ideas about perception that I will seek to reinforce.

For illustrative purposes, let us suppose the following case of empathy in a young boy:

> Charlie is an outgoing and kindhearted fourth-grader with a close circle of friends. At school, his teachers unanimously praise him for his considerate, mild-tempered manner and he takes pride in this good reputation. On weekends, he volunteers with his parents at a home for the elderly and last summer, he taught Sam, his timid, reluctant best friend, how to ride a bicycle, after months of gentle convincing. One day after school, Sam arrives at the playground in tears—his bike has been stolen. Charlie can tell his friend is very upset and, while he can hear the other kids laughing at Sam for crying, he does not judge him for reacting strongly. He lost his roller blades last year and remembers how badly he felt. Plus, he has been Sam's closest friend since kindergarten and he helped him get over his fear of bicycling.

> That night on the evening news, the local police announce they have arrested a homeless teenager for stealing a handful of bikes in Charlie's neighbourhood, including Sam's two-wheeler. It turns out the teenager had not eaten a full meal or taken a shower in weeks, ever since his mother, a single parent, checked herself into a rehab facility for her drug addiction. He stole the bikes to get money for food and shelter. Despite hearing these details, Charlie does not empathise with the teenager and when his parents ask why he seems so adamant about his stance, he responds: "Why would I bother with some nasty kid who stole my friend's bike?"

Clearly, Charlie is capable of empathy and embodies certain empathetic qualities in his interactions with others. And yet, he has narrow empathetic scope; the virtue of empathy is not wholly ingrained in him. Recalling Aristotle's mark of virtue, Charlie empathises "at the right times" and in part "for the right motive" when it comes to his friend, but not "on the right grounds"—his partiality clouds his judgement. Likewise, he fails to empathise "toward the right people" and "in the right way" when it comes to those with whom he does not easily identify, like the homeless teenager. He misses the "target" of empathy though he does not do so voluntarily in the way that a self-seeker might; rather, he is guilty of a partial vice as he only exhibits a certain degree of empathic engagement—a subtlety that advocates of empathy in childhood may inadvertently neglect. What Charlie lacks in this case are the features of deliberate moral imagining I have proposed, which I see as specifically contributing to the kind of discerning perception needed for practical wisdom and, by extension, enhanced empathic engagement.

I am not alone in defending the value of moral imagining on neo-Aristotelian grounds: the claims that Nussbaum makes in many of her books, notably *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature*, have some clear attractions, among them the connection she stresses between the ability to morally imagine and the capacity for salience detection. However, her view also has some shortcomings relating to clarity of terms: Nussbaum is not always consistent in her distinctions between practical wisdom and other concepts that she at times seems to use synonymously, like perception, discernment, insight and complex responsiveness. She also seems to use empathy and sympathy interchangeably. In what follows, I will analyse Charlie's scenario in light of my three proposed features of deliberate moral imagining, carefully selecting passages from Nussbaum that I find most insightful to support my argument that moral imagining must be deliberately exercised in order to act as a motivator of practical wisdom.

i) Acknowledgement of limited perspectives

First, Charlie seems unaware of his own limitations of perspective and thus does not heed the call to imagine a different set of possible vantage points to diversify and problematise his own. He does not see how he is favouring Sam because he knows him and cares for him, while dismissing the homeless teenager as unworthy of his empathy because his actions hurt his friend. The point of acknowledging these limited perspectives is not for Charlie to overcome bias entirely—an unfeasible task—but for him to become aware of the ways in which the current conceptual frameworks, values and commitments within his mental landscape may be preventing him from considering other relevant viewpoints as pertinent. For instance, by imagining beyond his limited interpretation of the situation, he could be more motivated to examine the role of privilege, particularly how certain possibilities afforded to him by his advantaged position have plainly not been available to the teenager.

Here, Nussbaum's argument about the value of alternative readings of society and culture is highly pertinent to childhood. As I interpret her take on Aristotle, since humans will have "never lived enough" to access all types of moral dilemmas, by feeding their mental landscape at an early age through narratives and deliberations about unfamiliar life experiences, children may begin to see in their own conceptual shortcomings the need for ethical flexibility so they do not simply approach "each situation prepared to see only those items about which [they] already knows how to deliberate."[216] Otherwise, they may find it difficult to become aware of the parochial confinement inhibiting the quality of their perception.

ii) Recognition of commonality

Second, due to the unacknowledged limited perspectives in his mental landscape, Charlie also fails to recognise overlaps in lived experiences between himself and the homeless teenager, or between the homeless teenager and other similar cases of desperation. He prioritises the differences between himself and the teenager rather than seeing their commonality, meaning he is not adequately informed about what the situation demands of him, namely that he strive toward a more complete view of the other's needs, goals, motivations and obstacles. Charlie may not think of himself as someone who would steal a bike, no matter the circumstances, but he could recognise the things he shares in common with the homeless teenager, like the need for nourishment, clothing, family support and a roof over his head. If he engaged in deliberate moral imagining, his purposeful envisioning of the given context would help to highlight humanity's shared aims and needs in the struggle for existence, dismantling the idea of the "other" as a foreign or lesser being, and replacing shame with ideals of mutual need and interdependency.

I think Nussbaum is right to advocate for this kind of exposure from an early age because, to my mind, it may greatly enrich what children believe is worth valuing as they shape their lives moving forward. In her words: "We can see how crucial it is for children not to aspire to control or invulnerability, defining their prospects and possibilities as above the common lot of human life, but, instead, learn to appreciate vividly the ways in which common human weaknesses are experienced in a wide range of social circumstances, understanding how social and political arrangements of different kinds affect the vulnerabilities that all human beings share."[217] Whereas some defenders of the innocence view of childhood might contend that such imaginative consideration is inappropriate or too burdensome for children, given my concern for their evolving autonomy, I concur with Nussbaum's position that it ought to prioritised lest more rigid and prejudiced "othering" tendencies become entrenched.

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[216] Nussbaum, 1990, 47, 67.

iii) Identification of competing considerations

Lastly, Charlie does not appear to realise the complexity of the situation at hand. Due to the lack of nuance in his mental landscape, he imposes a black-and-white reading on the circumstances rather than perceive their shades of grey. He is exhibiting the aforementioned "moral myopia" that business ethicists interested in moral imagination warn against.[218] Charlie may firmly grasp his own values and priorities but he does not see how these can conflict with one another and with others' considerations, so he misconstrues situations based on his own rationalised preferences. He seems unreceptive to the fact that his cherished values of friendship and integrity are in tension with other equally important values like human dignity—of which the homeless teenager is bereft due to unfortunate and desperate conditions. Without excusing the teenager's behaviour, Charlie could perceive his position as tragic and envision his hardships from a less biased perspective, such as a social justice angle that considers the varying effects of social policies and mores on individuals and communities.

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[217] Nussbaum, 2010, 39-40.

[218] Drumwright and Murphy 2004, 11.

As I see it, deliberate moral imagining may help to increase children's receptivity to such considerations by heightening respect for what Nussbaum calls the non-commensurability of the valuable things.[219] Values are seen as neither interchangeable nor replaceable, "each generating its own claims, but each having, as well, its own general definition and being instantiable in any number of particular situations and actions."[220] Without such receptivity, children's perception risks lacking subtlety, making it all too easy for them to accept a simplistic, clearcut reading of the situations in which they find themselves and resist the ambiguities that characterise many morally charged situations.

So taking these features together, within this scenario, what would Charlie have to do differently to avoid narrow empathetic scope? In short, he would need to become more morally imaginative. His impoverished mental landscape is an ideal hypothetical example of an opportunity for enrichment through deliberate moral imagining. As it stands, he risks becoming a source of toxins for others' mental landscapes because his restricted empathic engagement is hindering the perception necessary for practical wisdom. If given the space to practice this purposeful envisioning of a given context from multiple frames of reference, he could broaden the moral lens with which he approaches and assesses his lived experience. For instance, returning to my three proposed features, deliberate moral imagining could help Charlie…

- *acknowledge limited perspectives* by illuminating the social imaginaries about homelessness that have held his empathetic scope captive.
- *recognise commonality* through vicarious engagement with the homeless teenager's way of life within his mental landscape.

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[219] Nussbaum, 1990, 36.

[220] *Ibid*, 86.

- *identify competing considerations* by heightening his appreciation for the complexity, diversity and ambiguity of the situation at hand, notably possible conflicts between the values at stake.

With his empathetic scope widened by deliberate moral imagining, Charlie could then broaden the envisioned options for the lives he believes he has reason to value for himself and for others, thus expanding the deep concerns, multidirectional influences and teleological orientations that form the focus of his semiotic engagement, and can affect his reflective endorsement as his autonomy competence evolves. In terms of his empathetic scope, the potential for such transformation has been the subject of well-reputed psychological and neurological research, notably the study by Batson et al. on the effects of empathy on people's views of stigmatised groups like homeless populations.[221] Nussbaum insightfully describes these findings as "striking" because they demonstrate the power of "attend[ing] to a vivid narrative of someone else's plight, taking up the other person's point of view."[222]

According to Narvaez's neurobiological experiments, "Imagining and understanding another's reality can change how one thinks and may even instigate investigation into understanding the cause more deeply. An imagining individual uses abstraction capabilities with emotions engaged, becoming open to changing thinking as a result of the dramatic mental experience."[223] Nevertheless, the possibility of Charlie deliberately engaging in moral imagining about the homeless teenager's circumstances does not entail he will need to agree with what may plainly be vicious (or at least un-virtuous) ensuing actions: after all, as Aristotle remarks, "it is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it."[224] Through his openness to multidirectional influences, however, he will have exhibited the relational openness necessary to envision the context from multiple frames of reference to see its many significant shades of grey.

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[221] Betancourt et al., 1992.

[222] Nussbaum, 2010, 37.

[223] Narvaez, 2014, 13.

Of course, Charlie could also be victimised by the source of toxins that others represent for him, which would make deliberate moral imagining helpful in a second sense, namely in his resisting of their narrow empathetic scope so it does not undermine his own attempts to hit the target of empathy. Despite her debatable conception of childhood, even Hursthouse concedes that serious prejudice like extreme racism is not innate to children but rather taught to them. "No one relatively free of racism thinks that any of these emotional responses is in any sense natural; they all have to be inculcated, and from a very early age," she writes. "Children have to be taught to fear, particularly, adults of a different race; to be amused or otherwise pleased when they are hurt; to be angry or suspicious when they are friendly; to join in rejoicing when it is heard they have been done down; to admire those who have brought about their downfall; to resent, or dismiss, their doing well or being happy."[225]

Though Hursthouse questions whether such dubious childhood training can be undone, Nussbaum offers a more constructive stance when she suggests that "passional enlightenment" can do away with negative emotions like racial hatred, which she sees as "based on thoughts and evaluations that can be altered by teaching…This sort of inner moral work—usually carried out in large part during childhood, but a lifelong enterprise nonetheless—is a large part of what is morally valuable in the Aristotelian moral life."[226] In a similar vein, I am arguing that the practice of deliberate moral imagining may be used to protect children's mental landscapes from the threat of narrow empathetic scope that such external toxins symbolise.

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[224] Bennion, 1959, 52.

[225] Hursthouse, 1990, 88.

[226] Nussbaum, 1999, 185.

Indeed, in my estimation, when practiced and well honed, the three features of deliberate moral imagining I am proposing have the potential to translate into the "complex responsiveness" of practical wisdom that Nussbaum aptly qualifies as "the ability to discern, acutely and responsively, the salient features of one's particular situation."[227] By enhancing perception, deliberate moral imagining broadens the scope of empathy, illuminating a greater number of salient particulars and increasing sensitivity toward dimensions of a situation that may otherwise go overlooked. I am arguing that through the purposive exercise of moral imagining, a child may expand her criteria for determining the "who" and "why" of empathy, identifying more candidates with whom to empathise and perceiving circumstances more impartially than she did previously, thus drawing nearer to Aristotle's "target" of virtue.

In this way, deliberate moral imagining functions in a manner similar to practical wisdom, though it operates in a mental landscape rather than a concrete one. In my view, it motivates children to actively envision what they may not have encountered for themselves in reality, refining the perception of the concepts, social imaginaries and personal experiences that make up their mental landscape. Deliberate moral imagining is a kind of lived experience in its own right and through its mental landscaping, even children may acquire practical wisdom despite their relative immaturity because they gain access to a larger moral picture when they consider what is worthy of their valuing.

In this sense, practical wisdom integrates not only intellectual and emotional faculties but an imaginative process as well. To borrow from Nussbaum's apt phrasing, when facing a morally charged situation, "the only procedure to follow is…to imagine all the relevant features as well and full and concretely as possible, holding them up against whatever intuitions and emotions and plans and imaginings we have brought into the situation or can construct in it."[228] From my perspective, this complex imaginative responsiveness improves over time: as emerging agents, virtuously oriented children may become increasingly able to perceive salience with every particular situation encountered, which mirrors what Nussbaum describes as "a long process of living and choosing that develops the agent's resourcefulness and responsiveness."[229]

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[227] Nussbaum, 2006, 55, 37.

Thus, deliberate moral imagining may motivate children to embark on this painstaking process toward practical wisdom because the broadened moral lens it affords through purposeful experimentations in their mental landscapes allows them to see more than they could before. Evidence of their nascent practical wisdom can include some of the criteria that Nussbaum rightly identifies, such as the ability to "link particulars without dispensing with their particularity" as well as draw on memories and past readings of situations to "form new combinations, not yet experienced, from items that have entered sense-experience."[230]

Unlike many accounts of moral imagination that focus on its usefulness as a guide for action, my proposed neo-Aristotelian interpretation of deliberate moral imagining locates its role prior to any decision-making procedure, making it distinctive in its contribution. Certainly, when facing an ethical dilemma, the ability to imagine the potential consequences of an act is paramount: as we have seen, Werhane and her fellow business ethicists argue that this kind of anticipatory moral appraisal can help uncover alternatives that are at once practically feasible and more ethically sound.[231] This facet is important to local autonomy and should not be discounted. Yet I contend that my conception of deliberate moral imagining as a conscious, flexible meaning-making process—one that connects children's real life encounters with those envisioned in their mental landscapes across different morally charged circumstances—has the potential to strengthen their global autonomy as emerging agents by highlighting what lives might be worthy of their valuing, notably when they engage empathically with others.

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[228] Nussbaum, 1990, 74.

[229] *Ibid*, 75.

[230] *Ibid*, 77-78.

In this way, it recalls Aristotle's notion of *phantasia*, which Nussbaum argues can inform actual circumstances by "enabling the creature to focus on absent experienced items in their concreteness, and even to form new combinations, not yet experienced, from items that have entered sense-experience...its job is more to focus on reality than to create unreality."[232] Indeed, as I see it, a child who deliberately exercises her moral imagining may better embody the virtue of empathy because, through her nascent practical wisdom, she develops the quality of perception and accompanying sensitivity necessary to empathise with everyone. She can perceive anyone as a candidate for empathy because her capacity to envision their context and its possible implications is sufficiently developed to uncover the salient features that explain (though not necessarily excuse) their circumstances, enabling her to construe their experience more accurately. As such, as an emerging agent who is virtuously empathetic, the child can, on one extreme, empathise with her worst enemy, and on the other, empathise with people who simply conduct themselves differently than she does, and this influences what she reflectively endorses as she activates her evolving autonomy in responsible ways.

Of course, I want to underline that the practice of deliberate moral imagining does not imply an obligation to envision the circumstances of all people encountered at every moment—such a requirement risks resulting in a child reaching an excess of empathy—or self-alienation—where she extends herself outward to the point of losing herself and thus also to the point of threatening the perspectival identity that informs her responsible autonomy. Rather, deliberate moral imagining implies a willingness to acknowledge limited perspectives, recognise commonality, and identify competing considerations, all in an effort to bring to light what seems most reasonable to value. Further, though deliberate moral imagining broadens the scope of empathy, to my mind it does not require the more involved move toward sympathy since candidates for empathy may not deserve such concern or validation, especially if driven by vice.

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[231] Werhane, 1999.

Let us consider a concrete example relating to the above scenario involving criminality. Through deliberate moral imagining, a virtuously empathetic child may learn a lot from extending herself outward into a criminal's experience without having to commiserate with him: the imaginative process of envisioning his conditions from diverse angles could itself generate a more refined understanding of the conditions leading up to felonies, thus challenging her preconceptions of criminal minds. In reference to my three proposed features, with some guidance, this envisioning would motivate the child to acknowledge limited perspectives (e.g., racial profiling; appeal-to-fear fallacies; sweeping assertions like "All criminals are psychopaths," etc.), recognise common human needs and disparities (e.g., the effects of socioeconomic inequalities; poor education; domestic abuse; attachment disorder, etc.), and identify competing considerations (e.g., arguments for rehabilitation versus capital punishment; conflicting values of forgiveness, retribution and atonement, etc.).

The child is not expected to partake in the emotional experience of the criminal—say, the anger that motivated his behaviour—but to sincerely (rather than resentfully or disdainfully)

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[232] Nussbaum, 1990, 77.

commit to reconstructing his vantage point through an envisioning of his context from multiple reference points. As Nancy Sherman underlines in *The Fabric of Character*, "at stake will be the capacity to re-enact the agent's point of view and to consider what it is like for that agent to do that action in that context."[233] In this way, through deliberate moral imagining, the child as emergent agent could begin to exhibit the quality of perception and accompanying sensitivity characteristic of practical wisdom toward the people with whom she empathises, perceiving them as complex characters with intricate life stories rather than judging them prematurely based on certain isolated acts that do not capture the full picture of their context. This may broaden her envisioning of the overarching relation-to-other context, resulting in a relational openness characterised by more discerning perception of people in all their complexity.

Deliberate moral imagining may thus be deemed a motivator of practical wisdom, in the sense of "virtuous motivation" described by Zagzebksi, in that it "makes the agent want to act effectively," in this case by driving the desire to acquire the knowhow and skills necessary for responsible autonomy by being more perceptive of the salient facts of circumstances encountered.[234] If this is true, however, one point of clarification is necessary before moving forward: Is empathy even necessary as a virtue if deliberate moral imagining is used carefully enough? One could understandably wonder whether the conception I am advancing does the work of empathic engagement, thus rendering the latter obsolete. To this I want to suggest that deliberate moral imagining is not a virtue in itself but a purposefully initiated process that supports the virtue of empathy—as well as some other virtuous qualities that I will later consider—making it a precursor to extending oneself outward into another's experience with sensibility and discernment.

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[233] Sherman, 1991, 36.

Returning to Charlie's scenario, if narrow empathetic scope causes him to engage empathically with his friend but not the teenager, what he can do to enhance his empathic engagement in this real-life situation is an exercise in his mental landscape that involves imagining all the relevant particulars (salient detection) with a certain commitment—a certain generosity of spirit—that touches on the features I am proposing. Further, to intensify the motivational force of deliberate moral imagining toward the acquisition of practical wisdom, the process may benefit from narrative aids that boost children's mental landscape, as I will now explain.

Narrative aids for moral imagining

To speak of deliberate moral imagining as serving practical wisdom in childhood by enhancing perception is to speak about its potential for broadening the moral lens with which children approach and assess lived experience as emerging agents, with one possible outcome being a widened scope of empathy as virtue. Still, deliberate moral imagining does face the trap of subjectivity: It is difficult for a child—or even an adult for that matter—to transcend her individual viewpoint alone, regardless of her commitment to virtue and to envisioning given contexts from multiple frames of reference. This obstacle calls for a supported approach to the process, especially with respect to the task of enhancing children's empathic engagement through a more enriched mental landscape.

Though my case study chapter will closely investigate what a collaborative moral imaginative practice might look through the P4C model, in this section I want to consider the benefits of narrative aids in orienting children's efforts of deliberate moral imagining toward the virtue of

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[234] Zagzebski, 1996, 133.

empathy, using examples drawn directly from my own pedagogical practice complemented by the arguments I find most persuasive in Nussbaum's writings on virtue.

So far, this chapter has largely focused on the *ethics* of deliberate moral imagining in childhood through the lens of neo-Aristotelian virtue theory, but it is also worth asking what role *aesthetics* might play in strengthening this process of purposeful envisioning. I have already characterised deliberate moral imagining as an aesthetic practice itself in the broad sense of it being embodied and affectively charged—two dimensions I will be returning to in my case study chapter—so it is not hard to see how exposure to varied forms of narrative may have direct bearing on the purposeful imaginative process I am defending. Simply by evoking a broader range of phenomenological elements from the emotional to the bodily may help enrich children's mental landscape despite their less diverse collection of lived experiences. But how might aesthetic exposure help deliberate moral imagining address the challenge of narrow empathetic scope?

First, the connection between ethics and aesthetics—and notably the moral power of narrative—is hardly new, both within and beyond this particular theoretical framework. With respect to children, the book *Virtue Ethics and Moral Education* extols the strategies of fiction analysis and ethical deliberation as viable ways of educating toward virtue, claiming that "simply being able to enter into the point of view of people different from oneself can make a major difference in one's humanity toward them."[235] Similarly, Trevor Hart has argued that narrative enables a virtuously oriented agent to consider the lives of others with more profundity, getting past what Nussbaum has dubbed a "casual tourist's interest" to achieve a genuine willingness to reconsider personal vantage points.[236] On the whole, while I find these positions highly persuasive, I want to focus on my image of a "broadened moral lens" and how narrative aids might contribute to more refined pantascopic views in childhood. For this reason, I am particularly interested in Nussbaum's notions of "inner eyes" and of "play" with respect to children, as the following paragraphs will present.

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[235] Carr and Steutel, 1999.

Describing moral imagination as a "way of seeing" crucial to a virtuous worldview, Nussbaum has written extensively about the power of narratives to train children's "inner eyes" as part of a "carefully crafted instruction in the arts and humanities—appropriate to [their] age and developmental level—that will bring [them] in contact with issues of gender, race, ethnicity, and cross-cultural experience and understanding…since works of art are frequently an invaluable way of beginning to understand the achievements and sufferings of a culture different from one's own."[237] Given my concerns over evolving autonomy in childhood, I find this proposal very promising: not only does such contact have the potential of illuminating for children the complex intersecting social determinants that affect agency—which I find crucial to enriching their mental landscape so as to enhance their empathic engagement—it may also awaken them to interfering conditions that might distort autonomy competence; how others may be seeking to coerce, deceive or manipulate.

I have defined deliberate moral imagining as enabling a broadened moral *lens*, emphasising the ethical aspects of perception: what children see influences who they view as worthy of empathy and why. So if such perception influences the reasoning driving their reflective endorsement, prior to this more intellectual activity, children's moral lens may benefit from being refined through morally imaginative immersion in narratives that foster their "inner eyes."

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[236] Hart, 2003, 12.

As I see it, aesthetic exposure of this kind may lead to more responsible autonomy because it complexifies the considerations that will later inform what children believe they have reason to value. Accordingly I agree with Nussbaum that such exposure adds a dimension to perception that detached rationalism cannot:

> Frequently a reliance on the powers of the intellect can actually become an impediment to true ethical perception, by impeding or undermining these responses. It frequently happens that theoretical people, proud of their intellectual abilities and confident in their possession of techniques for the solution of practical problems, are led by their theoretical commitments to become inattentive to the concrete responses of emotion and imagination that would be essential constituents of correct perception.[238]

What I find most compelling about this claim is how inclusive it is of even very young children: though they may not be as able as their grown-up counterparts to take on the higher-order reasoning so often associated with Aristotelian logic, they may learn to see particularities of situations in ways that refine their perception so their nascent practical wisdom is further supported as their autonomy competence evolves.

To assist with this evolution, I think narrative is important in a second way: in addition to training children's inner eyes, it may provide meaningful experiences of play by immersing them in alternative possibilities within their mental landscape. This kind of playful experimentation with otherness through narrative immersion is not as threatening as real-life encounters because children are not themselves actively involved in the circumstances in question but neither is it a mere aesthetically intense diversion for them. Its possible effects on their perception also

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[237] Nussbaum, 2010, 108.

influences the extent to which their evolving autonomy can be responsible: children get to live out second-hand what they may not yet have encountered, thereby refining their deep concerns and the reasons they believe certain life approaches are more valuable than others. Nussbaum captures this potential well when she talks about imaginative play in childhood:

> Play is a type of activity that takes place in the space between people…experiment[ing] with the idea of otherness in ways that are less threatening than the direct encounter with another may often be. They thus get invaluable practice in empathy and reciprocity…Play teaches people to be capable of living with others without control; it connects the experiences of vulnerability and surprise to curiosity and wonder, rather than to crippling anxiety.[239]

This way of describing play also complements my notion of relational openness as denoting a more discerning perception of people in all their complexity. I want to argue that an imaginative curatorship of children's own mental landscaping, which I will elaborate in chapter five but have provisionally defined as the purposive facilitation of morally imaginative practices where deliberate moral imagining is modelled and exercised with integrity, ought to include careful narrative immersion if it is to cultivate their evolving responsible autonomy. Children's deliberations over what seems reasonable to value, notably with respect to virtuous ends, requires such purposeful practices to remain malleable.

As Nussbaum contends, "the content of rational choice must be supplied by nothing less messy than experience and stories of experience. Among stories of conduct, the most true and

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[238] Nussbaum, 1990, 81.

[239] Nussbaum, 2010, 99, 101.

informative will be works of literature, biography and history."[240] In justifying a virtue-based approach to thinking about the primacy of perception, she persuasively compares such experimentations in reasoning to performance, where being flexible, responsive and open matters more than abiding to any algorithm or logical set of principles.[241] On her account, narrative, and literature particularly, is entrusted with a moral task—certain literary writings can even be regarded as works of moral philosophy since their authors have managed to morally imagine in such a way as to shed light on the particulars of ethical experience that rules and principles fail to capture.[242]

And so, my own argument unfolds as follows: when activated through narrative aids, deliberate moral imagining may further increase children's sensitivity to potentially salient features of a situation or issue that might be neglected due to their lack of familiarity with it. Through such enhanced perception, deliberate moral imagining could orient their empathic engagement toward more virtuous application by enlarging the criteria for the who and why of empathy, and assisting them in resisting bias. This imaginative effort can involve emotional response—the best narratives often do elicit strong, mixed feelings—but it does not constitute the emotional identification involved in sympathy or pity.

Rather, deliberate moral imagining through narrative immersion could unveil a multiplicity of competing perspectives to ensure a wider application of empathy, which in turn may affect what children believe they have reason to value as emerging agents. What happened to make the subject in question think, feel, need, desire, respond and act in such ways? What particulars may be relevant but not immediately obvious? What is the panoramic view here—the bigger moral picture? Such a wonder-filled immersion can itself count as a lived experience for children, in addition to representing a playful experimentation with others' lived experiences, through imaginative exploration of fictional instances (like storytelling), hypothetical instances (like thought experiments) and actual instances (like real life examples and historical references). I will consider these three instances through examples of narrative aids that illustrate possible ways of illuminating the challenge of narrow empathetic scope and of facilitating children's practice with the features of deliberate moral imagining I am proposing.

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[240] Nussbaum, 1990, 77.

[241] Nussbaum writes: "Good deliberation is like theatrical or musical improvisation, where what counts as flexibility, responsiveness, and openness to the external; to rely on an algorithm here is not only insufficient, it is a sign of immaturity or weakness." *Ibid*, 74.

[242] Nussbaum, 1985, 516-529.

i) Fictional instances

First, especially applicable to small children, the morals of fairy tales tend to propagate a hero/villain dichotomy to the point of caricaturing the fable's "bad guy" and dismissing him as a worthy candidate for empathy. Nussbaum beautifully highlights the possible ramifications of this dichotomy, describing it as "the bifurcation of the 'pure' and the 'impure'—the construction of a 'we' who are without flaw and a 'they' who are dirty, evil, and contaminating."[243] The risks of such moralising can be counterbalanced by an exercise in deliberate moral imagining that underlines the pitfalls of such fables.

For instance, one set of narrative aid that I often use in my pedagogical practice as of preschool age pits the fairy tale of *The Three Little Pigs* against a contemporary retelling. In the classic version, the wolf is depicted as a gluttonous trickster motivated solely by his voracious appetite for ham. Whether for storytelling purposes or not, no other salient features of his context or character are spotlighted, so children only get a partial view, which could result in the kind of tunnel vision I have associated with the deficiency of empathy; specifically, a self-seeking tendency to see a "big bad wolf" in anyone who seems oppositional to them.

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[243] Nussbaum, 2010, 35.

By contrast, John Scieszka's popular parody, *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* puts forward a wholly different reading of the salient features of the wolf's situation, portraying him as a well meaning if clumsy eccentric trying to borrow a cup of sugar from his porcine neighbours to bake his grandmother's birthday cake, all the while suffering from the common cold and its signature sneezing fits. In the words of the alleged antagonist: "I don't know how this whole Big Bad Wolf thing got started, but it's all wrong"[244]—no one seems to empathise with him because no one knows the real, salient particulars of his situation. Thanks to such a set of narratives aids, the process of deliberate moral imagining may motivate children to take the time to purposefully envision all the factors that may have caused the wolf's ill repute so they can begin to apprehend the stereotyping at work.

Quoting novelist Ralph Ellison, Nussbaum claims that such imagining can lead to increased appreciation for the "full humanness of the people with whom our encounters in daily life are especially likely to be superficial at best,"[245] which is why "nursery rhymes and stories are thus a crucial preparation for concern in life. The presence of the other, which can be very threatening, becomes, in play, a delightful source of curiosity, and this curiosity contributes toward the development of healthy attitudes in friendship, love, and, later, political life."[246] On my interpretation, since this aesthetic exposure happens in their mental landscape, it may enrich the frames of reference to which children can have access when they encounter similar real-world situations.

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[244] Scieszka, 1989.

[245] Nussbaum, 2010, 107.

[246] *Ibid*, 99-100.

ii) Hypothetical instances

Hypothetical instances may also be an aid for deliberate moral imagining, especially in opening up the pool of candidates whom children perceive as deserving of empathy. This is especially useful when considering ecological matters in which certain life forms are not considered worthy of moral concern. In the realm of animal ethics, for instance, the issue of speciesism—or prejudice against non-human animals—is often repudiated by people who appeal to a list of ostensibly relevant differences between humans and other earthlings, notably the capacity to reason or communicate preferences.

In response, the argument over what makes a life form worthy of moral concern could be reformulated as an imaginative scenario—one I often use in my pedagogical practices with children—that focuses on one apparent difference, such as the power of speech. The thought experiment could be, “If animals could talk, would we treat them differently?” This visualisation may shed light on a host of neglected considerations, including the emotional range of different species, their non-verbal communication of pain and distress, the prioritisation of human suffering, and the means-to-an-end mentality behind certain farming practices and scientific testing.

Moreover, the thought experiment may elicit new perspectives that enrich children’s mental landscape, like the analogy made by J.M. Coetzee’s protagonist Elizabeth Costello between animal cruelty and the Holocaust, where the capacity to express agony has little bearing on moral treatment.[247] In this way, the scope of empathy can be extended beyond the human sphere to include animals, for reasons that do justice to the complexity of their experience rather than skew or sentimentalise it.

Again, Nussbaum's notion of inner eyes is pertinent: such perception is "not simply an intellectual grasp of propositions…not even simply intellectual grasp of particular facts…It is seeing a complex concrete reality in a highly lucid and richly responsive way; it is taking in what is there, with imagination and feeling."[248] Returning to the ethical dimensions of deliberate moral imagining, by enhancing empathic engagement, such a purposeful process can support the reflective endorsement needed for responsible autonomy, particularly when the autonomous thoughts or actions have direct effects on others, including other life forms.

iii) Actual instances

Beyond invented narratives, actual instances may also tell a more complete story of contentious, oversimplified matters that tend to fall prey to narrow empathetic scope. For a more mature youth audience, issues surrounding the sex industry can call attention to relevant moral particulars that are frequently ignored—and the following narratives are examples of aids I have used in my pedagogical practice with adolescents. For instance, conjectures about the goings-on between female employees and their clients in the shady corners of brothels suggest a lack of attentiveness to the conflicting needs, motivations and obstacles experienced by both parties.

This disregard may lead to an incomplete picture of the circumstances. Women may be deemed as inferior, promiscuous and indecent, choosing a life of prostitution freely, when their line of work may in fact be a last resort—a decision made under conditions of disadvantage and inequality. As Catharine MacKinnon notes in her study of sex discrimination, "Few weep the whore's reputation"—sex workers may not be considered worthy of empathy because their

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[247] It should be noted that this analogy is controversial, with some individuals refusing to compare the horrors of World War II with the harms entailed by speciesism. Mulhall, 2009, 22.

[248] Nussbaum, 1990, 152.

vulnerabilities go unacknowledged.[249] Yet certain narrative aids that document their real-life experiences, through short memoirs or interviews, can offer a more nuanced counterpoint.[250]

Similarly, as Aziza Sindhu's film documentary *Meeting John* reveals, the stereotype of men who purchase sexual services as chauvinistic, crude and violent obscures the true motives of a significant proportion of them, notably those propelled by loneliness, timidity, self-consciousness, and even grief.[251] Again, a broadening of the "who" and "why" of empathy does not require sympathetic identification or approval, but rather a sincere construal of the relevant particulars characterising a complex context.

Further, this exposure to serious contemporary issues in applied ethics may help young people see the worth of deliberate moral imagining in a real-world context. Current events can be particularly effective in this capacity: following the tragedy of the school shootings in Tuscon in 2011, then U.S. president Barack Obama urged Americans to refrain from assigning blame and rather "use this occasion to expand our moral imaginations, to listen to each other more carefully, to sharpen our instincts for empathy, and remind ourselves of all the ways our hopes and dreams are bound together."[252] This call to imaginative action closely resembles my second proposed feature of deliberate moral imagining, namely recognition of commonality.

Further, it may enable children to see the value of imaginativeness beyond the aesthetic exposure that enriches it: Nussbaum rightly asserts that children should not "be taught to believe that imagination is pertinent only in the domain of the unreal or imaginary. Instead, they need to see an imaginative dimension in all their interactions, and to see works of art as just one domain in which imagination is cultivated."[253] To anticipate a point in a later chapter, Dewey expresses a similar intention when he emphasises the need to avoid idle speculation by connecting imagination to real-world action.

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[249] MacKinnon, 2011, 14.

[250] For example, a former sex worker speaks anonymously of her experience as a stripper in the mini-memoir "Dancing Pornography" in MacKinnon, ed., 2011, 44.

[251] Sindhu, 2010.

[252] Bandes, 2011, 1.

Taken together, in their intricacy and nuance, these varied examples of narrative aids depict what deliberate moral imagining might look like in action, while re-emphasising the dangers of failed attempts to acknowledge limited perspectives, recognise commonality, and identify competing considerations. Yet while the morally imaginative efforts required to take such examples seriously may seem uncontroversial, my recommendation that children exercise deliberate moral imagining through such narrative immersion could appear more contentious.

Critics of this proposal might question whether children are really ready for such ethically intense aesthetic exposure. Should we give any credence to the everyday adage of "letting kids be kids?" Is such a level of complexity appropriate in childhood? As might be expected, opinions vary on these questions but I maintain my view that careful curatorship through morally imaginative practices may permit a helpful kind of mental landscaping that assists children as emerging agents in both their present and future circumstances. I think Nussbaum is correct to caution against the other extreme, where an all too prominent "disgust pathology" offers children seemingly safe but oversimplified world-views:

> We now notice that this very deep-seated human tendency is nourished by many time-honoured modes of storytelling to children, which suggest that the world will be set right when some ugly and disgusting witch or monster is killed, or even cooked in her own oven…We should be grateful for artists who suggest to children the world's complexity: Maurice Sendak, whose Max, in *Where the*

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[253] Nussbaum, 2010, 103.

> *Wild Things Are*—which has now become an impressive film—romps with monsters that represent his own inner world and the dangerous aggression that lurks there…stories learned in childhood become powerful constituents of the world we inhabit as adults.[254]

As I see it, one important implication of this claim includes teaching children to embrace human incompleteness and appreciate the need for interdependence. Nussbaum cites Rousseau's *Émile* as an example of such an educational intervention: "through a wide range of narratives, he must learn to identify with the lot of others, to see the world through their eyes, and to feel their sufferings vividly through the imagination. Only in that way will other people, at a distance, become real and equal to him."[255]

In terms of my own concerns over narrow empathetic scope as a challenge to children's evolving responsible autonomy, I think the practice of deliberate moral imagining can only be heightened through narrative aids that broaden the "who" and "why" of empathy, though the risks of such aesthetic exposure can be mitigated through a thoughtful mental landscaping approach like the P4C model I will later examine. To my mind, the vivid portrayals in such narrative aids help deliberate moral imagining by problematising and complexifying aspects of life that children may take for granted and fail to see as causes for concern: the imaginative effort initiates problem-setting so that the reasons driving their reflective endorsement may be more well informed and their expressions of evolving autonomy more responsible.

One quote by Murdoch captures my image of a broadened moral lens influencing what children see as worthy of their valuing: "I can only choose within the world I can see, in the moral sense of 'see' which implies that clear vision is a result of moral imagination and moral effort."[256] The elements that such narrative aids add to children's mental landscape may reveal for them the connections between the scenarios depicted and other experiences they encounter in the future, either personally or vicariously.

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[254] *Ibid*, 35-36.

In keeping with the examples I provided in this section, a consequence could be that children may become less quick to dismiss empathic engagement with a "bad guy," an animal or a sex worker the next time life presents them with such characters, whether real or fictional. Such connections may provoke more open-ended questions from children grounded in a genuine curiosity about the conditions that lead to certain forms of life—"What caused this conduct? What contributed to such and such virtue or vice?"—because they are interested in the subject as a whole multi-faceted character, not just the misapprehended author of one moral choice. In a sense, we could say they are interested in the subject's global autonomy, not just her local autonomy of choice in a particular set of circumstances, and this may affect the deep concerns that will inform their own autonomous agency. In his reflections on Nussbaum, Peter Johnson insightfully argues that such individuated accounts of ethical experiences are vital to ethical reflection, even though they cannot be wholly universalised: "Essential to reading is the ability to enter into a standpoint that is not ours without losing the capacity to assess it from without."[257]

And so, from a neo-Aristotelian virtue theory perspective, through immersion in different kinds of narrative, children may practise deliberate moral imagining in an effort to motivate themselves beyond mere habituation towards practical wisdom, notably with regard to the application of empathy as virtue. Virtue theorist Nancy Sherman characterises this capacity for perceiving ethical salience as "expressive of the agent's virtue…[she] will be responsible for how

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[255] *Ibid*, 40.

[256] Iris Murdoch in Biss, 2014, 3.

[257] Johnson, Peter, 2014, 89.

the situation appears as well as for omissions and distortions…how to construe the case, how to describe and classify."[258]

As my case study chapter will strive to show, such narrative aids to deliberate moral imagining may also act as valuable prompts for children's collective philosophical exploration aimed at challenging personal assumptions about concepts like empathy. Through the lens of this theoretical framework, I view such morally imaginative immersion as providing children with a particular kind of intensified life experience as well as multilayered opportunities to practice salience detection, which refines the quality of the perception characterising their nascent practical wisdom. The integration of others' perspectives through narrative aids may even increase the motivation to engage empathically with them, which resonates with Sherman's insistence on the role of the other in expanding practical wisdom:

> Through listening to and identifying with the viewpoints of others, an agent's vision becomes expanded and enlarged...The agent comes to learn different ways of reading a situation and different questions to pose in order to see the picture with increased insight and clarity…we can already begin to appreciate that a life in dialogue with others will have its effect on how we interpret and read the circumstances of ethical action.[259]

Closing remarks

In this chapter, using the theoretical framework of neo-Aristotelian virtue theory, I have sought to examine the ethics of deliberate moral imagining in childhood by considering how it might address the challenge of narrow empathetic scope, which I have characterised as a minor deficiency of empathy that involves a child empathising to an insufficient degree because her limited frame of reference causes her to misconstrue the circumstances of others. In trying to hit the target of empathy—that mean between the extreme of self-alienation and the deficiency of self-seeking—she falls short because she lacks a certain quality of perception that neo-Aristotelian virtue theorists call practical wisdom.

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[258] Sherman, 1991, 21.

Drawing from this rich virtue ethics tradition, I have considered the ways in which deliberate moral imagining may help children gain practical wisdom relative to their life experience by sensitising them to the salient particulars of situations that call for empathic response. I have argued that deliberate moral imagining is uniquely able to assist with the acquisition of practical wisdom in children since it enables them to visualise contexts they have not yet encountered and broaden the moral lens through which they approach and assess their lived experience, notably when activated by narrative aids that further enrich their mental landscapes.

Ultimately some important questions about the connection between deliberate moral imagining and empathy remain: If an agent becomes truly morally imaginative, does she still need to be empathetic or does the broadened lens afforded by her practice of deliberate moral imagining suffice for practical wisdom? By extension, would such purposeful envisioning have motivational force if she were no longer concerned with questions of empathetic scope? It is my hope that the arguments and examples I have proposed in this chapter can serve to highlight the complexity of empathy, above and beyond the conventional wisdom of "putting oneself in another's shoes," underscoring the need to reflect further on this intricate concept and to recognise the value of deliberate moral imagining in the childhood pursuit of virtue.

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[259] *Ibid*, 30.

Chapter 3: Moral Imagining Within the Capabilities Approach

This chapter will examine the politics of deliberate moral imagining in childhood through the lens of the Capabilities Approach (CA). Although both neo-Aristotelian virtue theory and the CA place great emphasis on human flourishing, Aristotle's residual influence limits eudaemonic pursuits to a select few whereas the CA is far more democratic in its reach, making it a highly appealing theoretical framework with which to consider children as emerging agents. Given my concern over ageist, adultist attitudes and policies that can obstruct children's attempts to exercise their evolving autonomy in meaningful ways, for the purpose of this chapter, the focus on "politics" is meant to address the issue of children manifesting themselves as active authors of their own lives and as actors in their social settings.

I am concerned that evolving autonomy in childhood may be challenged by an impediment to freedom that I am calling "conversion inhibition," which may affect whether children perceive themselves as capable of agency. As I will be arguing, this psychological barrier represents an important threat to children as emerging agents because it causes them to underestimate their own autonomy competence. This is politically significant because of the potential impact on their perspectival identity: if they have negative judgements about their own worth or potential, they may end up lacking the self-efficacy to act in the world and to protect themselves from interfering conditions that may further jeopardise their efforts to think and act autonomously.

Using language from the CA, I want to frame deliberate moral imagining as a complex capability that may fuel children's perspectival identity with more options to envision as worthy of their reflective endorsement as emerging agents—options gathered from their exposure to many rich and diverse sources, from their meaningful exchanges with a variety of people and environments, and from their own multifaceted experiments with creative activities and reflective practice. On the view I will be defending, my three proposed features of acknowledging limited perspectives, recognising commonality and identifying competing considerations become complex functionings that may help broaden children's envisioning of the overarching context of relation-to-self—how they perceive and value themselves—making them more resilient when tackling the difficult task of converting resources into the opportunities and outcomes they deem valuable.

I will begin this chapter by explaining the notion of capabilities and functionings drawing on key works from the CA in an effort to show how this theoretical framework can be relevant to my concerns about childhood. With this context established, aligning the perspectives of leading CA advocates Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum, I will introduce the challenge of conversion inhibition, maintaining that children with such a negative self-image risk being unable to convert the resources granted to them into meaningful capabilities and functionings despite favourable conditions under which to practise their evolving autonomy. I will then examine how the CA defines and incorporates self-determination into its research, underscoring the grounds for hope that children have within this framework and identifying additional traits to further qualify their status as emerging agents from a political perspective. After considering what a capabilities-inspired conception of autonomy might look like, I will present deliberate moral imagining as a complex capability that may foster children's self-efficacy, in part by offering opportunities to expand and enrich what they find worthy of their valuing through access to conceptual resources, access to dialogical space and access to creative expression.

Capabilities in context

To illuminate the political dimension of deliberate moral imagining, the CA offers a promising path as a highly influential theoretical paradigm of human development committed to securing people's freedoms and advocating for their political agency. Since the 1980s, leading advocates of the CA like Sen and Nussbaum have striven to redefine how we assess the wealth of communities based on what people are actually able to achieve within their set of circumstances, focusing on the opportunities to enact desired freedoms in ways that honour agency and dignity. In light of the CA's major political influence, notably toward the formation of the United Nations' Human Development Index—a summary measure of average achievement across areas like health, knowledge and standard of living—its distinctive methods of assessing human welfare can give insight into what it might mean to conceive deliberate moral imagining politically as a complex capability, notably one that can be significant in childhood. Before exploring this potential, I will first outline the main characteristics of the CA, specifically how it defines its central concepts of capabilities and functionings.

The CA has grown out of a profound and widely held concern that current utilitarian-based economic models are inadequate—and we might even say unimaginative—because their assessment strategies do not account for the particulars that make a human life meaningful and worthwhile.[260] By focusing on the overall economic wealth of nations through indicators like a country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), such approaches capture only fragments or generalities about human welfare, thereby overshadowing serious inequalities and limitations in what citizens are actually able to be and do, notably with respect to their access to health care, employment and education. What results is an inaccurate picture of a country's development: if increased wealth is evident, then major factors affecting welfare go unnoticed, like uneven distribution of resources, discrepancies between rich and poor, and unequal access to opportunities, many of which can stem from the complex intersecting social determinants that concern relational autonomy theorists, as presented in the introduction.

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[260] Sen and Nussbaum, 1993.

In contrast, the CA seeks to inquire into the real opportunities people have within their socio-economic contexts to achieve the "lives they have reason to value."[261] This key phrase coined by Sen highlights a crucial distinction between the CA and other economic assessments of well-being: as individuals, while we may value the human capital that can contribute to our community's growth, we also treasure many other dimensions of our lives that transcend the instrumentally valuable—for instance, the educational experiences that enhance our knowledge of world histories and cultures, the political engagements that enable us to express our ideas and be taken seriously, the aesthetic encounters that inspire us to imagine possible futures for ourselves and endeavour to realise them. In short, to use Kantian terms, we value ourselves as ends not merely as means.

By proposing a more holistic way of assessing and comparing quality of life across communities, the CA offers an interdisciplinary and context-sensitive framework that stresses this valuation process and reflects the actual struggles faced by people—including children—in their efforts to design meaningful lives for themselves. Through its emphasis on social justice and its careful study of cultural and regional differences, the CA recognises and ardently defends the plurality of freedoms that make a human life worth living, demonstrating that what might be valuable in one community might have no relevance in another.[262] The term "capabilities" designates these varied and substantial freedoms: the real opportunities we actually have in our specific set of circumstances to choose certain “functionings”—or beings and doings as forms of engagement—that we deem relevant for ourselves. On this framework, an individual’s agency can be measured based on what she “is free to do and achieve in pursuit of whatever goals or values she regards as important.”[263]

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[261] This popular phrasing in the CA literature was first coined by Sen, 1997, 1959.

In terms of childhood, research within the CA has contributed immensely to clarifying the meaning of capabilities and functionings with respect to children. For example, in a school setting, a child’s functionings are understood as her achieved learning outcomes—“beings and doings” that range from reading a book and writing a story, to discussing with classmates and listening attentively—while her capabilities are described as her opportunities to fulfill these outcomes, the potential she exhibits for various achievements in relation to the possibilities her educational context affords her.[264]

This angle is promising in terms of evolving global autonomy in childhood since it emphasises the combination of potential and possibilities needed for a child to realise what she believes she has reason to value. Nussbaum encapsulates this idea well when she insists that the CA is interested in securing capabilities and leaving functionings to individual choice:

> To promote capabilities is to promote areas of freedom, and this is not the same as making people function in a certain way…capabilities, not functionings, are the appropriate political goals, because room is thereby left for the exercise of human freedom. There is a huge moral difference between a policy that

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[262] Comim et al., 2008.

[263] Sen, 1985, 203.

[264] This framework is explained particularly well in the first chapter of Walker and Unterhalter, eds., 2007, 15.

> promotes health and one that promotes health capabilities—the latter, not the former, honours the person's lifestyle choices.[265]

Even so, within the CA, there has been much debate over whether specific capabilities should be identified at all, or whether they should emerge from communities themselves, based on their distinctive needs and customs. Sen has cautioned against advocating for a universal set of capabilities since such a selection risks becoming overly prescriptive and undermining the valuation process enabled by a community's public discourse channels.[266] Nussbaum disagrees, however, offering a now widely known list of ten central capabilities—a list on which imagination figures, as we will soon see. From her perspective, this list constitutes a necessary building block for a normative theory of social justice because it offers a point of convergence for sparking an international conversation about what makes a life worth living.[267]

In her view, provided the list is seen as a proposal that is sensitive to cultural differences and open to revision, much can be gained from considering these abstract universal capabilities and encouraging communities to determine for themselves how such abstractions should be concretised and actualised within their particular contexts. To anticipate a later section in this chapter, I want to make a similar argument that seeks to justify the possible gains children may get if deliberate moral imagining is viewed as a complex capability with particular political relevance in the context of childhood.

Whereas the previous chapter's theoretical framework was concerned with virtue in the realm of ethics, this chapter's framework is concerned with the state of affairs that results from attempts to enact freedoms from a political perspective; in this sense, the CA is more consequentialist (though not utilitarian) in its leanings, especially from Sen's interpretation. Advocating for "consequence-sensitive reasoning," he wants to call people's attention to the "comprehensive outcomes" of their choices, urging them to take "an adequately broad view of the realisations that would result, including the nature of the agencies involved, the processes used and the relationships of people."[268] In this sense, the CA is a highly imaginative model since it asks us to envisage the kinds of freedoms to which we should be entitled in order to preserve and promote our agency, which Nussbaum sees as crucial to human dignity, or to a "minimally flourishing life." In her words, "the Capabilities Approach tells us what to consider salient, but it does not dictate a final assignment of weights and a sharp-edged decision"—we must make those ultimate judgements ourselves based on what we have imagined as meaningful lives worthy of our pursuit.[269]

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[265] Nussbaum, 2011, 25–26.

[266] Sen, 2005, 158.

[267] Nussbaum, 2011, 29.

As I see it, if this role is to extend to children so that they too can lead a dignified life, they must be equipped to judge the worthiness of capabilities and associated functionings in light of the values and deep concerns that they reflectively endorse. Yet what happens if such opportunities and outcomes are made available in childhood but children are not prepared to make use of them? What if they lack the self-efficacy necessary to see themselves as capable of enacting agency and of resisting harmful external influences? In the next section, I will examine the challenge to evolving responsible autonomy that I call conversion inhibition, with particular references to CA accounts of capabilities in childhood.

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[268] Sen sets up his discussion of consequentialism in *Bhagavad Gita*, with Arjuna roughly representing the consequantialist stance and Krishna representing the deontological stance. Sen, 2009, 215-219.

[269] Nussbaum, 2011, 41.

The challenge of conversion inhibition

In my previous chapter, I presented the challenge of narrow empathetic scope as a minor deficiency of the virtue of empathy that can threaten children's evolving responsible autonomy by limiting who they find worthy of their valuing, thus impoverishing their envisioning of the overarching context of relation-to-other; how they view (and consequently treat) the people in their lives. Yet I remain concerned that even if children overcome this challenge by enhancing their empathic engagement through deliberate moral imagining so as to take seriously the perspective and complexity of others, they may not have a rich enough self-image to extend this regard to themselves, thereby jeopardising their envisioning of the overarching context of relation-to-self. In addressing this concern, I find the language of the CA very helpful since it concentrates on what individuals can actually be and do within their specific circumstances, notably with the addition of the term "conversion" to denote their ability to transform their resources into opportunities and outcomes they deem valuable.

As we shall see, while many CA proponents have analysed what have come to be known as social and environmental "conversion factors" with respect to issues of justice in childhood, I want to focus on a facet of the oft-neglected category of "personal heterogeneities" that I think may damage children's burgeoning perspectival identity through negative judgements regarding their own worth or potential. This section first outlines the notions of combined capabilities from Nussbaum and conversion factors from Sen to contextualise my own proposed challenge of "conversion inhibition," which I define as a psychological impediment caused by lacking self-efficacy that prevents children from envisaging themselves as emerging agents and thus from enacting their evolving responsible autonomy, specifically through the converting of resources into valued opportunities and outcomes.

To begin, Nussbaum uses the term *combined capabilities* to capture how she construes two crucial dimensions of capability development: internal capabilities (that is, "traits and abilities, developed, in most cases, in interaction with the social, economic, familial, and political environment") and the existing opportunities in a given context to exercise them.[270] If I apply her view to my focus on childhood, the extent to which children can be free depends in no small part on the possibilities that their context affords them: their family, their socioeconomic status, their educational conditions and their political environments, as well as a host of other complex intersecting social determinants, can help or hinder the development of their internal abilities, and thereby affect whether they can live in accordance with the deep concerns they believe they have reason to value. In other words, these contextual considerations partly determine whether children can begin to envisage and enact their evolving autonomy.

For instance, if a child lives in a repressive society that silences her speech, then even if she has learnt to express herself through public speaking training at school, she will have no forum in which to exercise this ability. As Nussbaum astutely notes, "a society might do quite well at producing internal capabilities but might cut off the avenues through which people actually have the opportunity to function in accordance with those capabilities."[271] Conversely, if a child's society encourages freedom of expression but she has no capacity to communicate, she will not be able to take advantage of this opportunity. Yet if both dimensions are satisfied—internal and contextual—the child can be said to have the combined capability and it becomes her choice whether to use it: she can decide not to exercise her free speech despite having the capacity and opportunity to do so.[272]

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[270] *Ibid*, 21.

[271] *Ibid*, 21.

Sen's classic example of fasting versus starving also illustrates this dynamic in terms of the capability of bodily health: If someone chooses to fast out of political convictions but has the opportunity to eat and access nourishment, her capability is drastically different from that of the person who is starving because no food is available, even though the functionings appear similar. So as I see it, if children are to cultivate their evolving autonomy, they need both dimensions of their combined capabilities satisfied; yet there is more threatening their prospects of doing so.

Indeed, Sen pushes this discussion of capabilities and functionings further by proposing the notion of *conversion factors*, which he defines as "the conversion of primary goods into the capability to do various things that a person may value doing."[273] A simple example of conversion often used in the literature works as follows: a bike (resource) can be converted into the ability to cycle (capability) and result in riding around to get from place to place (functioning).[274] Sen identifies four main sources of conversion factors that can act positively or negatively on an individual's agency: i) the environmental kind, relating to natural forces, climate, pollution, infrastructure; ii) the societal kind, involving institutions like health care, education, family, government systems and legal frameworks; iii) the perspectival kind, associated with collective norms, beliefs, traditions and patterns of behaviour; and finally, iv) the personal kind, connected to an agent's specific characteristics like age, gender, physical condition, and also her aptitudes and attitudes.[275]

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[272] As Nussbaum rightly notes, certain opportunities should be interpreted differently based on societal circumstances: Freedom of speech may exclude anti-semitic hate speech in Germany given the country's history, whereas the United States may endorse a more libertarian policy. Nussbaum, 2011.

[273] Sen, 2009, 254.

[274] Robeyns, 2016.

According to Sen, each individual has her own "capability set" determined by her distinctive collection of conversion factors: "A person's actual freedom to pursue her ends depends both on what ends she has, and what power she has to convert primary goods into the fulfilment of those ends…variations in our ability to convert resources into actual freedoms…give us very divergent powers to build freedom in our lives even when we have the same bundle of primary goods."[276] The example of gender illustrates how such variations in conversion rates are political as they can result in injustice—as Comim et al. write:

> For example, given gender labour market discrimination, a woman might have the same opportunity to study, but this might not translate into getting the same job. Or women might not have the same opportunity to go out at night because of male violence on the streets. Or women might have a physical voice and the intellectual capacity to think, but both the fact that men tend to interrupt women much more than they interrupt men, and tendencies to consider women as less capable leaders, might lead to the fact that women have fewer opportunities to have their voices heard in public.[277]

Given this divergence of powers to transform resources into "characteristics of good living" including capabilities and functionings, Sen regards the addition of conversion factors as crucial to a strong theory of justice, one that he thinks is missing in competing political approaches. He critiques John Rawls's justice-as-fairness stance for overlooking issues of human diversity by being too resourcist, focusing disproportionately on the fair distribution of goods and services as if all individuals have the same natural and socially acquired power to make use of these.[278] In his words, "investigations of equality—theoretical as well as practical—that proceed with the assumption of antecedent uniformity (including the presumption that 'all men are created equal') thus miss out on a major aspect of the problem."[279]

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[275] Sen, 2009, 255-256.

[276] Sen, 1992, 85.

[277] Comim et al., eds., 2008, 97.

To my mind, this issue of equality concerning conversion factors uniquely affects children's ability to transform resources into freedoms and functionings since they are all the more limited by internal factors such as age and skill level, and by external factors like their family environment, their school and their society's public policies, as well as the philosophies of childhood at play in the backdrop. Empirical evidence drawn from studies on the CA suggests that the capabilities of children's parents—especially their mothers—act as significant conversion sources: their level of education increases their son or daughter's own opportunities for health and school success.[280] In turn, children are either empowered or disempowered by their schooling experience (the curriculum, the teacher, the facilities, the learning atmosphere, etc.) to transform the resources available to them into valuable capabilities and functionings.

So in important ways, taken as a group, children face greater conversion challenges compared to adults: as Biggeri et al. have persuasively asserted, a child's success "typically depends on the decisions of parents, guardians and teachers, which implies that the child's conversion factors are subject to additional constraints as well as resources…Actually, even if we acknowledge that the child is not a passive actor, her choice often represents a compromise."[281] Though the impact of such social and environmental conversion factors in childhood has been the subject of a fair amount of important research within the CA, less attention has been paid to the personal factors that contribute positively or negatively to agency.

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[278] Sen writes: "the criticism of Rawls's theory of'justice as fairness' from the capability perspective arose partly from our attempt to take direct note of a person's difficulties—naturally or socially generated—in converting 'primary goods' into actual freedoms to achieve…A person less able or gifted in using primary goods to secure freedoms (e.g. because of physical or mental disability, or varying proneness to illness, or biological or conventional constraints related to gender) is disadvantaged compared with another more favourably placed in that respect even if both have the same bundle of primary goods. A theory of justice, I have argued, must take adequate note of that difference." Sen, 1992, 148.

[279] *Ibid*, xi.

[280] Biggeri et al., eds., 2011, 8-9.

To illustrate the significant impact of these personal conversion factors, Sen often uses the example of individuals with disabilities, noting that they tend to not only have less income but also need more financial resources just to get by, making them victims of what he calls a *conversion handicap*, or "the difficulty in converting incomes and resources into good living, precisely because of disability."[282] An example of this difficulty that I find especially useful comes from CA theorist Ingrid Robeyns: "A healthy person who has a pair of running shoes can use these to train for a marathon, but this is not an option for people with bad knees and certainly not for paralysed people."[283]

While the type of physiological disability that preoccupies Sen is without doubt a highly sensitive issue, I want to build on his notion of conversion handicaps to capture what I consider to be a personal barrier of the psychological kind; one that fits squarely within the last category of conversion factors he labels as "personal heterogeneities." Especially damaging to children because they are in their developmental stages, this barrier can be debilitating in ways similar to a disability but not as noticeably so given its "immaterial" quality. In *Children and the Capability Approach*, Trani et al. offer an interesting distinction that I want to adopt between the more conspicuous "material" conversion factors like physiological disability and the less tangible "immaterial" kind, such as personal identities, ways of understandings, individual styles and beliefs.[284] As Walker and Unterhalter astutely note in their book *Amartya Sen's Capability Approach and Social Justice in Education*, such personal differences can become inequalities under adverse circumstances.[285]

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[281] *Ibid*, 30.

[282] Sen, 2009, 258.

[283] Robeyns in Comim et al., eds., 2008, 84-85.

So what does this immaterial barrier involve on my account? Suppose a child has favourable personal heterogeneities in terms of her intelligence and physical condition, and that these are matched by propitious external factors—a supportive family, a good school, a thriving community and an effective local government—but she still has trouble converting her ample resources into desired capabilities and functionings. She is not able to trust in her capacity to think or act, and fails to transform new and complex experiences into occasions to learn and gain a greater appreciation for her own potential. She cannot accept her mistakes, find solace in defeat, rebound from setbacks, monitor negative emotions, cope with challenges or deal with adversity. With respect to well-being, I want to call this lack of self-efficacy (notwithstanding an otherwise conducive profile of internal and external factors) *conversion inhibition.*

To be clear, the notion of self-efficacy is hardly new in the discipline of disciplinary, notably in child and educational psychology,[286] but I want to connect it to the CA to argue that in terms of childhood agency, it is politically insufficient to achieve what Nussbaum calls combined capabilities or to resolve what Sen calls conversion handicaps as there is somethig else happening at the psychological level that may be causing youth to fail to embrace or enact their evolving autonomy. From my perspective, what I am calling conversion inhibition can be defined as a psychological impediment to converting resources into valued opportunities (capabilities) and outcomes (functionings); one that is largely self-induced as a result of negative judgements regarding personal worth or potential. I say “largely” because it seems inevitable to me that external factors will exert some influence on these judgements even if they are propelled by the individual’s poor self-image. For instance, the perception that young girls might have about themselves as citizens of a misogynistic, patriarchal society seems doomed to be at least partly influenced by the bigoted beliefs and social mores surrounding them.

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[284] Biggeri et al., 2011, 253.

[285] Walker and Unterhalter, eds., 2007, 10.

[286] See Yeager and Dweck, 2012.

And yet, even if the social, environmental and perspectival sources of conversion factors are advantageous, children may still be inhibited psychologically at the level of their internal factors. Indeed, on the view I am proposing, a child with conversion inhibition is self-conscious to the point that her agency is restrained; she is unable to act even though her profile of factors is technically disposing her to be capable of determining and realising ends she values. She may be smart, talented and able-bodied enough to convert her resources, and be contextually supported in beneficial ways, but her disparaging stance on her own personal heterogeneities creates a particular vulnerability that compromises otherwise accessible, functional factors. It is as though they are being immobilised by this immaterial barrier, and the effects on her agency—though perhaps not as tangible as those of a disability—could be considerable. I will consider two such effects on children’s perspectival identity and self-efficacy: the flattening of mental landscapes and the thwarting of resilience.

First, as I see it, conversion inhibition prevents children from developing their autonomy competence by flattening their mental landscape. Metaphorically speaking, the living, fluid repertoire that should be fuelling their burgeoning perspectival identity becomes desiccated: its intertwined concepts, social imaginaries and personal experiences (symbolised by memories, beliefs, feelings) do not offer enough depth or variety to enable children to see themselves as worthy of the capabilities and functionings they might otherwise concretise. Whereas the challenge of narrow empathetic scope represents a relation-to-other problem and, as we shall see in the next chapter, the challenge of inaccurate pseudoenvironments represents a relation-to-knowledge problem, conversion inhibition constitutes a relation-to-self problem—it is attitudinal in character and existential in impact.

A child with conversion inhibition might empathically engage with others but not extend the same consideration to herself, failing to take seriously her own perspective or the particulars of her own situation. Her perspectival identity is paralysed: returning to Friedman's wording, she has not identified "features of herself she cares deeply about" so she cannot perceive herself as capable of being an active agent in her own life—she lacks self-efficacy. According to psychologist Albert Bandura, self-efficacy "is concerned with people's beliefs in their capabilities to exercise control over their own functioning and over events that affect their lives," and thus influences their cognitive, affective and conative experiences—their thoughts, feelings and motivations.[287]

In my view, within the context of childhood, this belief is crucial since it can determine children's choices and degree of effort with respect to converting resources into opportunities and outcomes that they deem valuable—if they do not see themselves as capable, they risk giving up more easily and downplaying their power to affect situations, even if their overall factors are favourable. In turn, this may impoverish the reasoning driving their reflective endorsement when they consider what lives they believe they have reason to value and pursue.

By contrast, when confronting a situation beyond their comfort zone, self-efficacious children relish in the venture, believing that their genuine efforts and calculated risk-taking will yield constructive results, even if they end up failing and having to try anew. They exhibit hardiness and gumption in the face of novel, unfamiliar and uncertain experiences: they understand the value of self-doubt and use it to their advantage, committing themselves wholeheartedly to a task and figuring out the skills and resources needed to succeed. They confront tough circumstances, devalue quick successes, take pride in the solutions they devise, prize effort over accomplishment, and perceive others who emulate good practices as models. Over time, this self-efficacy translates into resilience—a coping capacity that children with conversion inhibition tend not to possess.

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[287] Bandura, 1997.

Second, then, conversion inhibition prevents children from developing their autonomy competence by thwarting their resilience, including the ability to mobilise the various criteria of self-efficacy referenced above when faced with trials and tribulations. As mentioned, I am interested in children's potential as actors in their social settings, both their current and future possibilities of building freedom in their lives through active engagement in society. To use Nussbaum's terminology, I am interested in their capability of affiliation, understood as being able to "engage in various forms of social interaction" and "being treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others," as well as their capability of control over their environment, or being able to "participate effectively in political choices that govern one's life."[288]

If children do not have a rich enough self-image to perceive these capabilities as possibilities for themselves due to their negative judgements about their own worth or potential, they may lack the resilience to act in the world, notably to endure the difficulties that come with trying to convert resources into valued opportunities and outcomes. They may shy away from occasions to exercise their autonomy competence, instead succumbing to a condition of excessive reliance, even of learned helplessness.

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[288] Nussbaum, 2011, 34.

Moreover, they may be less likely to shield themselves from interfering conditions that can further jeopardise their efforts to think and act autonomously, say by being more susceptible to the toxins that others may represent for them in their mental landscape. For example, such "pollutants" could include the coercive, deceptive and manipulative sources that Friedman fears might "distort someone's attempts to consider her options in light of what matters to her and to choose what genuinely reflects her own concerns."[289] In my view, children's autonomy competence is evolving and therefore more fragile; conversion inhibition is thus politically significant as it could lead them to become seduced by autonomy-devaluing practices that render them further vulnerable as emerging agents, such as involvement in oppressive customs.

This risk raises questions of justice: conversion inhibition might incapacitate children in ways comparable to the conversion handicaps that Sen worries can hamper people with disabilities, making them possible targets of unjust treatment. So how might the challenge of conversion inhibition be addressed? In what ways could self-efficacy be fostered in childhood so as to overcome or prevent poor self-image from interfering with children's envisaging and enacting of their evolving autonomy? While I will soon be examining the contributions that I think deliberate moral imagining may make, I first want to consider the place of self-determination within the CA, notably how it affords room for children as emerging autonomous agents.

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[289] Friedman, 2003, 5, 19.

Childhood autonomy and capabilities

The enrichment of mental landscapes and the promotion of resilience seem vital to fostering self-efficacy in childhood since these elements may contribute to strengthening children's perspectival identity, including the perception of themselves as capable of autonomous living. Just as children's autonomy is evolving and their practical wisdom is nascent, their self-efficacy is also in formation—the hope is not that they will achieve total mastery but rather that they might gain an awareness of the qualities and circumstances likeliest to bring them what they deem valuable as well as a sense of ownership over their accomplishments to ensure a generally positive outlook on themselves as emerging agents.

Whereas neo-Aristotelian virtue theory is largely ambivalent about the importance of autonomy and unsympathetic to the notion of childhood agency, the CA depends on a strong conception of self-determination and is amenable to the possibility of children as active actors. What remains unclear, however, is when and how autonomy can be achieved according to this theoretical framework. Is the designation of "self-determining agent" reserved for adults or can children be eligible as well? If so, as of what age and in what ways can they begin cultivating their responsible autonomy? Before examining the role that deliberate moral imagining may play in addressing conversion inhibition from a CA perspective, I will first consider this theoretical framework's perspectives on childhood autonomy and capabilities, interpreting from these some additional traits to help qualify the emerging responsibly autonomous child, notably in terms of her potential for political involvement.

Despite the undeniably crucial role of self-determination in the CA, some theorists have questioned whether it should indeed apply to children, hypothesising that younger minds may be able to *make* choices but not *evaluate* these choices; at best, they may be capable of minimal local autonomy.[290] Yet in line with my argument so far, recent work on children and capabilities suggests that while total self-determination may not be possible or advisable in childhood, children in their various stages of development already exercise agency in meaningful ways that risk being under-appreciated or compromised by adults.

Complementing the philosophers of childhood surveyed in my introduction, some CA proponents contend that the growing capabilities of children should be acknowledged despite their seeming unimportance, claiming it is a mistake to treat them merely as "future adults" or "recipients of freedoms" rather than as agents in their own right, "able to express their points of view, values and priorities."[291] For instance, Ballet et al. note that "the capacity to demand specific objects, toys, food or to move around the house may appear trivial from an adult's perspective, but may constitute big decisions and progress in the eyes of the child."[292] On the view I am defending, seemingly unimportant functionings that adults take for granted like picking a story to read or a game to play, expressing a preference or an idea, or questioning the way humans live, represent significant first experiences of global autonomy for children as emerging agents, reflecting their evolving competence to not only make choices but also to take action regarding what they value for themselves in their lives.

Accordingly, on my interpretation of the CA, in answer to the "when" of cultivating responsible autonomy, the period of childhood I am considering seems like an opportune time, though the goal is not to attain the full autonomy granted to adults but rather to carve a space for children to exercise their evolving global autonomy in ways that are meaningful to them, in light of their current lived experiences and maturity levels. Here the metaphor I proposed about a kind of autonomy with training wheels is once again applicable: the goal is an authentic though mitigated experience of autonomous thought and action that gradually introduces children to full agency thanks to crucial supports. In terms of the "how" of cultivating responsible autonomy, it seems ageist policies or mentalities regarding the capacities of children and adolescents must be addressed, especially in formal contexts that greatly impact the childhood experience: for instance, according to many CA proponents, schooling should strive to "teach children to be more autonomous, cooperative and to interact with others."[293]

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[290] Ballet et al., in Biggeri et al., eds., 2011, 27.

[291] Biggeri et al., eds., 2011, 22.

[292] *Ibid*, 28.

Since children represent a highly heterogenous group, as explored in my introduction, their responsible autonomy competence ought to be nurtured in terms of their gradually developing capabilities, many of which will lose relevance or change considerably as they grow up and refine their perspectival identity. Interestingly, some arguments in the CA scholarship lend credence to my preference for a weak/moderate substantive account of responsible autonomy which, as I have argued previously, seems better placed to assure that children are protected from expressions of autonomy that are oppressive or marginalising, and therefore threatening to their efforts as emerging agents.

For instance, in terms of capability development in childhood, Nussbaum has suggested an important exception that I think is extremely apt: she argues children need safeguarding against what she calls "capability-destruction," denoting actions that "appear to destroy some or all capabilities," such as drug abuse. She maintains that while adults should have this freedom because they are full agents, "children, of course, are different; requiring certain sorts of functioning of them (as in compulsory education) is defensible as a necessary prelude to adult capability."[294]

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[293] *Ibid*, 37.

Given many CA theorists seem to share this concern, it is important to note that descriptions in this framework of autonomy opportunities that a child should or should not have (including my own account) are not value-neutral. As Walker and Unterhalter have insightfully phrased it, these descriptions reflect a commitment to "autonomy-facilitating" approaches, which treat the child as a budding agent whose ongoing process of autonomy development should be protected from capability-destruction. Using the context of education as an example, they make the following claim, drawing on the ideas of Harry Brighouse:

> Education that contributes to unfreedoms would be deeply incompatible with the capability approach. We need to be clear that respecting a plurality of conceptions of the good life (and hence of how education is arranged) is not the same as endorsing all versions of the good life, and this has clear educational implications. The key issue here is that to count as education, processes and outcomes ought to enhance freedom, agency, and well-being.

Connecting this claim to my concerns about childhood autonomy, what might improve freedom, agency and well-being in children as emerging agents?

On my interpretation of the CA, the self-determining agent is characterised by traits that promote her political involvement, such as deliberation, individuality and accountability. This politically oriented portrayal complements the notion of evolving responsible autonomy in childhood as I have been defining it: what matters is the child's capacity not only to think about and determine her own life path but also to ensure it reflects the values she endorses and to live responsibly in accordance with these when she acts in the public sphere. While many CA proponents have contributed to portraying the self-determining agent, three in particular are worth briefly considering because their insights emphasise traits that I also deem useful for qualifying the child as an emerging autonomous agent, even though they themselves do not focus on childhood.

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[294] Nussbaum, 2011, 26-27.

First, to my mind, the capacity for deliberation is a crucial trait for evolving responsible autonomy as I understand it because it facilitates the reasoning driving children's first experiments with reflective endorsement. In his article "Capability and Deliberation," Geoffrey Hinchliffe proposes the helpful language of a "self" of capability to emphasise the individual agent engaged in deliberating about what she values. Borrowing from Charles Taylor's notion of a "strong evaluator" making qualitative, non-utilitarian distinctions that prioritise certain life pursuits as more valuable than others, he argues that the self of capability is an agent who "thinks about [her] life in terms of ends," perceiving herself as "living out [her] valued activities through [her] own agency" whenever possible, notably in the contexts of her education and of her community life.[295]

So constructed, this view aligns well with my argument about children exercising their evolving autonomy in meaningful ways within the contexts that most affect their lives, such as their school and extracurricular settings, by determining and trying to enact the deep concerns they have reflectively endorsed. Moreover, I agree with Hinchliffe that capability development involves both "the creation of opportunities"—which is largely determined by the agent's sociopolitical framework and thus beyond her control—and "the ability to make the best of those opportunities," which she can directly affect by deliberating over her existing functionings and identifying those she wants and needs with reference to the capabilities she may be lacking.[296]

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[295] Hinchliffe, 2009, 405-406.

When it comes to children, this role of deliberation further underscores the challenge that conversion inhibition can pose: children who cannot engage in such a deliberative process due to a poor self-image risk not being able to make the best of opportunities to convert the resources available to them. On my interpretation, then, as a trait that further qualifies the emerging responsibly autonomous child, deliberation that is reasoned and reflective, and guided by strong evaluations, can enable the harnessing of capabilities toward the achievement of well-being deemed valuable at different life phases.

Second, by virtue of these deliberative capacities, the emerging responsibly autonomous child can develop individuality, another autonomy trait found in the CA literature that I find important because it helps ensure she is acting out her own distinctive valued commitments, rather than following convention, conforming to a group mentality or submitting to interfering conditions—a risk confronting children with conversion inhibition, as I have noted. John Davis makes a compelling case for the trait of individuality in his article "The Capabilities Conception of the Individual," which describes the self-determining agent as an "evolving collection of capabilities"[297] whose learning about the world and engagement in empathetic social relationships yield self-concepts that express her individuality and enable her autonomy. This perspective aligns well with my own argument about children's self-efficacy depending in large part on their positive appraisal of their own worth and potential—Davis likens these self-concepts to "dynamic narratives [that people] make and re-make about themselves."[298] Such narratives contrast the oversimplified, uncharitable self-portrayals that plague children with conversion inhibition.

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[296] *Ibid*, 406.

[297] Davis, 2009, 419.

[298] *Ibid*, 419.

Conversely, as I see it, children who nurture their individuality can uncover new aspects about themselves that influence their burgeoning perspectival identity as well as their autonomous action over the course of their lives. From my perspective, while this perpetually developing sense of self is social in that it is informed by interactions with others, notably with a sense of belonging and of fellow feeling, it is still a reflection of children's own representations of themselves rather than an image assigned to them by those in their environment, or what Davis calls an "identity pump."[299] Since children will differ immensely in the types of lives they value once they achieve the basic capabilities and functionings required for survival, they can express their individuality in their actions through their distinct collection of capabilities. On my interpretation, then, as a trait that further qualifies the emerging responsibly autonomous child, individuality can help her value herself as an agent: though she recognises her identity as constructed through her social interactions, she nevertheless retains a singularity since she understands her combined capability sets are unique to her.

Finally, as an emerging responsibly autonomous agent, the child can show she is answerable for her deliberations and her individuality through the much needed autonomy trait of accountability. As I have argued, by adding the qualifier of *responsible* to my conception of autonomy, I am opting for a weak/moderate substantive account that strives to protect children from experiments with autonomy that risk undermining their self-worth, since they are already politically precarious as dependent, vulnerable members of society. Just as they deserve to be recognised as beings with powers of agency, they must learn to be accountable for these powers and for the effects they may have on others. In light of the importance granted to accountability in my conception of autonomy, I am attracted to the phenomenological view that Ballet et al. present in their article "Responsibility for Each Other's Freedom." I think they are right to point out that personal responsibility has been neglected in Sen's conception of freedom, "particularly with regard to the capability for a person to feel and be responsible, that is, voluntary self-constraint in order to satisfy obligations towards others."[300]

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[299] *Ibid*, 415.

Whereas Sen describes responsibility as the consequence of freedom, Ballet et al. want to define it as "constitutive of the person" and of the "richness of her nature," drawing from the philosophies of Heidegger, Sartre and Arendt.[301] In their view, this prioritisation of responsibility expands Sen's notion of agency by suggesting that "fulfilling a set of obligations often constitutes a pre-condition for well-being"[302] and can thus override certain claims to freedom of choice. Applied to childhood, as I see it, children may also feel this sense of personal responsibility and have it become part of their deep concerns, meaning they can be quite willing to limit some expressions of their emerging agency if it means being more accountable to others who are affected by it. On my interpretation, then, as a trait of the emerging responsibly autonomous child, accountability underscores the nuanced take on relationality that I value in Friedman's theory: since children exist in an embedded social network that they affect through their various commitments, being responsible becomes "a precondition for action, whereas rights and freedom act only as 'facilitators.'"[303]

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[300] Ballet et al., 2007, 198.

[301] *Ibid*, 190.

[302] *Ibid*, 195.

[303] *Ibid*, 197.

In brief, according to my take on the prospects of childhood autonomy within the CA, the child as emerging agent can be considered autonomous if she can deliberate over the value of her current and desired functionings, form self-concepts that contribute to her individuality as a distinct collection of evolving capabilities, and enact her values in an accountable way that accentuates her obligations towards others and thereby enriches her well-being. The traits of deliberation, individuality and accountability that I have singled out from the CA literature complement the criteria I find most compelling in Friedman's relational theory of autonomy, accentuating not only their potential for agency but also for political involvement. I think it justifiable to conceive of the emerging responsibly autonomous child as willingly limiting what she has reason to value to commitments that take the well-being of others into account and, further still, as viewing this limitation as a source of increased well-being and expanded freedom rather than a type of sacrifice or impediment.

Returning to the question of "how" to cultivate responsible autonomy in childhood, it stands to reason that any autonomy-facilitating policy aimed at children should at the very least consider these traits when defining age-appropriate parametres to facilitate the safe, constructive exercise of their evolving autonomy competence. Though I will revisit the policy question shortly, for now I want to turn to what might actually fuel children's deliberation, individuality and accountability as emerging agents, and help them overcome any conversion inhibition when it comes to transforming resources into opportunities and outcomes they believe are worth valuing. After all, as I have been hypothesising, if a responsibly autonomous child believes she has reason to value X, it is because she has weighed its worth in light of her deep concerns and in relation to a host of other possible options. Yet what might give her evolving global autonomy content and enrich the reasons driving her reflective endorsement so as to "give her a perspective that is hers," as Friedman eloquently suggests? While a handful of capabilities could play a part in cultivating responsible autonomy in childhood, I want to consider the contributions that deliberate moral imagining might make to fostering children's self-efficacy.

Moral imagining as a complex capability

In this section, I will consider the role that deliberate moral imagining might play in fostering the self-efficacy needed to help children overcome conversion inhibition by fuelling their perspectival identity so that they may perceive themselves as emerging agents who are able to transform the resources available to them into capabilities and functionings they deem valuable. So far, I have been describing deliberate moral imagining as a helpful stand-in to the lived experiences that children have yet to encounter, enabling them to explore within their mental landscape what they have yet to live in the real world—in other words, to envisage themselves as emerging agents before having to enact their evolving autonomy. Because conversion inhibition gets in the way of this envisioning, it can be understood as a failure of moral imagining; by flattening the mental landscape that informs their self-image and thwarting their resilience, it causes children to underestimate their own autonomy competence. This failure is politically significant because it may lead them to misperceive their own powers of conversion, regardless of the favourable profile of factors they may otherwise have, and consequently not take action to achieve the lives they believe they have reason to value. Worse still, it may make them all the more vulnerable to autonomy-devaluing practices that can further hinder their evolving autonomy competence.

In this section, I want to show how deliberate moral imagining, when framed as a complex capability, might address this challenge by expanding and enriching what children find worthy of their valuing *in* themselves and thus *for* themselves as emerging agents. I will argue that morally imaginative children may be more able than their unimaginative peers to take seriously their own perspectives and the complexity of their own circumstances, having envisioned enough varied possibilities of themselves as emergent agents to feel self-efficacious and resilient when attempting to convert resources into valued opportunities and outcomes. I will begin with a hypothetical case, then analyse it through the lens of the CA, with a particular emphasis on Nussbaum's ideas about imagination as one of the central capabilities.

For illustrative purposes, let us suppose the following comparative case of two young girls that underlines the difference in their powers to convert resources made available to them into a valued opportunity and outcome:

> Aisha and Charlotte are both enrolled in a community essay contest on the theme of leadership in an age of social diversity, entitled "What I would do if I were Prime Minister." Aisha comes from an ethnically diverse family that prizes multiculturalism and social justice. She has travelled extensively with her parents, been exposed to a diversity of cultures and world views, gotten involved in many art classes and volunteer projects, and grown up in an atmosphere of open dialogue on difficult sociopolitical topics. Writing an essay on leadership and social diversity should come naturally to her as she is technically able to draw on her many personal aptitudes and connected lived experiences, to say nothing of the substantial moral support of her parents. And yet, her sheet of paper remains blank—she does not think she has any ideas worth sharing because she cannot imagine herself ever being in charge of a country. "No one would want to vote for me so what is the point of pretending?" she declares dejectedly. For Aisha, the mere visualisation of herself in the position of prime minister is stressful: with so many major issues to analyse and tough calls to make, she is certain she would mess up and let everyone down. While she likes

> the idea of a woman in power, in her opinion, she is definitely not the right candidate for the job; other girls would fare far better.
>
> Charlotte, on the other hand, has always been strong-willed and spirited, but is being raised in a racist, sexist and homophobic environment, and discouraged from making friends with kids whose lifestyles her parents do not accept. Growing up, she has been uncomfortable with difference and accustomed to taking her parents' word as gospel. Yet thanks to the supportive atmosphere at her school, she has been able to push her boundaries of perception regarding social diversity and engage in dialogue with people holding unfamiliar views, thus broadening her frames of reference and reconsidering the concepts and values she has inherited from her family. Though initially uncertain about the essay contest, over time she is persuaded by her peers and teachers to identify the assumptions constraining her moral lens by acknowledging her limited perspectives, recognising commonality and identifying competing considerations, notably with respect to the notion of female leaders. Writing the essay is a chance to formulate what her own position would be as prime minister, demonstrating that she now has reason to value something she could not before. Her essay acts as a reminder of her expanded imaginative repertoire and as a possible source of inspiration for others.

In this hypothetical case, both girls are given the same opportunity to achieve an outcome by transforming an available resource—namely, competing to win an essay contest through writing—but they are approaching the given context with a very different profile of conversion factors. This situation echoes the concerns over justice that have led CA theorists to underscore the divergence of power to transform resources across individuals: two people can share a vision of the "characteristics of good living"—like the possibility of more inclusive societal conditions through female representation in government—but not be equally equipped to realise them, even if just in descriptive form, as in the case of this example's essay contest.

Case in point: Charlotte has some important social conversion factors working against her, most notably her bigoted family, but her school context has provided her with meaningful occasions to exercise the complex capability of deliberate moral imagining, enabling her to transform the resources made available to her into a functioning that she believes matters: writing an essay in which she imaginatively portrays herself as capable of being prime minister. In contrast, despite her highly favourable profile of internal and external conversion factors, Aisha still has trouble transforming her ample resources into desirable opportunities and outcomes, one consequence being her heightened susceptibility to interfering conditions that can further affect her self-image.

On the surface, it may seem that Aisha is better positioned than Charlotte to enact her evolving autonomy but at the level of self-efficacy, their situations are drastically different: Aisha suffers from conversion inhibition that causes her to underestimate her own autonomy competence whereas Charlotte exhibits the resilience necessary to overcome negative judgements about her worth and potential, and see herself as an emerging agent with the wherewithal to tackle the task at hand. And so, while Charlotte manages to be self-efficacious by deliberately engaging in moral imagining about her own agency—specifically through opportunities to access conceptual resources, dialogical space and creative expression, as my next section will describe—Aisha's conversion inhibition reveals her failure to morally imagine what might be valuable in and for herself. She may be capable of empathic engagement in ways that Charlotte is not (or at least not yet), but her efforts of deliberate moral imagining do not extend to herself. With respect to her own self-image, Aisha's mental landscape is barren: if we frame my three proposed features of deliberate moral imagining as functionings, it becomes clear that she is not currently capable of these beings and doings in her envisioning of the overarching context of relation-to-self…

- *Acknowledgement of limited perspectives*: Aisha has very limited perspectives regarding her own worth and potential, and seems unwilling to consider how these might be presenting a flawed picture of her promise as an emerging agent. Inhibited by this low of opinion of herself, she is unable to call to mind a different set of vantage points to diversify and problematise her own, including appraisals from her own loved-ones. She is reluctant to entertain the possibility, however unusual, of herself in a leadership position and this refusal to look past the familiar—that is, past her own poor self-image—prevents her from acknowledging these limitations of perspectives.
- *Recognition of commonality*: Further, Aisha can see others as capable and deserving of opportunities to enact their agency, but she cannot recognise the same qualities and aptitudes in herself, even if these may seem obvious from the outside. She seems to suggest that her propensity to fail and disappoint is unique to her—as if others would not experience similar worries and weaknesses if placed in the same demanding position of being prime minister. This tendency to force disparaging distinctions between herself and others keeps her from striving toward a more complete view of her own needs, goals, motivations and obstacles; for example, by considering how she might surpass the initial difficulties inherent in leadership roles with practise and patience, just as many others have done before her.
- *Identification of competing considerations*: Lastly, Aisha imposes a very simplistic reading on her situation, taking an all-or-nothing stance regarding her prospects as leader that erases the possible shades of grey: she either has what it takes or she does not—no

> room for growth or improvement. In terms of values, she seems insensitive to the conflicts that can arise between outlooks: she fears failure so cannot envision success, not realising they can both impart important lessons, just as pride and effort can co-exist with self-doubt, notably in high-profile roles that require experimentations with various forms of agency. The lack of depth and variety in her mental landscape translates into an absence of nuance and complexity in her construal of her own situation.

As a whole, these effects of conversion inhibition point to a psychological barrier when it comes to Aisha's perception of herself as an emerging autonomous agent, one with possible implications for her political involvement. If Aisha cannot envisage her own agency, how can she enact it, notably through the traits of deliberation, individuality and accountability that characterise the self-determining agent on the CA's politically oriented view? How can her mental landscape be enriched so as to fuel her perspectival identity, all the while being protected from damaging interfering conditions that risk further distorting Aisha's self-image? To my mind, the challenge of conversion inhibition, in its intricacy and immateriality, is a prime example of the need to go beyond basic capabilities toward more complex ones.

Proponents of the CA have understandably not devoted as much time to complex capabilities: the concern over the stark reality of people throughout the world lacking the most fundamental needs—such as being able to access adequate food, shelter and security—have made basic capabilities a more pressing priority.[304] Presumably, if basic capabilities could be met on an international scale, more complex capabilities would be given greater consideration. For good reason, much of the literature has focused on the protection and promotion of such basic capabilities as nourishment and bodily integrity, notably in relation to serious issues of global justice surrounding the alleviation of poverty and the eradication of health inequalities. After all, basic capabilities ultimately translate into the capacity for survival: for Sen, they represent “the ability to satisfy certain elementary and crucially important functionings up to certain levels.”[305]

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[304] Sen, 1992, 151.

Yet vital as they are, to my mind, their prioritisation has resulted in an under-appreciation for the complex capabilities that contribute to agency development or, as Davis aptly phrases it, “what it means to be and develop as an individual” once survival needs are met.[306] I want to depict deliberate moral imagining as one such complex capability, building first on some of Nussbaum’s assorted contributions in light of her sustained interest in imagination, then elaborating on my own account.

Though the broader concept of imagination is underlined in many accounts of the CA, it is often subsumed under generalised categories like education, knowledge and citizenship. As we shall see, Nussbaum’s own conceptualisation is quite variable, homing in on different facets depending on the topic under consideration. In her widely known list of central capabilities, she explicitly aligns imagination with senses and thought, but also refers to it under the capability of affiliation:

> *4. Senses, imagination, and thought.* Being able to use the senses, to imagine, think, and reason—and to do these things in a ‘truly human’ way, a way informed and cultivated by an adequate education, including, but by no means limited to, literacy and basic mathematical and scientific training. Being able to use imagination and thought in connection with experiencing and producing works and events of one’s own choice, religious, literary, musical, and so forth.

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[305] Sen, 1992, 45.

[306] Davis, 2009, 427.

> Being able to use one's mind in ways protected by guarantees of freedom of expression with respect to both political and artistic speech, and freedom of religious exercise. Being able to have pleasurable experiences and to avoid nonbeneficial pain.
>
> *7. Affiliation.* (A)…To be able to imagine the situation of another.[307]

Within this list, imagination is characterised simultaneously as a mental capacity refined through education, a creative force that allows for various kinds of self-expression, and a disposition for empathy that heightens concern for others and forms the basis of social relationships.

Elsewhere, in her many defenses of the importance of the arts and humanities in education and moral development, Nussbaum presents imagination as one of three crucial democratic abilities alongside critical reasoning and global citizenship.[308] As we have seen, from the perspective of neo-Aristotelian virtue theory, she describes it as a "quality of vision" and an "art of interpretation" that is best strengthened through exposure to various artistic forms (literature chief among them), adding that children are shortchanged if they miss out on opportunities to become more imaginative.[309]

In *Cultivating Humanity*, she credits imagination with "enabl[ing] us to comprehend the motives and choices of people different from ourselves, seeing them not as forbiddingly alien and other, but as sharing many problems and possibilities with us."[310] Through references to multiple writers and works of fiction, she makes a case for imagination as a special kind of moral orientation that is rich with insight and allows an agent to "be an intelligent reader of [another] person's story."[311] Following her lead, many proponents of the CA have incorporated imagination into their accounts of education,[312] recognising both its pedagogical importance and children's natural proclivity for it.

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[307] Nussbaum, 2011, 33-34.

[308] Throughout her work, Nussbaum uses the terms "narrative imagination," "sympathetic imagination" and "imaginative understanding." She writes specifically about sympathetic imagination as a key democratic ability in Nussbaum, 2010, 7.

[309] Nussbaum, 1997, 88.

[310] *Ibid*, 85.

While I generally agree with the features of imagination highlighted by Nussbaum and many educational theorists using the CA, I want to call attention to their implications in terms of framing deliberate moral imagining as a complex capability. These accounts seem to indicate that imagining makes possible certain complex functionings that are morally oriented—such as empathising with a stranger, expressing compassion for a crime victim, appreciating the plight of displaced persons, or fairly interpreting unfamiliar circumstances—as well as complex functionings that are creatively oriented—such as producing a work of art, inventing a scientific device, voicing an original scholarly argument, or innovating a spiritual practice.

Moreover, it would seem that an agent would require the capability of deliberate moral imagining so conceived to even consider the CA as a viable model and to perceive the capability development of others as a worthwhile investment. Indeed, from my perspective, the task that Nussbaum herself undertakes in the opening chapter of *Creating Capabilities*—in which she strives to identify the salient features of one woman's complex life circumstances in Gujarat, India—expresses her highly attuned capability of deliberate moral imagining.[313] Through encounters with women like Vasanti, Nussbaum immerses herself in the purposeful exercise of envisioning life circumstances different from her own so she can expand her mental landscape and begin to recognise the significant aspects that define (and, in these cases, aggravate) their quality of life: how seemingly unrelated elements like poor nutrition, physical frailty and self-esteem intersect with issues of gender imbalance, how domestic violence is perpetuated by a lack of financial independence due to illiteracy and unemployability, how the structure of traditional families and local policies shape self-esteem, aspirations and civic involvement, etc.[314]

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[311] Nussbaum, 2006, 390.

[312] Of note, Pedro Flores-Crespo has proposed a framework to evaluate capabilities at the undergraduate level, and his proposed functionings reflect some important dimensions of imagination, like "being able to visualise life plans." Flores-Crespo in Walker and Unterhalter, eds., 2007, 51.

[313] Nussbaum, 2011, 2-14.

These efforts of salience detection are a reflection of my proposed features of deliberate moral imagining: Nussbaum transforms her complex capability into the functionings of acknowledging limited perspectives, embracing commonality and identifying competing perspectives, all with the deliberate purpose of bringing to light more options of lives that seem reasonable to value through the envisioning of a given context in varied, nuanced ways. On my interpretation, Sen exhibits similar functionings when he speaks of the "imaginative intervention" required of society with respect to conversion handicaps. In his view, disability represents a serious but also solvable problem of injustice: as he writes, "an understanding of the moral and political demands of disability is important not only because it is such a widespread and impairing feature of humanity, but also because many of the tragic consequences of disability can actually be substantially overcome with determined societal help and *imaginative intervention*."[315] To my mind, this insight aligns well with my conception of deliberate moral imagining as intentionally initiated to shed light on what seems most reasonable to value—in this case, a move towards more thoughtful and humane treatment of people with disabilities.

And so, if deliberate moral imagining is about purposefully envisioning contexts from multiple frames of reference to broaden the moral lens with which experience is approached and addressed, using the language of the CA, I want to characterise it as a complex capability in the sense of lending support to agency development once survival needs are met. The given context being imagined can be the agent's own life—as is required to overcome conversion inhibition—or the life of another person or even another living being; this flexibility captures the political orientation of imagination and the importance of portraying the responsibly autonomous agent as aware of her obligations and impact. As a model of this flexibility, in her extension of the CA to include nonhuman animals as worthy of moral and political concern, Nussbaum further reveals her imaginative skills at work: she insists the approach "sees animals as agents, not as receptacles of pleasure or pain. This deep conceptual difference can help the [CA] develop a more pertinent sort of respect for animal striving and animal activity."[316]

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[314] *Ibid*, 2-14.

A similar case of deliberate moral imagining in the service of animals can be seen in the work of animal scientist Temple Grandin, who has described her particular imaginative faculties resulting from autism as enabling a "cow's eye view" that has helped her to design systems to improve the lives of cattle, including more ethical slaughtering techniques.[317] Her body of work clearly demonstrates that she has achieved the functionings I am proposing: she has acknowledged limited speciesist perspectives to recognise and even embrace commonalities she shares with other animals, notably the capacity for pleasure and pain, allowing her to better identify competing considerations between humans and other life forms. These are fitting examples of the complex capability of deliberate moral imagining transformed into a highly valued set of functionings aimed at envisioning and creatively implementing new paradigms for analysing and assessing welfare. To put it plainly, the CA itself would likely not have emerged without a well-honed capability of moral imagining used purposefully to give it substance and scope. But what are the implications for children and the challenge of conversion inhibition?

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[315] Sen, 2009, 259. Emphasis my own.

[316] Nussbaum, 2011, 160.

[317] Grandin, 2006.

In the context of childhood, from my perspective, it would seem that deliberate moral imagining is required for children to even envisage themselves as capable of the kinds of ethically and creatively oriented "beings and doings" that Nussbaum and other CA theorists engage in themselves and describe as options worth valuing. On the argument I am advancing, in order to envision what she has reason to value in herself as an emerging agent, the responsibly autonomous child must have in her mental landscape a wide range of options to consider—options gathered from her exposure to many rich and diverse sources, from her meaningful exchanges with a variety of people and environments, and from her own multifaceted experiments with creative activities and reflective practices, three access points to which I will turn in my next section. Only then could she state that "the features of herself she cares deeply about," those elements of her perspectival identity that she believes she has reason to value, were selected against other worthwhile and noteworthy options.

Next, through reflective endorsement, she could begin to articulate her grounds for choosing certain functionings over others to achieve well-being. At that point, other complex capabilities could help the process along: for instance, Nussbaum makes a compelling case for the importance of practical reasoning and affiliation, which she entrusts with the "architectonic role" of organising and powering all other capability freedoms toward the formation of a socially sensitive and dignified conception of the good life.[318] Deliberate moral imagining would be thus supplying and fuelling a child's perspectival identity by expanding the range of considerations informing her self-image within her mental landscape, which she could then evaluate to reflectively endorse what seems most reasonable. In terms of the overarching context of relation-to-self, this complex capability can help children envisage their agency so as to enact it, notably by striving to convert resources into valued opportunities and outcomes.

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[318] Nussbaum, 2011, 39.

Of course, as we have seen, conversion inhibition complicates this process by impeding the self-efficacy and resilience needed for children to appreciate their own worth and potential as emerging agents. In doing so, it alienates them from their evolving autonomy and, by extension, from political involvement; they are not equipped nor prepared to make use of the resources available to them despite an otherwise favourable profile of internal and external factors. Returning to the hypothetical scenario, what would Aisha have to do to overcome this psychological barrier that causes her to underestimate her own autonomy competence? In short, Aisha would need the time and space to purposefully imagine herself as an agent—to envisage her agency so as to enact it.

For instance, by imagining herself as prime minister in a deliberate manner, one intended to shed light on what seems reasonable to value in herself, she could visualise what she might think, feel and do in light of all that she has already thought, felt and done: the past experiences that have led her to learn and value certain things over others, to see the world in a particular way, to develop new ideas and skills, to undergo emotions and sensations previously unfamiliar to her, to position herself in the face of novel situations, whether positively or negatively. In so doing, she could acknowledge the ways in which her perspectives on herself and her circumstances are limited, and could be inhibiting her exercise of forethought.

To overcome such limitations, she could call to mind and mobilise other narratives that have impacted her, considering the thoughts, feelings and actions of others in comparable circumstances—the heroes, rivals, ambivalent characters she has come across in real and fictional encounters. This envisioning could help her recognise the common weaknesses and vulnerabilities she shares with others so as to arrive at a more complete view of her own needs, goals, motivations and obstacles, and perhaps seek out new narratives that further emphasise overlaps in lived experiences between herself and others, say stories of women in leadership positions. Through vicarious engagement with other ways of life, her reading of her own situation could take on more complexity and nuance as she begins to identify competing considerations in her mental landscape: perhaps she is not well suited for a leadership position but not for the simplistic reasons she assumed, and rather because her deep concerns and the features she is starting to care about in herself are orienting her to other interests and commitments worth envisioning and later enacting.

And so, through the main features I am proposing as functionings, the complex capability of deliberate moral imagining could give Aisha the freedom to envisage a huge range of possibilities for herself, regardless of what she actually does with them. At minimum, they would become available to her as envisioned options in her mental landscape and, as she grows in her comfort with autonomy competence, she could experiment with those she believes are worth her valuing, gradually building her self-efficacy and thus her faith in her own autonomy competence.

If deliberate moral imagining can indeed support children's evolving autonomy in these ways, I want to argue that this complex capability is not only desirable in childhood but necessary. If children are to be *responsibly* autonomous, they must value their own selves as agents: they owe this imaginative consideration to themselves, not just to others. Conversion inhibition risks making a child like Aisha's expressions of autonomy less responsible: because of it, she does not imagine as many possibilities for her agency so she denies herself options that could be worth her valuing in her burgeoning perspectival identity. In turn, this could lead to a poverty of initiative when comes the time to even attempt converting resources into valued opportunities and outcomes. If she can engage in deliberate moral imagining, however, she may begin to get to know her own possibilities of worth and potential within her mental landscape, which can translate into a more charitable perception of herself as an emerging agent and lead to increased self-efficacy.

Of course, this is not all it takes to foster self-efficacy in children—if we recall Bandura's definition, the belief in one's capabilities to exercise control over one's functioning and over events that affects one's life may necessitate a combination of precursors. Still, I am arguing that deliberate moral imagining is a necessary though not sufficient precursor: morally imaginative children may be better than their peers at converting resources into valued capabilities and functionings simply because they are able to envision themselves doing this conversion so they try more often, thus developing an increasingly stronger belief and trust in their own powers of conversion.

Returning to the perspectives of relational autonomy theorists from my introduction, such a perception is crucial for autonomy: for her part, Mullin argues that children cannot become autonomous "if they fail to have confidence that what they care about is worth taking seriously, and have in addition the self-confidence to believe that they have the general ability to bring about outcomes that accord with what they care about."[319] Similarly, Trudy Govier argues that an agent can only be truly autonomous if she can "maintain against criticism, a sense of [her] own basic competence and worth,"[320] while McLeod's account requires an agent to have an "attitude of optimism about [her] own competence and moral integrity."[321] I agree with these requirements because they extend the notion of responsibility to the self in a way that I think might protect children from disparaging negative judgements about themselves interfering with their reflective endorsement and from harmful toxins that others can represent for them in their mental landscape—or, in other words, from the challenge of conversion inhibition.

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[319] Mullin, 2007, 546.

[320] Govier, 2007, 103-104.

[321] McLeod, 2002, 6.

Furthermore, as I see it, this potential of deliberate moral imagining as a complex capability in childhood goes beyond the benefits to any individual child—it also has broader political implications. If a significant aim of contemporary democracies is to promote the self-determination of its citizens by ensuring certain crucial freedoms, as the CA suggests, and if this aim can extend at least in part to children as emerging agents, then deliberate moral imagining may be deemed as an important avenue for expanding the scope of agency in childhood *so as to* ensure a fuller scope of global autonomy in adulthood. After all, on the view I am proposing, it is through their imaginative capacities that children can envision themselves enacting their autonomy both in their current and future contexts from more diverse frames of reference, and develop a broadened lens with which to approach and assess their lived experience as they grow up. CA theorists have claimed—and I think correctly—that young citizens can play a role in "the construction of future internal and societal/environmental conversion factors as children, as future adults, parents and caregivers…[and] in building-up the future society and its constraints…children, from this point of view, can be considered as a vehicle of change."[322]

By helping children overcome conversion inhibition, deliberate moral imagining equips them with the imaginative resources to perceive themselves as capable of affecting the social settings in which they find themselves, simply by living out and embodying the freedoms they have envisaged and reflectively endorsed as most valuable, and these early experimentations with responsible autonomy in childhood can pave the way for their increased involvement as political actors in future, not least by building their resilience.

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[322] Walker and Unterhalter, eds., 2007, 216.

Given the CA's commitment to agency development entails the need for policy change, I think it useful to end this section by specifying some minimum thresholds of the capability of deliberate moral imagining within the context of childhood to help determine its purview. Without basic thresholds, children risk developing what Nussbaum refers to as adaptive preferences: they may simply adjust to what they believe is realistic to expect of themselves and become contented with interfering conditions that might otherwise be perceived as inadequate, even unjust.[323] As I see it, if the capability of deliberate moral imagining is fostered to specific degrees, however, children may more readily see such limited pictures as insufficient and as threatening to the scope of their autonomy, given what they have had the chance to envision as possible for themselves and potentially valuable in their lives.

Though many external factors affecting children are beyond the scope of government plans—parenting styles and community mores being but two—in order to be truly autonomy-facilitating, public policies directed at children ought to at least endeavour to defuse three key threats to this complex capability. First, to secure a minimum threshold of deliberate moral imagining, public policies should protect against unwarranted censorship, such as questionable bans on library books or whitewashing strategies, in no small part because they can affect children's capacity for deliberation as emerging agents. This excludes materials that clearly constitute harm or contain age-inappropriate content, though these criteria are notoriously hard to determine and should be addressed in culturally sensitive ways. Second, public policies should protect against indoctrination—especially in education bylaws since children spend so much of their lives at school—by circumventing dogmatic teaching techniques, one-sided curricula and suspicious state-sponsored content. Such approaches risk inhibiting children's individuality by imposing specific sets of beliefs, values and concerns: as Nussbaum cautions, "Many politicians the world over do not like educational freedom: they seek the imprisonment of children within a single 'correct' ideology."[324] Third, public policies should protect against commercial and political propaganda—like bandwagon and card-stacking techniques—unless the materials are being used strategically to improve critical literacy, show instances of logical fallacies, or openly spark discussion on controversial topics.

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[323] Nussbaum, 2011, 82-84.

When sufficiently diverse and abundant, the repertoire of children's mental landscapes may help guard against these threats simply by offering counterexamples to test biased materials, enabling them to be more accountable for their perspectival identity. In Nussbaum's words, "the imagination is a hardy plant. When it is not killed, it can thrive in many places."[325] At worst, in oppressive circumstances that greatly restrict autonomy-facilitating policies, the Internet can act as an insurer of a minimum threshold of deliberate moral imagining since it grants access to varied sources, online networking tools and self-publishing avenues that can diversify children's envisioned options for themselves as emerging agents. In the best case scenario, the capability can thrive through opportunities that support access to conceptual resources, dialogical space and creative expression from an early age—something the CA is uniquely positioned to promote, as I will now consider.

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[324] Nussbaum, 2006, 392.

[325] *Ibid*, 394.

Access points for moral imagining

If deliberate moral imagining, framed as a complex capability, might help children envisage more possibilities worth valuing in themselves and for themselves so they can better enact their evolving responsible autonomy, it is worth exploring the kind of opportunities it would require to help them overcome conversion inhibition and foster self-efficacy. Such a proposition may seem like an imposition given the high value the CA places on individual freedoms, but as I have been arguing with reference to certain theorists within this theoretical framework, children as emerging agents need to be protected from autonomy-devaluing practices that may put them in harm's way by destroying their capabilities before they even get a chance to consider them as worthy of their valuing. Such a concern for their fragile evolving autonomy competence can justify the kind of "autonomy-oriented paternalism" that Mullins recommends to guide children towards what they themselves find meaningful while protecting them from significant harm. Within the CA, Biggeri et al. make a similar claim with respect to childhood when they suggest the distinction between autonomy supportive or controlling methods of raising children: "On the one hand, parents need to respect children's desires and freedoms but, on the other, they have to assist children to expand or acquire further capabilities, even though this may need to be done against their will."[326]

From my perspective, while it is clearly preferable if children do not feel forced but rather inspired to experiment with autonomy, returning to my notion of a curatorship of mental landscapes, it also seems reasonable to recommend the purposive facilitation of morally imaginative practices that may create meaningful opportunities for them to envisage and exercise their evolving agency by exposing them to encounters they may not otherwise come across. To this end, in this section, I am proposing three interrelated opportunities that the capability of deliberate moral imagining ought to provide—access to conceptual resources, access to dialogical space and access to creative expression—alongside illustrative examples, with the understanding that these might take very different forms, depending on children's given context.

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[326] Biggeri et al. in Walker and Unterhalter, eds., 2007, 1999.

To my mind, these interrelated opportunities to engage in deliberate moral imagining represent crucial supports for children as emerging agents—the "training wheels" of their global autonomy experimentations. They also uncover the aesthetic dimensions of this complex capability since they often involve embodied and affectively charged experiences. While these opportunities can also apply to adults, I will be focusing on their benefits for children as emerging agents engaged in the ongoing process of developing their responsible autonomy competence.[327] I hope to show how the interrelated opportunities offered by the complex capability of deliberate moral imagining may act as important interventions that may help reduce conversion inhibition in children and thus assist with their conversion of resources into capabilities and functionings they deem valuable in light of their burgeoning perspectival identity.

i) Access to conceptual resources

To foster the kind of complex functionings that support responsible autonomy, the complex capability of deliberate moral imagining must first offer access to conceptual resources. By "conceptual" I mean resources that can help broaden the concepts that make up the repertoire of a child's mental landscape, and thus contribute to her perspectival identity so she can develop a more charitable and diversified view of her own worth and possibilities as an emerging agent.

Many resources can fit this specification—from art works to revisionist histories to scientific innovations—and the aim should be the opportunity to access a diversity and abundance of these. Though this kind of repertoire could be interpreted as a simple reserve of accumulated facts, the purpose of these diverse, abundant resources is to challenge the boundaries of imaginative thinking and imaginative understanding so that children are able to envision more than they could previously, with regard both to their own options for agency and how others' circumstances could inform these. For instance, a kindergartener who does not have access to conceptual resources at home—in the form of, say, picture books—may have the opportunity to exercise the capability of deliberate moral imagining through exposure to the variety of children's literature available in his local library. Such exposure could increase the likelihood of his envisioning the overarching context of relation-to-self from more varied frames of reference at an early age so as to not be impeded by conversion inhibition.

Since there are countless possible candidates for such conceptual resources, for the sake of illustration, I will only mention two. Picture books like *Emily's Art* and *Zero* portray characters who learn to overcome their negative judgements of themselves and become more self-efficacious by changing their frame of reference: in the first story, Emily discovers her potential as an artist through a school contest that challenges her assumptions about what counts as good art; she slowly learns to cope with adversity and rebound from setbacks, all the while gaining in resilience as she strives to convert her resources into opportunities and outcomes she reflectively endorses as valuable.[328] In a similar vein, in the latter story, after meeting other digits with whom he can collaborate, the number zero moves from a wholly disparaging stance on his own worth to

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[327] In a future analysis, however, it would be fruitful to consider how these same opportunities could positively affect adults whose education and upbringing did not allow for the development of the complex capability of deliberate moral imagining.

[328] Catalanotta, 2006.

a greater appreciation of his potential—and, one could symbolically say, of his powers to affect his own situation—by acknowledging his own limited perspectives of himself and of his possibilities for a life he has reason to value.[329] In both cases of conceptual resources, the kindergartener gets to envision the given context of poor self-image through someone else's struggles with it and realise it can be surmountable.

Though my objective here is not to recommend specific conceptual resources, in light of my proposed features of deliberate moral imagining, I am advocating that children have access to a diversity and abundance of morally imaginative materials that can challenge and broaden their mental landscapes so as to fuel their perspectival identity with more options to envision as worthy of their reflective endorsement as emerging agents. These resources should include those in the accepted canons as well as those that are lesser known: artistic masterpieces alongside local or marginalised works; orthodox views of the humanities and social sciences alongside revisionist interpretations; prevalent scientific theories and discoveries alongside contested or peripheral ones, etc. To ensure a breadth of resources, it may even be beneficial, if not advisable, for children to learn at least one foreign language.

Of course, this proposal presupposes certain contextual conditions once again underscoring the issue of equality that so concerns CA theorists when it comes to the conversion of resources. Unterhalter captures this limitation well when she considers the example of children's access to news media: "If we evaluate the link between resources and capabilities, we would need to take into account critical issues like the availability of newspapers, the amount of free time for children to read, the acceptability of even reading a newspaper for some types of children (particularly girls and those living in poverty) in certain societies, and the actual accuracy of investigative methods being employed."[330] Notwithstanding this important concern at the level of external factors, it stands to reason that at the level of personal heterogeneities like self-image, exposure to what others have had reason to value—whether fictional or real characters—may help to enrich children's options for what they might value in and for themselves.

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[329] Otoshi, 2010.

ii) Access to dialogical space

A second and related opportunity that the capability of deliberate moral imagining must offer is access to dialogical space. By this I mean occasions for children to examine, interrogate and problematise the aforementioned kinds of conceptual resources through exchanges with others. A school can offer such space within classrooms, though other informal educational settings such as libraries and community centres, and even a family dinner table, can also be effective. Since conceptual resources in their diversity and abundance do not present a unified picture of a given context but rather reveal its inherent tensions, clashes and inconsistencies, children should have opportunities to collaboratively grapple with these so as to further enrich their conceptual understanding of the multiple frames of reference that inform their envisioning of themselves as agents and of the lives they might deem worthy of their valuing.

For instance, a child may have access to innumerable conceptual resources at home through the Internet but have no opportunity to question and examine the medium's conflicting messages—notably in terms of its influences on her perspectival identity—making dialogical space at school all the more important to develop her critical and visual literacy, and allow her to explore with her peers how these resources may contribute to what she believes she has reason to value in herself and for her life, through examples of what to emulate and what to avoid. More broadly, such access to dialogical space in childhood may also reveal for children the complex intersecting social determinants that affect their self-image, notably the ageist and adultist views that could be constraining their deep concerns and their attitude toward their autonomy competence. In learning to address these views by acknowledging their limited perspectives, recognising commonality and identifying competing considerations, children should have the chance to engage with a range of other people who can enlarge their imaginative repertoire, possibly through partnerships between different schools, panels with varied guest speakers, student exchanges, designated online forums, to name but a few possibilities. Through these kinds of encounters, children may be able to better locate and question the toxins in their mental landscape that coercive, deceptive and manipulative sources represent—from a bigoted parent to an internet troll to prejudicial fallacies—and expand their moral lens with regard to their own options for agency and how others' circumstances could inform these.

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[330] Deneulin and Shahani, eds., 2010, 219-220.

Moreover, although conceptual resources can offer rich and varying perspectives, the communication is one-sided. By contrast, dialogue about these resources can create live interactions with others and with their interests, concerns, beliefs, ideals, wonders and trepidations, which may expand what children might care about in themselves as they shape their perspectival identity. In the process of exploring another person's perspective or experience through deliberate moral imagining prompted by dialogue, children may be more likely to realise the possible consequences of their own judgements and broaden the scope of what matters to them, further highlighting the features they care most about in themselves. This space of convergence can foster an awareness that children may miss or avoid when navigating conceptual resources alone. In a shared and personalised dialogical experience, they may for the first time come to see certain issues as possibilities or problems because they have had a chance to view them through the eyes of others, which may lead to a broadened and more nuanced set of considerations.

Returning to Taylor’s notion of strong evaluations, this dialogical space can enable collective deliberation about values, meaning children can contribute to each other’s value assessments by strengthening the reasons for prioritising certain deep concerns over others: “The strong evaluator can articulate the reasons why A is more attractive than B, because he has a vocabulary of worth—a language of qualitative contrast that is predicated upon a vision of what constitutes a meaningful life.”[331] Additionally, these dialogues promote a host of communication skills, from clarity of speech to deliberative reasoning to attentive listening, which in turn help to create a more inclusive environment in which to envisage and shape perspectival identity. This inclusiveness is vital to preventing injustice: Walker and Unterhalter offer the example of a child who “might value the capability for voice, but finds herself silenced in a classroom through particular social arrangements of power and privilege” and thus “needs social arrangements that are sensitive to her ways of expressing herself” in order to benefit from dialogical space.[332]

iii) Access to creative expression

In addition to offering access to conceptual resources and dialogical space, the capability of deliberate moral imagining should provide access to creative expression that enables children to experiment with complex functionings so as to enact what they have been envisaging. Creative expression can encompass many activities, from art projects and opinion pieces to the design of ecologically sustainable lifestyle practices. Although exposure to diverse frames of reference through conceptual resources and dialogical exchanges can significantly broaden the capacity for envisioning themselves as agents, children may also benefit from occasions to internalise, individualise, deepen and even concretise their new perspectives by enacting their evolving autonomy through their own creative work. In taking ownership of their mental landscape's repertoire in this way, they can begin to embody and act out their own distinctive valued commitments, which may strengthen their self-image and build their resilience.

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[331] Redhead, 2002, 160.

[332] Walker and Unterhalter, eds., 2007, 10.

For instance, an adolescent who feels powerless in the face of ecological crises may have access to highly motivating conceptual resources and dialogical space about environmental issues at his local community centre but, because of his conversion inhibition, not see himself as capable of taking initiative to create occasions for greener living at home by transforming his resources into valued opportunities and outcomes. If through his community projects, however, he has the space to imagine sustainable lifestyle changes and his implementation of them, he may be able to make adjustments that give him agency in his life and thus strengthen his self-efficacy. Ecological awareness and sustainable living could then become important deep concerns for him, thus shaping his perspectival identity with added features that he cares about and a stronger overall self-image. Through access to creative expression, he may also be more able to resist interfering conditions that might otherwise impede his power to transform the resources at his disposal into capabilities and functionings he has reflectively endorsed as valuable.

Beyond its intrinsic worth as a fulfilling experience, access to creative expression may also play an important instrumental role in contributing to children's sense of themselves as political actors. If through their concretised imaginative efforts they are able to self-identify as emerging agents capable of effecting change, they may be likelier to want to engage in similar pursuits again and believe in their ability to transform their resources into characteristics of good living. Their mental landscapes will include more vivid pictures of their possibilities for responsible autonomy—a portrait of themselves as self-efficacious. This political potential could be heightened even further through interactions with the global community, such as projects connecting children with actual issues of injustice that call on their creative problem-solving, like activism around water privatisation, sweatshop work, LGBTQ marginalisation, to name but a few. Within such access to creative expression lies not only the opportunity for the transformative experience of doing the work itself, but also of visualising a more expanded sense of self and more valued ways of life.

In an article on disability and the CA, Michael Watts and Barbara Ridley present the heartening approach used by the Drake Music Project, a non-profit organisation that supplies technical equipment to individuals with disabilities, including children, to enable their creative agency as musicians—a capability previously denied to them. They write: "In giving them these opportunities to achieve outcomes that they valued and had reason to value the Drake Music Project greatly increased their well-being."[333] Similarly, in an article on art education and the CA, Cindy Maguire et al. describe the ways that social justice art projects enable children to "engage in creative personal expression and reflection" and practice "big picture thinking," thus providing them with "the freedoms, abilities and agency to choose lives they have reason to value."[334]

To summarize, then, when it comes to children, the complex capability of deliberate moral imagining ought to offer access to conceptual resources, dialogical space and creative expression in order to expand and enrich what they find worthy of their valuing *in* themselves and thus *for* themselves as emerging agents. Of course, this section's examples serve only illustrative purposes—the three interrelated access points may be achieved in myriad ways, depending on what the context in question can bestow. Still, I want to close this section with one last example that I think illuminates the relationship between the three access points while accentuating the aesthetic dimensions of deliberate moral imagining in action. To my mind, a viable candidate for the imaginative curatorship of children's own mental landscaping is what has come to be known as the story circle pedagogy developed by Myles Horton, which I deem as a morally imaginative practice when facilitated to accentuate the proposed features of deliberate moral imagining I have been defending so far.[335]

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[333] Watts and Ridley, 2007, 159.

Though this pedagogy was conceived for adults, I have adapted story circles for children and use them extensively in my own philosophical practices. Dating back to the 1930s and inspired by the Danish popular education movement, this pedagogy was originally designed for the Highlander Folk School, which Horton founded to help people—especially the poor and marginalised—to recognise power and agency in themselves by accessing, expressing and interpreting personal meaning in the form of recounts, anecdotes and memories. Most famously, the school played a pivotal role in the creation of labour unions in the Appalachians and in the launch of the American civil rights movement, attracting activists like Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks into some of the first collaborative conversations between white and black Americans at a time when racial segregation was still the norm.[336] The story circle itself describes the egalitarian process of a group of individuals sharing personal narratives about their own lived experiences regarding a certain problem or phenomenon, using deep listening and meaning-making in an effort to learn from each other and bring about change at the grassroots level. Horton's motivations echo those of CA theorists, notably when he defends "respect for

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[334] Maguire et al., 2012, 369.

[335] I will return to my use of this pedagogy in my case study chapter.

people's abilities to learn and to act and to shape their own lives. You have to have confidence that people can do that...You can't say you respect people if you don't respect their experience."[337]

Procedurally, a story circle traditionally begins with a simple prompt that follows the formula "Think back to a time in your life when…" and focuses on a topic or concept of relevance to the group in question. For instance, let us consider a story circle scenario to help confront the challenge of conversion inhibition: children are invited to tell stories about their sense of self by thinking back to a time in their lives when they felt most or least themselves. They then take turns sharing a relevant life story without interruption or cross-talk for the amount of time they deem they need, while others listen attentively and take mental notes of common themes that arise. During the debriefing afterwards, the group collaboratively garners their insights and perspectives on selfhood, finding connections between their shared narratives. Here we begin to see the interrelated access points of deliberate moral imagining coming together to form a powerful aesthetic experience:

- *Access to conceptual resources*: Children gain access to conceptual resources about selfhood through a diversity of personal narratives that enrich and nuance their mental landscapes, thus allowing them to broaden their scope of considerations for their own burgeoning perspectival identity. The stories are told in vivid detail right before their eyes, allowing them to viscerally experience the conceptual resource through the words and body language of their peers. Further, in imagining their own story, children gain a new perspective on their own life, learning afresh from a reframed past and perceiving

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[336] Founded by Horton in 1932 in Chattanooga, TN, the Highlander Folk School is now known as the Highlander Research and Education Center (www.highlandercenter.org).

[337] Horton and Freire, 1990, 177.

themselves as valuable sources of knowledge for others as they sense the effects of their own sharing on the group at an affective and corporeal level.

- *Access to dialogical space*: Direct contact with a plurality of voices in this dialogical space enables children to make sense of the varied unfolding conceptions of selfhood, sensitising them to the reasons that others may have for thinking and acting in particular ways, and granting them access to different social imaginaries. As their mental repertoire of relevant considerations is further expanded, they can envision what they might have reason to value in themselves in relation to what others have experienced—their successes and their setbacks. Though the stories themselves are immaterial, since they create meanings in the moment, they simultaneously become affectively charged experiences with appreciable sensory, stimulating and stirring qualities: the energy of the circle fluctuates with the style and cadence of each interlocutor.
- *Access to creative expression*: By trying their hand as storytellers, children get to express themselves creatively in the title role of their own tale, weaving elements of their lives into a coherent, engrossing and noteworthy account for others to learn from and appreciate. They may surprise themselves by laughing, crying, shaking, sweating—in other words, reliving at an embodied level the intensity of the memory they are recounting as they also visualise it like a mental movie. When debriefing with others, they can picture the motifs and patterns arising from the collection of stories so as to determine how to reasonably address an issue, solve a problem or resolve a conflict. In this more meta-reflective stage, they can feel their imaginative efforts as vibrating, pulsating possibilities and the story circle itself can serve as an impetus for enacting the

various options for agency that were individually and collectively envisaged, say through an activist project like those at Highlander.

And so, conceived in this way, the story circle pedagogy may be seen as a morally imaginative "landscaping" practice that represents a meaningful, aesthetically powerful opportunity for children to envisage their agency so as to enact it. It also honours the traits of deliberation, individuality and accountability that I have argued are characteristic of the emerging responsibly autonomous child viewed through the political lens of the CA. Better still, it evades many issues of inclusion and social justice since it is very cost-effective and practicable: all that is really needed is a group of children sitting in a circle with their imaginations engaged. Certainly, to create the safe space for such sharing, adults need to be open to children's voices and willing to test out an emergent pedagogy where the results are not wholly predictable—two criteria that can be hard to meet within certain cultural communities—while children need to learn certain functionings with respect to storytelling and become comfortable as storytellers.

Inevitably at first, complex intersecting social determinants may lead some voices to have greater authority and some interpretations to be privileged at the expense others. Still, overall this practice may serve as a model of an imaginative curatorship of children's own mental landscaping that is feasible and realistic within a theoretical framework that seeks to level the playing field when it comes to what agents are actually able to be and do in their specific circumstances. Incidentally, on my construal, story circles can be used as a stimulus for the P4C model explored in my case study chapter. For now, I want to reaffirm my hypothesis that from a CA lens, if granted these three access points, children may be able to exercise the complex capability of deliberate moral imagining so as to better convert the resources available to them into the opportunities and outcomes they value.

Closing remarks

In this chapter, using the theoretical framework of the CA, I have sought to examine the politics of deliberate moral imagining in childhood by considering how it might address the challenge of conversion inhibition, which I have characterised as a psychological impediment caused by lacking self-efficacy that prevents a child from envisaging herself as an emerging agent and thus from enacting her evolving responsible autonomy. By flattening her mental landscape and thwarting her resilience, this barrier makes it difficult for a child to convert resources into valued opportunities and outcomes, despite her otherwise conducive profile of internal and external factors.

Borrowing and adapting terms from the CA literature, I have framed deliberate moral imagining as a complex capability that may foster the achievement of complex functionings in children—notably my three proposed features of acknowledging limited perspectives, recognising commonality and identifying competing considerations—thus enriching their envisioned options for what they might value in and for themselves. This is politically significant because of the potential impact on their burgeoning perspectival identity: if through their imaginative efforts, they may develop a more charitable self-image regarding their own worth and potential, they may be more able and willing to manifest themselves as active authors of their own lives and actors in their social settings, thereby growing in their self-efficacy and in their resilience, notably when faced with autonomy-devaluing interfering conditions.

It is my hope that the arguments and examples I have proposed in this chapter demonstrate why the complex capability of deliberate moral imagining in childhood is valuable in its own right and should not be simply subsumed under broader categories of education- or citizenship-capabilities. To my mind, it holds the promise of informing how the CA might evaluate the degree to which a policy affecting children is indeed autonomy-facilitating. When asking how effective children are in their specific contexts at transforming resources into valued capabilities and functionings, it may be worth analysing whether they have been granted the space to envisage themselves as capable of enacting their agency and of resisting harmful external influences. The complex capability of deliberate moral imagining, with its opportunities for rich resource discovery, meaningful exchanges and creative experimentation, may grant children the freedom to envisage a vast range of possibilities for themselves so these become available as envisioned options in their mental landscape as they grow in their autonomy competence: something seemingly simple takes on complexity, something formerly dismissed takes on importance, and something once unknown becomes most valuable.

Chapter 4: Moral Imagining Within Classical Pragmatism

This chapter will examine the educative potential of deliberate moral imagining in childhood through the lens of classical pragmatism. So far, I have drawn on the theoretical frameworks of neo-Aristotelian virtue theory and the Capabilities Approach to consider the ethics and the politics of deliberate moral imagining respectively, arguing that this form of purposeful envisioning may help children to enhance their empathic engagement by enlarging the scope of their moral concern—who they empathise with and why—and foster their self-efficacy through opportunities to access conceptual resources, dialogical space and creative expression that fuel their perspectival identity. In both analyses of deliberate moral imagining, the stakes have been what children find worthy of their valuing in others and in themselves, which is ethically and politically significant because of the potential impact on their evolving competence for global responsible autonomy, specifically the impact on their deep concerns, and how they may choose to think and act in accordance with these. Put another way, I am proposing that if children can enhance empathic engagement and foster self-efficacy through deliberate moral imagining then they may be better positioned to attain a relational openness characterised, on the one hand, by ethical discernment that affects their perception of others, and on the other hand, by resilience that affects their perception of themselves as capable of converting resources into the capabilities and functionings they deem valuable.

In a sense, given my base definition of deliberate moral imagining as the purposeful envisioning of a *given context* from multiple frames of reference to ensure a broadened moral lens with which to approach and assess lived experience, we could say that children's envisioning of two overarching contexts—relation-to-other (leading to empathic engagement) and relation-to-self (leading to self-efficacy)—is broadened by these imaginative efforts. Yet beyond narrow empathetic scope and conversion inhibition, children's evolving responsible autonomy can be challenged in another sense, through the undermining of their reasoning abilities, which risks narrowing their envisioning of a third context: relation-to-knowledge—how they learn and what they claim to know about the world. This is educationally significant since children as emerging agents must *learn to determine* what is most reasonable to think, be and do, in order to practice reflectively endorsing the deep concerns informing their perspectival identity so that they may progressively live in accordance with them, and thus evolve in their responsible autonomy competence. In my view, any threat to this reasoning can be viewed as a threat to their emerging agency. Conversely, educational interventions that help to address such threats can be seen as supports for responsible autonomy, as I hope to demonstrate through the use of classical pragmatism as a theoretical framework that I think highlights the educational dimension of deliberate moral imagining.

I will begin this chapter by briefly presenting pragmatic inquiry as the heart of classical pragmatism's educational theory, drawing primarily on ideas from John Dewey as well as on some central references from Charles Sanders Peirce and a few key educational insights from William James. Next I will introduce the challenge of "inaccurate pseudoenvironments"—or faulty mental constructs based on misinformation and bias—extending the ideas of social theorist Walter Lippmann to examine the risks posed to children's autonomous thinking. I will then examine how autonomy can be construed from a pragmatist perspective, identifying criteria from Dewey's thoughts about individualism to determine additional traits that can further qualify the emerging responsibly autonomous child. After considering what a pragmatic conception of autonomy might look like, I will illustrate how my pragmatist interpretation of deliberate moral imagining may alleviate such threats to children's evolving responsible autonomy by helping to destabilise the stereotypes that result from inaccurate pseudoenvironments and lead to problematic normative claims about the world. Subsequently, I will identify the pragmatist principles of indeterminacy, reflection, habit and community that I extract from the philosophies of Dewey, Peirce and James to underscore the pedagogical merit of deliberate moral imagining when fused with pragmatic inquiry, as a support for children's reasonableness and, by extension, their responsible autonomy.

Pragmatic inquiry in context

To illuminate the educational dimension of deliberate moral imagining, classical pragmatism offers an interesting angle because of its significant influence on the now popular notion of "inquiry-based learning"—a pedagogical approach that is generally praised for being child-driven and thus, to my mind, a hopeful support of evolving responsible autonomy in childhood as I am conceiving it. Whereas the previous chapters were concerned with children's virtuous character in the realm of ethics and their capabilities as emerging agents in the realm of politics, this chapter is concerned with the development of children's reasoning skills in the realm of education, drawing on ideas about inquiry from classical pragmatists, including a few from Peirce and James where relevant, and a substantial amount from Dewey, given his legacy on the field of educational theory.

The educative value of inquiry-based learning is often held to be uncontroversial, especially as educational theorists and practitioners move towards learner-driven pedagogical approaches that show concern for children's voices and autonomy development. Yet despite the plethora of options for inquiry-based models, it is not necessarily evident which is most promising in terms of developing reasonableness, understood as a reliable, attentive orientation toward judgement-formation that allows children to tackle difficult, complex situations using varying thinking strategies, including metacognitive ones.

With this definition in mind, it is worth asking: Are the typical steps of inquiry-based learning (such as asking questions, researching answers, sharing results and evaluating the process) sufficient for developing reasonable children or must other learning conditions and dispositions come into play as well? Clearly, such an assessment depends on the educator's philosophy of education, conception of childhood, and pedagogical goals and values: what she strives to achieve will be greatly influenced by her attitude toward learning, her view of children and their capacities, and the kind of society she thinks education should help to create.[338] Given the significance of such contextual considerations, the philosophical ideas about inquiry that shape classical pragmatism may offer fruitful insights since this theoretical framework honours the maxim of addressing problems in the contexts they arise to avoid dealing in abstractions. In this section, I will construct a definition of pragmatic inquiry from a Deweyan perspective, with some references to Peirce and James, so as to contextualise this chapter's claims concerning the threat of stereotyped thinking and problematic normative claims on children's attempts to think and act autonomously. I will also outline Dewey's concern over idle speculation in childhood to later demonstrate how my conceptualisation of deliberate moral imagining may be well placed to sidestep such worries by supporting inquiry-based learning in school settings.

The notion of a cohesive sense of "classical pragmatism" can seem counterintuitive given the widely known philosophical disparities between Dewey, Peirce and James, whose ideas evolved in the dynamic American context of the 1800s, as socioeconomic structures were transforming from agrarian to industrial systems. Though their writings demonstrate support for the broader spirit of pragmatism—notably an experimental approach to philosophy inspired by the natural sciences that resists the problematic dualisms of European thinkers like Descartes and Kant—they disagreed in substantial ways that led them to distance themselves from each other's practices, or in Peirce's case, resort to renaming it outright.[339] This variance owes in no small part to their very different backgrounds—Peirce as a physicist, James as a psychologist and Dewey as a Hegel-influenced educationalist—and how these influenced their engagement in philosophical debates, with Peirce becoming increasingly isolated in his final years, James painting himself as the charismatic public intellectual par excellence, and Dewey getting involved in media and schools, in addition to his prolific academic scholarship.

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[338] Oyler, 2008.

Yet, despite these important differences, what all three theorists share in common is an enthusiasm for inquiry as a mode of learning. James refers to inquiry as the means by which we get to productive beliefs in ways that are practically actionable and can have an impact on real life.[340] For Peirce, the best inquiry approach is scientific, and should be prioritised over other methods of "fixing belief" that he considers highly deceptive yet appealing because of their psychological comforts. Specifically, he identifies three methods that are likely to erode our reasoning capacities:[341]

First, the method of tenacity facilitates our wilful clinging to a belief regardless of its foundations, encouraging us to shelter ourselves from external evidence that may change our minds—we "hold to it to the end, whatever happens, without an instant's irresolution."[342] Second, the method of authority enables us to maintain power over others by upholding questionable political or religious doctrines as universally valid, making of others our "intellectual slaves" and justifying "atrocities of the most horrible kind in the eyes of any rational man."[343] Third and finally, the *a priori* method favoured by metaphysicians accepts as true any belief that is rationally defensible even if not empirically supported, allowing us to accept "comfortable conclusions...until we are awakened from our pleasing dream by some rough facts."[344] On this account, then, inquiry within educational settings is likelier to be safeguarded if it avoids these approaches to instead follow the scientific method, anchored in real-world experimentation that moves from hypotheses about reality to sound and measurable empirical evidence using objective testing strategies.

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[339] Dissatisfied by his colleagues' takes on pragmatism, notably James's understanding, Peirce dubbed his new version "pragmaticism," convinced it was "ugly enough to be safe from kidnappers." Biesta, 2003, 4.

[340] James, 1950, 283-284.

[341] As Bacon notes, these methods fail because "in their different ways, they all take personal attitudes alone to determine belief." Bacon, 2012, 48.

Throughout his body of work, Dewey's multifaceted conception of inquiry attests to children's potential for independent thought and action in ways that I interpret as encouraging of their evolving responsible autonomy. For Dewey, inquiry is a dynamic practice comprising various methods, techniques and traits that enable the purposeful exploration and resolution of socially relevant problems, driven by the requirements of its context and enhanced by its capacity to inform future inquiries through constant adaptation. In *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*, Dewey offers the following characterisation:

> Inquiry is the controlled or directed transformation of an indeterminate situation into one that is so determinate in its constituent distinctions and relations as to convert the elements of the original situation into a unified whole.[345]

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[342] Peirce, 1997, 24.

[343] *Ibid*, 17-18.

[344] *Ibid*, 23.

[345] Boydston, ed., 1986, 108.

In Dewey's view, inquiry is a form of action in which individuals engage "as part of an existential struggle to cope with an objectively precarious but improvable environment."[346] He too describes inquiry as scientific: mirroring Peirce's notion of a community of inquiring scientists, Deweyan inquiry portrays individuals who exhibit the array of attitudes crucial to science in that they foster an atmosphere of constant questioning toward ever more nuanced truths—"the scientific attitude is experimental, as well as intrinsically communicative. If it were generally applied, it would liberate us from the heavy burden imposed by dogmas and external standards."[347]

Dewey further asserts that the greatest prospects for such action leading to unbiased, discerning and nuanced results resides in its collaborative spirit. Through inquiry, individuals with distinct skill-sets come to understand that collaboration is a far more efficient path to new knowledge than competition; they are far more likely to create better life conditions by aligning their skills and abilities as inquirers, producing robust strategies that fully utilise science for the greater good. In turn, this leads to a sense of accountability for their work and indebtedness to others for the expertise they add to it: "an inquirer in a given special field appeals to the experiences of the community of his fellow workers for confirmation and correction of results."[348] Deweyan scholar James Scott Johnston emphasises this communal dimension of inquiry in ways that echo my last chapter's argument in favour of children gaining access to conceptual resources, dialogical space and creative expression:

> It stands to reason that, if we want to solve social problems, then we cannot do so in isolation from one another. Social problems demand social solutions, and

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[346] Festenstein, 2001, 732.

[347] Boydston, ed., 1986, 75.

[348] Festenstein, 2001, 733.

> these solutions are premised on the capacity for groups that have the problems to come together to solve the problem. Inquiry in these contexts must focus on the skills of communication, dialogue, and the development of a shared and sympathetic set of sentiments toward others.[349]

Accordingly, as a contributor to a community's meaning-making, inquiry can also be considered a "tool to foster increasingly democratic ways of living."[350] For Dewey, then, because of its problem-solving, action-guiding and community-building features, inquiry ought to be a central part of their education. From his perspective, however, educational establishments have furnished children with the end products of inquiry rather than the means to inquire for themselves into the problematic issues of living, thus impeding their autonomous thinking and acting. Whereas inquiry should begin with an issue that is genuinely identified as puzzling, schooling often imposes a curriculum that alienates children from authentic involvement in their own learning: a prime example being rote memorisation of uncontextualised facts.

This unfortunate state of affairs inspired Dewey not only in his educational theory but also in his pedagogical practice, which is best exemplified by the live democratic community of learners he helped mould at his Chicago-based Laboratory School, where children could "translate [their] powers over in terms of their social equivalencies; to see what they mean in terms of what they are capable of accomplishing in social life."[351] This experiment demonstrates that education should, as Johnston aptly puts it, "not only facilitate the development of the habits of inquiry but also provide the conditions of this facilitation through the bringing together of children having varied experiences, with the goal of having these experiences shared."[352]

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[349] Johnston, 2009, 16.

[350] Boydston, ed., 1984, 83.

[351] Dewey in Boydston (ed.), 1990, 5.225.

It is this vision that has given rise to inquiry-based learning programs around the world and garnered an impressive following of educational practitioners and theorists. For her part, Nussbaum views the critical reasoning enabled by pragmatic inquiry as crucial to the development of global citizenship—a position that to my mind bridges the ethical and political concerns of my last chapters with the educational focus in this one: "Dewey's Socratism was not a sit-at-your-desk-and-argue technique," she writes, "it was a form of life carried on with other children in the pursuit of an understanding of real-world issues and immediate practical projects, under the guidance of teachers, but without imposition of authority from without."[353]

Yet while childhood can be perceived as an opportune time to practise autonomous thought and action in ways that are relevant to children in light of their lived experiences and maturity levels, I am concerned the stereotyped thinking and problematic normative claims they inherit from the world around them may be jeopardising these efforts so that even if they are inquiring collaboratively in an educational setting, the results are not necessarily reasonable in the ways I have been articulating so far. In the next section, I will examine what I call the challenge of inaccurate pseudoenvironments in childhood as a prime instance of such a threat, to later argue for conditions and dispositions that deliberate moral imagining may encourage to destabilise them.

Before concluding this section, however, I want to briefly address the ambiguous status of imagination in pragmatic inquiry. Though classical pragmatists concede that imagination is a natural and necessary part of life—for Peirce, it is as inherent to human experience as the building of dams is for beavers[354]—Dewey repeatedly expresses his concern regarding imaginative reflection in the absence of action. Interestingly, this angle has been generally overlooked, with many Deweyan scholars interpreting his theory as being pro-imagination, especially Steven Fesmire and Thomas Alexander whose accounts of moral imagination are inspired by his ideas about art and human nature.[355]

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[352] Johnston, 2006, 112.

[353] Nussbaum, 2010, 66.

On the argument I want to defend, Dewey's ambivalence towards certain forms of imagination in childhood is important to consider, given the significant role I want to attribute to deliberate moral imagining in promoting the reasonableness necessary for children to enact their evolving autonomy in responsible ways, notably in their educational settings. Can this role be justified from a Deweyan pragmatist viewpoint? I think it can, if we emphasise the distinction between "imaginary" and "imaginative" that Fesmire rightly points out.[356] Dewey blames Romantic notions of the imaginary—and the pedagogies that incorporate them—for turning children into idle speculators by creating a dream world of escapist tendencies and desires that sever them from reality and risk making them cynical.[357] In *School and Society*, he warns against the use of fantastical stories to develop imagination in childhood, concerned that children already have trouble differentiating the real from the imaginary.[358]

By contrast, the imaginative is connected and concerned with real-world action. In Dewey's estimation, only what he calls "creative imagination" is truly productive because of its meaning-making power on both intellectual and emotional levels: whether in the ream of art, science or technological innovation, it “makes its object new by setting it in a new light.”[359] More specifically, this form of productive imagination supports deliberation by enabling “a kind of dramatic rehearsal” in which possibilities can be tested without the “irrevocable” consequences of “an act overtly tried out.”[360] To my mind, this description recalls the criterion of “careful exercise of forethought” that I gleaned from my survey of moral imagination across the disciplines—it is future-oriented in its focus on possible effects and consequences. While this is a useful role, I think deliberate moral imagining goes further, as I have been striving to show.

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[354] As Peirce writes, "the whole business of ratiocination, and all that makes us intellectual beings, is performed in imagination." Peirce in Fesmire, 2003, 64. In James's view, "There are imaginations, not 'the Imagination,' and they must be studied in detail." James, 1950, 50.

[355] Pope, 2016, 183.

[356] Fesmire, 2003, 65.

[357] Waddington, 2010, 353.

[358] Dewey, 2001, 123.

Though it is carried out in a mental landscape, it is in response to an actual phenomenological experience and is *purposefully initiated* to assist with achieving a particular goal—notably bringing to light possibilities for what seems reasonable to value in order to support future action—making it by definition not mere idle speculation. It could be argued that some of my proposed features require some escapism to allow for visualisations of alternative worlds but only because such purposeful envisioning may support inquiry efforts, notably in the “assessment of existing and past social imaginaries”—another one of my interdisciplinary criteria. As David Waddington clearly states in his examination of Deweyan imagination, “Dewey maintained his position that imagination in education, when at its best, was connected with inquiry.”[361] I agree but think the opposite may also true: pragmatic inquiry in education might be at its best when connected to the deliberate moral imagining I am advancing because it could make children more epistemically flexible, notably when faced with the challenge of inaccurate pseudoenvironments, to which I will now turn.

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[359] Boydston, ed., 1990, 171.

[360] Dewey in Fesmire, 2003, 77.

[361] Waddington, 2010, 362.

The challenge of inaccurate pseudoenvironments

In my previous chapters, I coined the terms for the challenges to evolving responsible autonomy in childhood that I find especially concerning, in relation to the theoretical frameworks under consideration: "narrow empathetic scope" for neo-Aristotelian virtue theory and "conversion inhibition" for the Capabilities Approach. For this chapter, I want to build off an existing term—namely Lippmann's notion of "pseudoenvironments"—because I find it to be a powerful metaphor that complements my own image of a mental landscape with respect to childhood. Although Lippmann was not a pragmatist, he was a known critic of Dewey's work, especially his views on the feasibility of democratic citizenship through self-determination, which makes him a thought-provoking counterpoint within this analysis. This section first outlines the Lippmannian account of pseudoenvironments in order to then contextualise my own proposal regarding the challenge posed by inaccurate pseudoenvironments. I will be arguing that these mental constructs may be negatively contributing to children's current world-views, specifically by yielding stereotyped thinking and misleading value judgements that affect their capacity to think and act reasonably.

Lippmann famously describes the chasm between the real world and what he calls the "pictures in our heads" in his 1922 treatise *Public Opinion*. These mental constructs—or "pseudoenvironments"—combine both actual facts and personal interpretations to create an image that does not necessarily correspond to the external world it purports to reflect.[362] Paralleling Plato's Allegory of the Cave, he describes the citizens of modern-day democracies as imprisoned by deceptive shadows of reality that they cannot transcend without a keen recognition of the source of their illusions—politicians, media and their own multifaceted epistemological limitations.[363] What concerns him most is the human tendency, not toward the creation of pseudoenvironments—which he deems unavoidable—but toward their inappropriate application in the real world: "We shall assume that what each man does is based not on direct and certain knowledge, but on pictures made by himself or given to him," yet "because it is behaviour, the consequences, if they are acts, operate not in the pseudoenvironment where the behaviour is stimulated, but in the real environment where action eventuates."[364] As such, on my interpretation, inaccurate pseudoenvironments represent a hindrance to both autonomous thought and action since individuals use them as their guiding framework despite their unreliability.

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[362] While Lippmann's conception of pseudoenvironments includes both the accurate and inaccurate kinds—the mental pictures that correspond to reality and those that do not—this chapter will focus on the latter since they tend to form the basis of stereotyped thinking.

Lippmann's account of pseudoenvironments points to two overarching causes: the inaccessible, complex nature of modern-day reality and the apathetic, biased inclinations of average citizens. First, the sheer intricacy of advanced democratic societies has rendered them largely impenetrable to their citizens, who lack the necessary ensemble of up-to-the-minute details and inside information to understand their inner workings. Lippmann characterises the real world as "altogether too big, too complex, and too fleeting for direct acquaintance. We are not equipped to deal with so much subtlety, so much variety, so many permutations and combinations."[365] Inevitably, citizens must rely on external sources to construct a simpler schema of reality, leaving them susceptible to persuasion and prone to reductive construals.

Second, these already flawed sources of information must contend with the competing interests and judgements of average citizens, often becoming further tainted and contorted by widespread apathy and bias. Lippmann portrayed most people as too consumed by their own concerns and volatile sentiments to invest the time required to tackle complex public affairs, contenting themselves with their own incomplete translations, however haphazard and misinformed. Taken together, these causes highlight the inescapability of the pseudoenvironment as a kind of coping mechanism in a world that has grown too complicated for identification. As Lippmann writes, "Inevitably our opinions cover a bigger space, a longer reach of time, a greater number of things, than we can directly observe. They have, therefore, to be pieced together out of what others have reported and what we can imagine."[366] So the pictures in our heads prevail, often offering less than reliable representations.

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[363] Lippmann, 1922, 5.

[364] *Ibid*, 25, 15. To clarify, Lippmann believes that we cannot help but create pseudoenvironments, yet we *can* discern whether we will act on them inappropriately.

Though Lippmann does not focus on the child's pseudoenvironment specifically, I want to apply his notion to childhood to instantiate the aforementioned "toxins" within mental landscapes that call for landscaping through deliberate moral imagining—the focus of a later section. For now, extending this metaphor to childhood, we could portray children as being trapped, or at least beguiled, by their own mental picture books—inner narratives that blend facets of the stories they are told with their own conjectural leaps. Lippmann's take on the roots of preconceptions is pertinent to the childhood experience: "We are told about the world before we see it," he writes. "We imagine most things before we experience them. And those preconceptions, unless education has made us acutely aware, govern deeply the whole process of perception."[367]

In my view, many dimensions of modern-day childhood—educational settings often chief among them—are rife with the deliberate creation and transmission of inaccurate pseudoenvironments. Whether through fairy tales or fables, make-believe games or play-acting,

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[365] *Ibid*, 16.

[366] *Ibid, 79.*

[367] *Ibid*, 90.

children in the advanced democracies that form Lippmann's contextual focus are encouraged to fabricate fanciful worlds by incorporating their own experience with their preferred elements of fantasy.[368] As parents, authors, entertainers and also educators, adults feed this mental image library—with the ethereal, the absurd, the magical—in a seemingly benign fashion, notably when compared to the propaganda tactics Lippmann bemoans with good reason. Yet, as I see it, one crucial constant applies: they often do so with an ulterior motive beyond the stimulation of imagination—the transfer of norms and values. The pseudoenvironments of children may be overrun with fairies, witches and dragons, but they are also weighed down by particular stereotyped conceptions of fairness, goodness, beauty and the like—all of which I argue may be equally misleading for children's autonomous thought and action if they go unexamined and impair their reasoning abilities, especially with respect to their reflective endorsement of their deep concerns.

This potential danger of children's orchestrated pseudoenvironments reveals itself through what I see as a crucial distinction implicit in Lippmann's work: the descriptive versus the normative claims engendered by the pictures in our heads. While Lippmann seems to both acknowledge and conflate these two types of assertions throughout *Public Opinion*, I find the distinct consequences they produce especially relevant when considering the pseudoenvironments of children. Clearly, inaccurate pseudoenvironments can cause people to make false judgements of fact as well as false judgements of value. Lippmann's own example of the sailor avoiding the sea's edge based on the belief that the earth is flat demonstrates how mental constructs can lead individuals astray until they discover the actual facts of a situation.[369] In this case, the sailor's inaccurate pseudoenvironment—and ironically, Lippmann's own misguided view of Medieval science[370]—engendered a mistaken descriptive claim (e.g., "The earth is flat"), resulting in the perceived consequence of his possible death should his sailboat drift too far. We can assume the mere re-education of the sailor with a correct descriptive claim about the earth's roundness would be sufficient to alter his behaviour. However, in my estimation, judgements of value may be more challenging.

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[368] I am not suggesting that children should not be introduced to such fairy tales, fables and make-believe, but that the more moralising kinds should at least be complemented by alternative proposals—as I describe in my previous section on narrative aids, notably the example of *The Three Little Pigs* narratives—to help avoid the stereotyping of concepts that require more nuance if they are to be applied in ethical thought, decision-making and activity.

While children can be trained to assess descriptive claims for factual accuracy, normative claims may be harder to unravel (even with tailored training) because they are influenced by cherished personal values that shape their deep concerns. Returning to the notion of mental picture books, even in a school setting, when children are invited to inhabit a fantastical alternate world through a literary narrative, the normative claims are often expected to endure even after the story ends, especially in the case of stories with more moralising motives. They may discover Dragon X is not real but that does not discredit the lesson that Dragon X ought not to have set fire to his friend.[371] The interpretable normative claim—"We should not harm our friends"—can thus survive in their pseudoenvironments, and by extension in their mental landscape—long after the descriptive claim has been debunked, thus influencing their sense of reasonableness and future behaviour.

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[369] *Ibid*, 25.

[370] The Greeks determined the earth was spherical around 300 B.C. thus, nearly every educated person throughout the Middle Ages would have believed the earth to be round (the argument was over the size of the earth, not its shape). The myth that early explorers believed the earth was flat was made famous by 19th century historians such as Washington Irving, Antoinne-Jean letronne, William Whewell, and others. In this case, it is Lippmann who is engaged in a pseudoenvironment about the perception of the Medieval scientist as inept and overruled by dogma in comparison to the modern human. See Russell, *Inventing the Flat Earth* and Garwood, *Flat Earth*.

[371] Of course, Lippmann would certainly agree that it is impossible to gauge with any certainty whether children have learnt the lesson that these moralizing tales present.

While such deontic rules may seem harmless, they may breed tunnel vision under certain circumstances. Returning to Nussbaum's concern regarding the dangers of classic fairy tales that lack complexity with their hero/villain dichotomy, children's fear of monsters in childhood may risk morphing into a fear of otherness in adulthood, where a "hero-should-slay-monster-to-restore-order" mentality can have devastating ramifications. Children may grow into adults who see "Big Bad Wolves" everywhere—a disturbing example in North America being the xenophobic tendency to view all muslim men as terrorists whose very presence on the continent could threaten society as we know it. Here, as I see it, the inaccurate pseudoenvironment generated by simplistic storytelling equates the unfamiliar with the threatening, the weak, the grotesque; and these oversimplifications may affect children's efforts to think and act autonomously as emerging agents both in their present and their future.

For his part, Lippmann is equally concerned about the impact of prejudiced pseudoenvironments on the thought and action of democratic citizens. He repurposes the term "stereotype" to describe those "certain fixed habits of cognition which classify and abstract falsely; [and] usually, but not always, falsify the picture."[372] Among these habits is the tendency to define reality before experiencing it or adopt a preexisting definition without assessing its merits: "In the great blooming, buzzing confusion of the outer world…we tend to perceive that which we have picked out in the form stereotyped for us by our culture."[373] Lippmann also attacks the divisive impact of stereotypes on individuals for interfering "with the full recognition of their common humanity,"[374] which echoes my three features of deliberate moral imagining, notably the recognition of commonality. Worse still, stereotypes create a near irresistible (if disingenuous) sense of ease when individuals are confronted with possible confusion or uncertainty—as Benjamin Wright aptly puts it, “They permit us to feel at home, to be members, to fit in. When the stereotypes are attacked, the whole world they represent is shaken.”[375]

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[372] Lippmann clarified his notion of stereotype in a letter dated January 13, 1925. Curtis, 1991, 25.

[373] Lippmann, 1922, 80.

[374] *Ibid*, 87.

Interestingly, though contemporary interpretations of the term “stereotype” in sociology and psychology focus on widely held cultural beliefs about particular individuals or groups, in my view, Lippmann’s original characterisation as well as the very etymology of the word—literally “firm impression”—also allow for the possibility of stereotyping a *concept*. To my mind, the childhood pseudoenvironments regarding Santa Claus are a telling example: though the descriptive aspect can be corrected upon the realisation that Father Christmas does not in fact exist, the normative aspect of desert with regard to gift-giving may remain, even if in changed form. For instance, the claim “Children who are good should get presents” may persist, possibly alongside stereotyped conceptions of goodness, entitlement and reward, resulting in a resilient yet potentially misleading set of values and motivations to act, including concerns of the shallower and less reflectively endorsed variety.

Once again, though Lippmann is not specifically concerned with such effects on childhood, I think it could be argued that the stereotypes fostered by inaccurate pseudoenvironments may make children as emerging agents all the more susceptible to problematic thought and action since they tend to be less experienced and more impressionable than adults, lacking the critical awareness necessary to challenge and deconstruct the ideas they inherit in their initial experimentations with reflective endorsement. As Lippmann points out, a stereotype “may be so consistently and authoritatively transmitted in each generation from parent to child that it seems almost like a biological fact,"[376] particularly when further entrenched at school. As another example, the significant influence of neoliberal economic ideas could spawn a stereotyped concept of success as being reducible to the "winners" of the human rat race with the highest earnings and most prominent social status; clearly such a mental construct would risk affecting children's envisioning of their relation-to-knowledge context, colouring what they claim to know about it and how they strive to learn about it.

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[375] Wright, 1973, 44.

Accordingly, children's "repertory of stereotypes" may run the risk of becoming the authoritative guide to their thinking and their acting—with the characters, settings, and morals of their mental narratives seeming as familiar and comforting as a tattered security blanket. They may cling to this repertory for the same reasons Lippmann's average citizens hold fast to their biases, and this adherence to oversimplified concepts and spurious normative claims may be further reinforced by the adults in their lives, including their teachers. In this light, the failure to accurately describe seems far less dangerous to the cultivation of children's evolving responsible autonomy than the failure to fairly prescribe. The resulting dogmatic stereotyped mental constructs may impair their reasoning abilities when they reflectively endorse the concerns they believe they have reason to value, while crippling the educative potential of pragmatic inquiry. Such constructs can become the coercive, deceptive and manipulative "interfering conditions" that Friedman rightly cautions against when she warns of obstructions to autonomy, particularly for vulnerable populations. So what avenues may offer a solution to this pseudoenvironment challenge, notably with respect to reasonableness in childhood? Prior to considering how deliberate moral imagining might intervene, I will first examine how global responsible autonomy can be construed from a pragmatist perspective.

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[376] Lippmann, 1922*,* 93.

Childhood autonomy and inquiry

Childhood can be a tug-of-war between imaginative play and curious investigation—some might argue that this tension is precisely what makes children such natural inquirers. The careful use of inquiry in education therefore seems vital to reasonableness in childhood since it can turn such tensions into opportunities for children as emerging agents to hone the reasoning skills necessary for their evolving responsible autonomy and—even more importantly for Dewey—for democratic citizenship. Yet does the contemporary experience of childhood, with its imposed traditions, orchestrated rituals and influential authority figures at school and beyond, offer a suitable space for children to think autonomously about questions of value?

If Lippmann is correct in his account of the human tendency toward inaccurate pseudoenvironments, children appear to face an even greater obstacle than adults in their struggle toward global responsible autonomy since their thought and action, and the deep concerns they try to reflectively endorse, are so influenced by the narratives passed down to them from the adult world, even in educational settings. Before examining the role that deliberate moral imagining might play in destabilising stereotyped thinking from a classical pragmatist perspective, I will first consider the implications of this theoretical framework on the prospects of childhood autonomy and inquiry, notably when contrasting Dewey and Lippmann's positions, as this will help lay the groundwork for the next step in my argument.

To be sure, Lippmann's route seems decidedly bleak for proponents of autonomy and inquiry given his distrust of the public's capacity to form constructive opinions.[377] In his view, though democratic participation may have been possible in the smaller, simpler communities of times past, it seems overambitious for the twentieth century's advanced societies. Worsening matters are social institutions that manipulate pseudoenvironments to their advantage when their mandates command the opposite task. Lippmann accuses newspapers of overdramatising events rather than pursuing truth, thus failing "to bring into focus the underlying facts, to indicate their inter-relationships and construct a picture of reality on which men could act."[378] Meanwhile, political leaders achieve the "manufacturing of consent"[379] by carefully crafting their messages to "appease rather than dispel and discourage popular prejudices."[380] Case in point: the calculated propagation of Americanism as a pseudoenvironment that promotes nationalistic conduct through certain versions of excessive individualism.[381]

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[377] Lippmann's wariness grows gradually through his experience as a journalist and political consultant: while his earlier work *Liberty and the News* suggests individuals can make thoughtful decisions about democratic policies with the right perspective moulding, this initial optimism is infamously absent in *Public Opinion*. Disillusioned by the outcome of WWI, he dismisses "the omnicompetent citizen" notion, suspicious that "the knowledge needed for the management of human affairs comes up spontaneously from the human heart." *Ibid*, 249.

In his article "The Tyranny of False Vision: America's Unipolar Fantasy," David Calleo describes the far-reaching effects of such mental pictures:

> These synthetic constructions become our reality, our way of depicting the world in which we live…Every individual therefore has his own particular vision of reality, and every nation tends to arrive at a favoured collective view that differs from the favoured views of other nations. When powerful and interdependent nations hold visions of the world severely at odds with one another, the world grows dangerous.[382]

Thus, according to Lippmann, the challenge of inaccurate pseudoenvironments has severe implications for democratic citizenship, as it reveals that autonomy may not be the most worthwhile goal for citizens who are not “reasonable, informed, and educated enough to discern and pursue even their own interests.”[383] Rather than government by the people, Lippmann proposes a network of “disinterested experts” whose specialised knowledge and mastery of inquiry can more reliably guide public opinion by committing to “empirical economic research, political analysis, and psychological study of pseudoenvironments, blind spots, and human error.”[384]

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[378] Dam, 1973, 23.

[379] Westbrook, 1991, 296.

[380] Syed, 1963, 278.

[381] Lippmann, 1922, 85.

[382] Calleo, 2008, 62-63.

As I see it, when applied to childhood, this proposal has important ramifications for education and inquiry-based learning. The expert network’s findings could help children learn to “catch themselves making allegories, dramatising relations, and personifying abstractions’’[385] and thus become able to “deal with [the] world with a great deal more sophistication about their own minds.”[386] This recalls the criterion of social embeddedness that I originally gleaned from Friedman’s account: adults with extensive life experience could help to inform children’s evolving autonomy competence by directing their inquiry away from faulty mental constructs so that they may learn to reflectively endorse the deep concerns that matter to them from a more reasonable stance.

Yet Lippmann’s goal seems at odds with Dewey’s educational aims and with classical pragmatism more broadly: the proposed network would render children very (if not fully) dependent on the so-called master specialists with little chance of growing out of their status as disciples even as they begin to hone the skills of inquiry. Returning to Peirce’s concern about the method of authority, the possibility of “disinterested” experts collapsing into dictatorial justification of questionable doctrines is also disconcerting. The question remains: What hope for responsible autonomy do children as emerging agents have under this regime of experts? Is his vision too grim?

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[383] Syed, 1963, 277.

[384] Bottom and Kong, 2012, 376.

[385] Lippmann, 1922, 409-410.

[386] *Ibid*, 409.

Whereas Lippmann's disenchantment with the general population's capacity for autonomy causes him to restrict inquiry to isolated specialists, classical pragmatists—and Dewey in particular—interpret the prevailing shortcomings in democratic governance as ever more pressing reasons for teaching citizens to become independent inquirers from an early age. Though there is no explicit account of autonomy within classical pragmatism, to my mind, it stands to reason that neither Dewey, Peirce nor James would accept the detached, ahistorical, disembodied Kantian view of the autonomous person adhering to the self-governing faculty of reason, and would instead likely favour a conception at least minimally informed by evolutionary science—autonomy as a kind of intentional activity enabling our control over the processes of our own habit-formation. In particular, autonomy as the result of self-control seems legitimate on a Peircean view of humans as responsible inquirers capable of shaping experience according to chosen ideals by both turning inward "to deliberate about our motives, our habits, and ultimately our character" as well as outward for "an examination of our entanglements with the world."[387]

Similarly, Dewey's social conception of the mind supposes that individuals gain their power as liberated selves through a kind of intersubjectivity rather than an unequivocal rejection of otherness. As he explains in *Democracy and Education*, the pursuit of freedom is not tantamount to social disconnection: individuals want "not isolation from the world, but a more intimate connection with it…[a] closer union with their fellows so that they might influence one another more effectively and might combine their respective actions for mutual aims."[388] Dismissing the notion of an atomistic mind popularised by Cartesian dualism and Kantian morality, he insists—and I think correctly—that meaning manifests solely through environmental and social interactions: "Through social intercourse, through sharing in the activities embodying beliefs, he gradually acquires a mind of his own…the self is not a separate mind building up knowledge anew on its own account."[389] For Dewey, then, even a liberated self is relationally constituted, so it seems defensible on my view that a pragmatic account of autonomy should be also.

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[387] Colapietro in Thellefsen and Sorensen, eds., 2014, 490.

Further, given the crucial role in Dewey's philosophy of the notion of growth—understood as a continual adaptation to an ever-changing environment as well as the refinement of the methods of such adaptation[390]—a pragmatic sense of autonomy could arguably be described as the means for attaining the end of self-development. Interestingly, in his proposal of a Deweyan conception of autonomy, political scientist Daniel Savage makes a similar claim, bringing together neo-Aristotelian virtue theory and classical pragmatism to suggest that the autonomous person exhibits three interrelated virtues: critical reflection (as the mean between the extremes of dogmatism and skepticism), creative individuality (as the mean between the extremes of conformity and eccentricity) and sociability (as the mean between docility and rebelliousness).[391]

To my mind, however, when applied to childhood, since children evolve bit by bit in their autonomy competence by engaging in inquiry within an existing context, then at least at the outset, they "all ultimately depend on a background of unquestioned assumptions"[392] without necessarily having the learning skills or knowledge to assess them, making autonomy toward self-development a precarious enterprise unless they somehow consistently hit the target of the aforementioned virtues. For as we have seen, in addition to factual errors, inaccurate pseudoenvironments can yield misleading value judgements that may affect children's capacity to think and act reasonably, thus threatening Deweyan growth by impoverishing experiences in childhood and weakening the methods of adaptation that lead to self-development. In such cases, what happens to children's experiential continuum, which Dewey describes as experience that "arouses curiosity, strengthens initiative, and sets up desires and purposes that are sufficiently intense to carry a person over" into future experiences?[393]

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[388] Dewey, 2004, 161.

[389] *Ibid*, 162.

[390] Savage, 2002, 17-18.

[391] *Ibid*, 36-37.

[392] *Ibid*, 30.

If Dewey's progressive education can be summed up colloquially as a hands-on, participatory model of learning by doing, then through a pragmatist lens, I see autonomy as necessarily playing a crucial role in childhood since it is through active interaction with their environment—not passive indoctrination—that children as emerging agents come to inquire, learn and achieve the kind of growth described above. I therefore propose that in Deweyan terms, evolving autonomy in childhood be understood as a process of self-development that liberates the child as an emerging autonomous agent from miseducative experiences through individualism while simultaneously rooting them in historical appreciation and deliberative communication that imbue meaning into their current experiences. To elaborate, in light of the centrality of democracy in his philosophy, Dewey is understandably wary of what he calls "intellectual servility," which he argues is a condition necessary "for fitting the masses into a society where the many are *not expected to have aims or ideas of their own*, but to take orders from the few set in authority."[394]

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[393] Dewey in Breault, 2014, 29.

[394] Savage, 2002, 35. Emphasis mine.

From a pragmatist perspective, then, autonomy as self-control toward self-development seems a possible and desirable aim for children, at least in educational settings, so that they can practice developing “aims and ideas of their own,” and gradually acquire the knowhow to actively participate in democratic society. Dewey’s notion of a liberated self has been described as Emersonian insofar as it captures features of individualism like self-reliance, nonconformity and the creative capacities of the human mind: “Dewey’s paradigmatic student is a youth with a full sense of vitality, threatened by the restricting influences of traditional pedagogies, worn-out traditions, and the nation’s parochialism.”[395] To address these external threats, education must therefore help students to liberate themselves from the cultural and historical baggage that narrows their perspectives by learning to carve out their own stances as inquiring individuals.

And yet, at the same time, while Dewey appears to highly regard the liberated self for the more robust type of individualism it fosters, this facet of autonomy is tempered on his view by the need for historical appreciation and deliberative communication. In *School and Society*, Dewey extols the concept of learning through occupations not least for its capacity to sensitise students to human history—one of spirit, tenacity and technological advances. The occupation becomes a bridge connecting students to the social and scientific significance of their past, and to a possible future vocation they will reflectively endorse as meaningful for themselves: “With the growth of the child’s mind in power and knowledge it ceases to be a pleasant occupation merely and becomes more and more a medium, an instrument, an organ of understanding—and is thereby transformed.”[396] Clearly, Dewey’s interest in the liberated self does not exist in isolation from his concern over historical appreciation. I contend that this kind of vocational education can be seen as autonomy-facilitating since it involves preparing children as emerging agents for choosing and reflectively endorsing their life's calling(s) from among the many worthwhile options that their schooling enables them to explore.

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[395] Margonis, 2009, 30.

Moreover, in *Democracy and Education*, Dewey contends that education is the ideal means by which to ensure the transmission of civilization between generations, noting the crucial role of communication in forging commonalities between people and, in time, forming communal bonds. He describes democratic society as a group of individuals "cognizant of the common end and all interested in it so that they regulate their specific activity in view of it,"[397] accentuating the importance of achieving consensus through deliberative communication. To my mind, this definition suggests a receptivity to difference and its accompanying challenges: such a society is not achieved through coercive assimilationist measures but through a careful communicative process that Dewey compares to art. He writes: "To formulate requires getting outside of it, seeing it as another would see it, considering what points of contact it has with the life of another so that it may be got into such form that he can appreciate its meaning."[398]

By this very process, which aligns well with my definition of deliberate moral imagining, individuals become acquainted with the historical appreciation they have gleaned from their own educative experiences by communicating their respective social significances and deliberating about them. Again, the liberated self cannot be severed from its historical, communicative context without losing its educative potential and possibilities for growth: as African American pragmatist Eddie S. Glaude insightfully puts it, for Dewey, "individuality is understood as

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[396] Dewey, 2001, 16.

[397] *Ibid*, 7.

[398] *Ibid*, 7.

developing one's unique capacities within the context of one's social relations and one's community."[399]

To sum up, according to this pragmatist interpretation, though Dewey does not offer an outright account of autonomy, I think it fair to interpret from the above criteria of liberating individualism, historical appreciation and deliberative communication that his philosophy supports the kind of evolving responsible autonomy I have been developing with respect to children as emerging agents. Indeed, the individualistic angle is in keeping with the idea of an emerging responsibly autonomous child as beginning to get in touch with her perspectival identity—the features she cares most deeply about in herself—while allowing these to be influenced positively by experimenting with what others have historically valued through active, deliberative inquiry. In my view, these experiments with autonomous thinking and doing should be part of education because they constitute meaningful experiences of practising to determine what is reasonable to think, be and do, and as such promote children's growth.

Returning to the Lippmannian challenge, if children cannot be expected to completely escape their inaccurate pseudoenvironments given the complex nature of modern-day reality, it does not necessarily follow that they cannot learn to address the passive, biased inclinations that Lippmann deems characteristic of the general population by engaging in pragmatic inquiry at school. Such engagement would provide them with a purposeful space to think autonomously about questions of value that matter to them. The restraints of time, access and fact acquisition may make it near impossible for children as emerging agents to correct all the false descriptive claims in their pseudoenvironments, but given the opportunity within their educational setting—as my next section will strive to demonstrate—they may learn through deliberate moral imagining to destabilise the mental constructs they have inherited from adults that produce stereotyped concepts and dubious normative claims.

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[399] Glaude, 2007, p. 12.

Moral imagining as a destabiliser of stereotypes

In this section, I want to show how deliberate moral imagining may destabilise the stereotypes in children's mental landscapes by promoting a set of specific conditions and dispositions that I see as necessary for promoting reasonableness in childhood. I have been defining deliberate moral imagining as a conscious and flexible process of meaning-making that, although pre-critical, is purposefully initiated to assist with a particular goal, namely the bringing to light of what seems most reasonable to value. Stereotypes—and the inaccurate pseudoenvironments that foster them—can therefore be interpreted as a failure of moral imagining, alongside narrow empathetic scope and conversion inhibition, because they engender an epistemic rigidity that constrains inquiry efforts by undermining reasoning skills and skewing what might be considered valuable.

I will argue that morally imaginative children may be more able than their unimaginative peers to detect the problematic normative claims resulting from the faulty mental constructs they inherit from adults because they are better positioned, through deliberate moral imagining, to learn and enact conditions and dispositions supportive of pragmatic inquiry, allowing them to approach and assess lived experience from a broadened moral lens and weaken the hold of stereotypes. As I will explain, these learning conditions include humility and acceptance of fallibility, epistemological flexibility and comfort with uncertainty. I will begin with a hypothetical case then revisit my three features of deliberate moral imagining in light of this scenario, linking these to the ideas about pragmatic inquiry that I find most promising in Dewey.

For illustrative purposes, let us suppose the following case of stereotyped thinking in an elementary classroom. Though children's pseudoenvironments are clearly influenced by a variety of sources, for the sake of concretisation, this section's example will specifically examine the possible effects of the original Peter Pan narrative—J. M. Barrie's *Peter and Wendy* (1911)—on children's mental picture books, since it is still so widely referenced in schools despite the many stereotypes it presents.[400] The scenario is also inspired by real exchanges between children on the concept of freedom from my pedagogical practice:

> During a language arts course, a class of third-graders is invited to analyse the central characters of *Peter and Wendy*. One of the assigned tasks involves identifying some of Peter's key character traits using clues from the story. "What kind of character is Peter?" the teacher asks them. She starts to make a list on the blackboard of the students' impressions—adventurous, brave, strong—along with their evidence. When his turn comes to share, Rafael exclaims: "He's a free spirit!" After the teacher encourages him to elaborate, he offers this long-winded appraisal:
>
> - "Peter does whatever he wants to do all of the time! He doesn't care about what he's *supposed* to do…he just does what he feels like. He's totally free! He won't let anyone stand in his way. No one is going to change his mind once he decides to think something or do something. He tries things that other people think are impossible! He's always pushing the limits…I mean, what kid wouldn't want to be Peter Pan? He has no parents telling him what to do, he can play games all day, everyone loves him! And have you noticed—*all* the girls have a crush on him! Plus, he can fly…now *that*'s freedom."
>
> Rallied by Rafael's enthusiasm, other classmates chime in:
>
> - "That's because he's a kid! When you grow up, there are no more stories or playtime or hanging out. Adults are always like, 'Stop goofing around!' They get so serious and cranky."

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[400] For instance, the American "Common Core" program for English Language Arts includes a Grade Three curriculum on *Peter Pan*. EL Education, Common Core ELA, 2013.

> - “My dad is always stressed out. He has no life. It’s like he forgot how to have fun. He doesn’t seem free at all.”
>
> - “When I make up games that I’m a superhero or the queen of the world, my mom just laughs at me and tells me to do something useful with all my ‘free’ time, like homework. That doesn’t sound very free to me…”
>
> - “It would be so much better if children were always free to do whatever we wanted. Like in Neverland!”

Notwithstanding Barrie’s own motivations for writing the novel,[401] as with many nuanced yet flawed works of children’s literature, *Peter and Wendy* presents a collision of pseudoenvironments: the free-agent mentality of Peter Pan and the Lost Boys conflicts with the adult mindsets of the pirates and the parents, while diverging from the Darling children’s initial attitude of willing subservience. Within a classroom, depending on individual interpretations and external influences, the novel could result in vastly different mental constructs with correspondingly distinct stereotypes. The opening chapters even suggest that Neverland itself represents a collection of varied pseudoenvironments that differ according to the fears, needs, preoccupations and interests of each child.[402]

In the hypothetical case above, the particular reading of the novel promotes a pseudoenvironment that glorifies the *puer aeternus* (eternal boy) phenomenon. Originating in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, this Latin term captures the desire to remain forever young and was adapted by Carl Jung as an archetype reflecting both the positive childhood characteristics of freshness and ingenuity, and the negative attributes of a man-child fearing responsibility—now dubbed informally in pop psychology as the Peter Pan Syndrome.[403] In this pseudoenvironment, Peter Pan, as the “boy who wouldn’t grow up,” symbolises a stereotyped concept of freedom that portrays children as having the ultimate license to do as they please, pursue their own interests, answer to no one but themselves, renege on responsibilities, and influence others to follow their lead. This particular mental construct—henceforth called the “Peter Pan Picture”—could generate a range of possible normative claims tying freedom to extreme self-interest and downplaying the importance of adult authority in children’s lives.[404] As an educational intervention, how might deliberate moral imagining help in such circumstances?

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[401] Barrie’s mother mourned the death of his brother so intensely that she told him she would be glad if he never grew up so he could not leave her. This early experience is though to have led to his interest in a boy who would never grow up.

[402] Barrie writes: “Of course the Neverlands vary a good deal. John’s, for instance, had a lagoon with flamingoes flying over it at which John was shooting, while Michael, who was very small, had a flamingo with lagoons flying over it. John lived in a boat turned upside down on the sands, Michael in a wigwam, Wendy in a house of leaves deftly sewn together. John had no friends, Michael had friends at night, Wendy had a pet wolf forsaken by its parents, but on the whole the Neverlands have a family resemblance, and if they stood still in a row you could say of them that they have each other’s nose, and so forth.” Barrie, 1911, 3.

While children may quickly learn to distinguish Neverland from reality, the numerous and even contradictory normative claims the novel helps shape—such as, “Children should be free,” “Children should behave,” “Adults should be in control,” and so on—are transferable, especially if educators emphasise certain morals over others in an attempt to transfer specific norms and values. Barrie himself seems to insinuate that adults manipulate their children’s pseudoenvironments to reflect their own preferred sense of reality (however distorted) when he paints the picture of Mrs. Darling as being committed to “tidying up her children’s minds,” allegedly like parents everywhere:

> It is the nightly custom of every good mother after her children are asleep to rummage in their minds and put things straight for next morning, repacking into their proper places the many articles that have wandered during the day. If you could keep awake (but of course you can’t) you would see your own mother doing this, and you would find it very interesting to watch her. It is quite like

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[403] Von Franz, 2000 and Kiley, 1983.

> tidying up drawers. You would see her on her knees, I expect, lingering humorously over some of your contents, wondering where on earth you had picked this thing up, making discoveries sweet and not so sweet, pressing this to her cheek as if it were as nice as a kitten, and hurriedly stowing that out of sight. When you wake in the morning, the naughtiness and evil passions with which you went to bed have been folded up small and placed at the bottom of your mind and on the top, beautifully aired, are spread out your prettier thoughts, ready for you to put on.[405]

Clearly this kind of paternalistic interference is not what Dewey had in mind for educators when he described the role of pragmatic inquiry in a school setting, though it does partly capture the worries he expresses over the parochial character of traditional pedagogies. Yet I remain concerned that even in a collaborative inquiry-based learning setting, it may be very challenging for children to determine what is most reasonable to think, be and do when it comes to questions of value, which might affect the capacities for reflective endorsement so needed for their evolving autonomy. While children can be taught to assess both descriptive and normative claims for their coherence, the latter may be harder for them to unravel, even through inquiry, because they are influenced by the cherished personal values they hold, however unreflexively.

In my view, though Dewey's take on the scientific method can certainly be applied beyond experiments in the physical world, it should be with the recognition that matters of value and moral judgement require their own particular set of conditions and dispositions for the generation and the testing of concepts and claims, in order to prevent the undermining of reasonableness

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[404] For the purpose of this example, the Peter Pan Picture captures the more egoistic tendencies of the story's protagonist, though children could very well gravitate toward other less ethically charged dimensions of the story, including ideas about happiness, play, enjoyment, camaraderie, and the like.

[405] *Ibid*, 1911, 3.

through stereotyped thinking. As Lippmman emphasises, a stereotype is an inadequate "habit of molding" that creates oversimplified and manipulated images to enable our "projecting on the world our own values and acting as if these projections corresponded to actual fact."[406] In the case of the Peter Pan Picture, while engaged in a collective inquiry, the students are stereotyping a concept they seem to greatly value—freedom—in ways that risk narrowing their envisioning of the aforementioned relation-to-knowledge context: how they strive to learn about the world and what they claim to know about it is mediated through the stereotyped concept.

How might this stereotyped concept of freedom operate in their knowing and learning? Children could make the moral claim that they ought to be able to pursue their own self-interest at all times without restriction and even at the expense of others. This in turn could translate into the conviction that only their needs and wishes matter, so anything they seek to know or learn should directly correspond to furthering their perceived right to do as they please regardless of the consequences. The result could be their resenting of any and all adults—including teachers—who provide parametres that they feel interfere with their personal agendas. These agendas might comprise of questionable concerns characterised by excessive materialism, unbridled entitlement, moral relativism, power-hungry pursuits, the desire for a job that feeds their desire for narcissistic self-promotion. As they age into more opportunities to act in accordance with the concerns and features about themselves they care most about, they may believe they have reason to value lifestyles that by most ethical standards would be considered depraved, wholly selfish, indifferent to societal inequalities and ecological degradation, and thus decidedly estranged from the intersubjectively inclined "liberated self" that Dewey champions.

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[406] Curtis, 1991, 26-27.

If this posture were even to be considered autonomous on a weak/moderate substantive account such as mine, it would be *irresponsibly* so at best and certainly not relational. Indeed, this stereotyped concept and circumscribed envisioning of the relation-to-knowledge context would counter the nuanced Deweyan conception of freedom that depicts union with others as paramount to achieving mutually acceptable ends:

> For freedom from restriction, the negative side, is to be prized only as a means to a freedom which is power: power to frame purposes, to judge wisely, to evaluate desires by the consequences which will result from acting upon them; power to select and order means to carry chosen ends into operation…Since freedom resides in the operations of intelligent observation and judgement by which a purpose is developed, guidance given by the teacher to the exercise of the pupils' intelligence is an aid to freedom, not a restriction upon it.[407]

And so, in terms of evolving responsible autonomy in childhood, the implications of equating freedom with the uninhibited, boundless pursuit of self-interest are considerable since these may contribute to the valuing that children might assume in their present and their future. The stereotyped concept represents a toxin in their mental landscape—an image that both falsifies the picture at the level of the *content* and downplays complexity at the level of *procedure*, the result of which may be an epistemic rigidity that undermines the reasoning skills required for pragmatic inquiry into questions of value. Such rigidity poses concurrent threats: children risk becoming a source of toxins for others' mental landscapes because of the dubious lives they believe are worth valuing, but they also risk becoming victimised by the source of toxins that others represent in the form of stereotyped thinking and dubious moral claims that negatively influence their own attempts at reasonableness.

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[407] Boydston, 1988, 41.

As we shall see, educationally speaking, deliberate moral imagining may therefore be used to set favourable conditions for pragmatic inquiry, fostering in children the dispositions necessary to reframe not only stereotypes and inaccurate pseudoenvironments, but also the unsound reasoning methods that entrench them, as problems requiring careful examination because of their potentially nefarious impact on their evolving responsible autonomy. This reframing role recalls the feminist proposal of *radical moral imagination* (outlined in chapter two), which seeks to complexify concepts with moral underpinnings so as to challenge hegemonic understandings and better represent diversity.

For himself, Dewey undergoes a process that I view as akin to deliberate moral imagining about stereotyped concepts when his inquiry leads him to distinguish between old and new accounts of individualism, in an effort to show how concepts lose their usefulness if they do not evolve to reflect the needs of the day.[408] On my interpretation of his distinction, while a self-regarding individualism of the Peter Pan Picture variety may have been necessary to liberate people from the oppressive, restraining power structures of the past, advanced democracies require a more community-oriented, interdependent sense of individualism that helps people determine their own capacities and strengths for the greater good. In "Inquiry as Critique," Matthew Festeinstein persuasively describes this process in terms of democracy: "ideologies are not fixed ahistorical entities but, when confronted with changes in social and political practice, may adjust to take into account the new forms of practice, rather than condemning them as not compatible with the ideology in its original form."[409]

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[408] Dewey, 1984.

Similarly, when the children's collective inquiry into the Peter Pan Picture calls for a new set of learning conditions and dispositions (namely humility and acceptance of fallibility, epistemological flexibility and comfort with uncertainty) through more morally imaginative channels—such as acknowledging limited perspectives, recognising commonality and identifying competing considerations—they can adapt their method as well as their claims, rather than doggedly conforming to an ineffective strategy to preserve a pseudoenvironment they now know to be flawed. They can demonstrate, through pragmatic inquiry infused with deliberate moral imagining, that "[w]hat counts as a successful inquiry is a satisfactory or settled situation, and until this is accomplished, inquiry self-corrects."[410] In terms of the relation-to-knowledge context, then, morally imaginative children might embody the three features of deliberate moral imagining in the following ways:

i) Acknowledgement of limited perspectives

When infused into pragmatic inquiry in a school setting, deliberate moral imagining can encourage children to acknowledge the limitations of their pseudoenvironments, viewing these provisionally as a handful of options amidst a large assortment of possible interpretations of the world, and exhibiting a willingness to recognise errors among them that need correction, thus learning the importance of *humility* and *acceptance of fallibility* in the face of knowledge. Because such purposeful envisioning unburdens them from the need to find an absolute, unequivocally accurate picture of the world to supplant their bank of mental images, morally imaginative children may be better placed to destabilise their stereotypes through an ongoing inquiry process of "reasoning and making tentative appraisals, taking hold of some set of factors that allow us to move to some other set, while ruling out others."[411] In other words, in adopting a humble attitude characterised by a willingness to err, they will not view their perspectives as static but as revisable—a kind of "temporal satisfaction of solved problems in a world that is not set apart from the knower's use(s) of the world or place(s) in that world."[412]

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[409] Festenstein, 2001, 742.

[410] Johnston, 2009, 22.

By engaging in deliberate moral imagining with respect to the Peter Pan Picture, children may begin to experience the normative claims arising from this interpretation of the story as possibilities rather than certainties, as wonderings rather than foregone conclusions—"Is freedom a kind of selfishness?" or "Should people be wholly self-interested?"—and be open to exploring a variety of possible interpretations. Accordingly, they may learn to question both the apparent certainty of their take on self-interest and their tendency to hold normative claims as certain, transforming these particular facets of their pseudoenvironment into a possibility in need of scrutiny and testing, and thus acknowledging, even surpassing, the limitations they represent. This awareness of their limitations of perspectives and stereotyped thinking can prompt a more discriminating orientation toward the elaboration and testing of value claims, making deliberate moral imagining a support for their developing sense of reasonableness since they will possess the humility needed to be open to correction. I take some of Dewey's key ideas as confirming my argument:

> It is [education's] business to cultivate deep-seated and effective habits of discriminating tested beliefs from mere assertions, guesses, and opinions; to develop a lively, sincere, and open-minded preference for conclusions that are

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[411] Rogers, 2007, 107.

> properly grounded, and to ingrain into the individual's working habits methods of inquiry and reasoning appropriate to the various problems that present themselves.[413]

While children could arrive at similar results on their own, it may be problematic to assume such humility and acceptance of fallibility will occur without educational exposures like morally imaginative pragmatic inquiry to help counterbalance social mores or family traditions that can potentially perpetuate inaccurate pseudoenvironments coupled with unreasonable thinking. Recalling my last chapter on the CA, external factors of the societal kind, associated with collective norms, beliefs and attitudes, can be so prejudicial and unjust that they become interfering conditions limiting children's agency by distorting what they might deem reasonable to value.

ii) Recognition of commonality

When engaging in pragmatic inquiry at school, morally imaginative children may be quicker to learn the benefits of *epistemological flexibility* by becoming conscious that everyone is susceptible to stereotyping concepts and cutting corners in their attempts to make meaning, and that their own struggles for flexibility in meaning-making are mirrored in the experiences of others, including their co-inquirers, thereby recognising how this commonality is crucial to the success of their inquiry efforts toward tentative claims that are inclusive of human experiences. Deliberate moral imagining can help them see their investigation as shared, encouraging them to compare what they have collectively identified as problematic facets of their pseudoenvironments in order to generate stronger, more robust conceptions and claims that can

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[412] Boyles, 2006, 61.

[413] Johnston, 2006, 111.

pass the test of their combined imaginative efforts and transform their stereotypes in light of a greater range of considerations.

With regard to the Peter Pan Picture, the common ground required for the children to problematise and ultimately destabilise their initial stereotyped concept of freedom can contribute to the success of their inquiry community while also becoming constitutive of it. In being epistemologically flexible, they have to discern their own perspective, convey it to their peers, actively listen to other views without dismissing them, assist with their assessment, attend to overlaps in the group's experiences of the same story, and contribute to the revised claims culminating from the group's ideas. By extension, morally imaginative children may be more prone than their peers to communication forms that smooth the way for challenging inquiries into questions of value, or what Leonard Waks insightfully calls transactional listening—"where individual boundaries momentarily dissolve, and speaker and listener, in working toward cooperative partnership, become so intertwined that it is hard to say where one ends and the other begins…Instead of feared aliens, the 'others' become cooperative friends."[414] This recognition of commonality, manifested through epistemological flexibility, reflects Dewey's sense of "thinking [as] the internalisation of social processes. Thus, in order to think for oneself, one must be a member of…an open, pluralistic and inquiring community."[415]

iii) Identification of competing considerations

Lastly, by learning *comfort with uncertainty* through deliberate moral imagining, children may become more apt at handling complexity and ambiguity, identifying the competing considerations within their mental constructs so as to highlight the inherent clashes and inconsistencies, which I see as a precursor to developing a critical stance toward their inaccurate pseudoenvironments. Returning to the Peter Pan Picture, when given the opportunity to inquire into the stereotyped concept of self-serving freedom reflected through Peter, morally imaginative children might realise the free spirit ideal is more complex that it initially seems, mulling over the distinction between self-interest as a kind of personal ambition and self-interest as a kind of disregard for others' welfare, and considering the legitimacy of their simplified claims regarding the acceptability of selfish ends. They may be likelier to notice that their initial orientation towards inquiry no longer suffices to confront their identified problem so their very approach must change, calling for specific combinations of the methods, techniques and traits of inquiry that may once again demand a more morally imaginative set of learning conditions as new problems emerge. I agree with Johnston's view that pragmatic inquiry thus facilitates the self-correction of both inquirers and their practice:

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[414] Waks, 2011, 197.

[415] Bleazby, 2006, 30–31.

> Any of the aspects of inquiry are potentially reconstructed when a problem goes unsolved by earlier methods, or a novel problem emerges from the reconsideration of a situation...inquiry, when faced with a problem that cannot be resolved satisfactorily, transforms itself directly, through its response to the environment or context in which it is used, and indirectly, through its concepts and propositions.[416]

This willingness to conceive of strategies in light of tensions and differences mobilises the children's imaginative repertoires, motivating them to envision the possible consequences of the normative claims their stereotyped concept of self-serving freedom presents. They may attempt to visualise what the world would be like if everyone lived by this free agent maxim that suddenly seems so rife with ambiguity, realising that such an orientation could change how people see each other—perhaps more as means than as ends—thus threatening the values of camaraderie and friendship that the story also celebrates with good reason. Throughout this inquiring process, they may discover that what they actually esteem is independence, not self-serving; Peter's lack of subjugation, not his egoism. In turn, they may consider an alternate world in which people have the time and space to focus on what makes them happiest—arguably the best moments in *Peter and Wendy*—rather than struggle against each other over limited resources and alienate themselves from the people they love. Accordingly, in a Deweyan sense, the comfort with uncertainty resulting from their deliberate moral imagining would enable an inquiry process that "reconstructs and broadens experience, thus giving a more complete representation of ends than are suggested by the problematic environment in which [they] find [them]selves."[417]

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[416] *Ibid*, 55.

In summary, as I have stated, children are emerging agents in the sense that they need practice reflectively endorsing their deep concerns so that they can progressively live in accordance with them as they grow up, and thus evolve in their evolving responsible autonomy competence. This practice involves learning to determine what is most reasonable to think, be and do, which in an educational setting seems most feasible through pragmatic inquiry. According to the argument I am advancing, deliberate moral imagining supports such efforts by fostering in children a particular set of conditions and dispositions to help them reason better together so that the products of their inquiry as well as the inquiry process itself become more reasonable.

As a result of acquiring humility, acceptance of fallibility, epistemological flexibility and comfort with uncertainty, they can learn to view both the content and procedures of inquiry as malleable, improvable and adjustable. Used pedagogically, deliberate moral imagining can help children address the failure to fairly prescribe ("All children should be free to do whatever they want!") which might otherwise impair their reasoning abilities in ways that fortify questionable concerns (only lives of extreme self-interest seem reasonable to value) while crippling the educative potential of pragmatic inquiry (through a posture of epistemic rigidity).

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[417] Rogers, 2007, 107.

In keeping with the mental landscape metaphor, deliberate moral imagining enables a weeding of stereotypes as invasive species that otherwise grow rampant. Just as deliberate moral imagining motivates practical wisdom to enlarge the scope of empathic engagement and fuels perspectival identity to foster self-efficacy in the conversion of resources into valued opportunities and outcomes, here it encourages learning dispositions that lessen the grip of inaccurate pseudoenvironments and destabilise stereotypes, thereby promoting reasonableness. If on the pragmatist interpretation I have proposed, responsible autonomy is a striving for self-development through a liberating individualism that remains historically and deliberatively engaged, then deliberate moral imagining helps children as emerging responsibly autonomous agents to realise the risks that inaccurate pseudoenvironments pose to this self-development and to reason about them more effectively. Though often challenging intellectually and affectively, as my next chapter will strive to illustrate, the conditions and dispositions encouraged through morally imaginative inquiry may indeed free children from the safety zone of bias that gets in the way of their envisioning of their relation-to-knowledge context—how they learn and what they claim to know about the world.

By learning to detect and debunk problematic stereotypes and normative claims, they may more readily avoid the bias Lippmann feared and the potential moral relativism of their pseudoenvironments, and tend "to realise more and more clearly when [their] ideas started, where they started, how they came to [them], why [they] accepted them…to know what fairy tale, what school book, what tradition, what novel, play, picture, phrase, planted one preconception in this mind, another in that mind."[418] Finally, because morally imaginative children may also come to see the pragmatic inquiry process itself as something they believe they have reason to value, their experience is educative in the Deweyan sense of growth—producing meaning that they can extend into future experiences. For these reasons, I argue that deliberate moral imagining has educative potential. As Dewey writes:

> He must, if he is an educator, be able to judge what attitudes are actually conducive to continued growth and what are detrimental…All this means that attentive care must be devoted to the conditions which give each present experience a worthwhile meaning…The [pedagogical] planning must be flexible enough to permit free play for individuality of experience and yet firm enough to give direction towards continuous development of power.[419]

In closing, I want to end this section by considering another reason why deliberate moral imagining may be pedagogically worthwhile, which recalls the philosophies of childhood I outlined in my introduction. It could be argued that children may be better positioned to excel at such purposeful envisioning due to their more fluid sense of self and experience in their early stage of life. If we assume that childhood is somehow tainted by the deliberate creation and transmission of inaccurate pseudoenvironments from adult to child, then the stereotyped concepts and normative claims that result may indeed endanger children's evolving autonomy for the reasons explored. Yet it is not clear to me whether children experience their pseudoenvironments the same way that Lippmann argues adults do, namely as coping mechanisms in the face of an overly complex world.

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[418] Lippmann, *Public Opinion,* 91.

[419] Boydston, 1988, 21.

While hard to gauge empirically, it may be worth considering whether children—by virtue of the fact that they have lived less long—might be less dependent on the entrenched ideologies that hold adults captive over time, and thus more inclined to excel at deliberate moral imagining and to thrive under its learning conditions. This greenness may lay the foundation for an experience of evolving responsible autonomy that is meaningful to them (although perhaps dismissed by adults), in light of their unique epistemological vantage point as newer, less ripened individuals who are thereby less attached to their pseudoenvironments, and more able to think and act independently of them. With regard to my hypothetical case, while Barrie seems to imply that all children desire the Neverland pseudoenvironment despite the tragic inevitability of their growing up—they all start off with the ability to fly but unlearn it over time—his apparent nostalgia for childhood may be clouding the way children actually experience the story and their capacity to inquire into its portrayals, especially if assisted through pedagogical interventions that emphasise deliberate moral imagining. Whereas the Peter Pan Picture acts as a coping strategy for Barrie in adulthood, children may not necessarily experience it as a crutch given their short past and their particular lived experiences.

Moving forward into my case study chapter, I want to consider the possibility that children may more readily exhibit morally imaginative inquiry dispositions like comfort with uncertainty and acceptance of fallibility, especially with regard to questions of value, because they are less vulnerable than adults to the scientistic grip that confines many contemporary cultures. Interestingly, Kennedy likens children to the perennial figure of the fool in Western civilization, one whose very existence as an inverter of order “shows the underside of what is being carefully avoided by normal people" and is thus "a reminder of what [the dominant scientific world-picture] has suppressed in order to be totalistic."[420] Through the imaginative leaps that flesh out the mental picture books they inherit from adults, children may become enraptured by their pseudoenvironments but not to the extent that they are unable to cope if the stereotypes to which they have been exposed are suddenly debunked for their moral failings. Because their relative youth might make them more malleable, notably through deliberate moral imagining that encourages epistemological flexibility, children may be better positioned to view their pseudoenvironments not as the definitive world-picture but as a handful of options amidst a large assortment of possible interpretations of the world, making them more able to keep them at arm's length to appraise their distortions.

This distinctive potential of childhood echoes what Lippmann hoped citizens could accomplish if they could become less fearfully obstinate:

> What matters is the character of the stereotypes, and the gullibility with which we employ them. And these in the end depend on inclusive patterns which constitute our philosophy of life. If in that philosophy we assume that the world is codified according to a code which we possess, we are likely to make our reports of what is going on describe a world run by our code. But if our philosophy tells us that each man is only a small part of the world, that his intelligence catches at best only phases and aspects in a coarse net of ideas, then, when we use our stereotypes, we tend to know that they are only stereotypes, *to hold them lightly, to modify them gladly*.[421]

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[420] Kennedy, 1989, 374.

[421] Lippmann, 1922, 90–91. Emphasis mine.

If children experience their pseudoenvironments differently than adults do, not as a dependency but as a curiosity, they may represent an alternative standpoint to reality as morally imaginative agents, a source of "transgressive knowledge" that Kennedy argues can challenge the adult world-picture: "Do young children, because of their different situation, have some insight into nature that adults do not?" he asks. "Does their folly actually represent a form of wisdom, or at least a philosophical openness lost to the adults who have learned, before they knew it, to read soul out of nature?"[422] In other words, the very experience of childhood may create an atmosphere for moral imagining that enables children to destabilise the stereotypes and debunk the problematic normative claims resulting from the pseudoenvironments they inherit from adults. Moreover, they may also be more likely to resist the interpretive lens imposed by adults because their own immediacy of experience (characterised by a limited past and a very tangibly felt present) may make them more receptive. As Barrie himself remarks in *Peter and Wendy*, "Children have the strangest adventures without being troubled by them."[423]

By extension, if morally imaginative dispositions are not only casually encouraged in children but purposively facilitated through a curatorship of space for their own mental landscaping, they may become adept at negotiating and constructing collective pseudoenvironments that are more nuanced and reasonable than their individual (possibly stereotyped) conceptions, thus enhancing their evolving responsible autonomy competence in their thought and action. To be clear, the promotion of these conditions and dispositions is appropriate—whereas those in the pseudoenvironments perpetuated by some children's stories are not—because they are *procedural values* that support pragmatic inquiry in an educational setting rather than content-specific values that endorse particular beliefs or world-views for miseducative purposes. To help ensure such educative potential, in my next section I will analyse the theoretical framework of classical pragmatism to establish evaluation criteria that can assess the pedagogical worthiness of deliberate moral imagining.

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[422] Kennedy, 1989, 378–79.

Pragmatist principles for moral imagining

Through interpretations of the distinctive but complementary philosophical contributions of classical pragmatism, this section will identify pragmatist principles that may help to generate evaluation criteria for ensuring the pedagogical worthiness of deliberate moral imagining in educational settings. As we have seen, early pragmatists may have disagreed on many fronts but the common themes that emerge from their philosophies remain pertinent and are worth considering in light of the argument I am proposing. For present purposes, the term "principle" should not be understood in the strong sense as denoting absolute foundations or fundamental norms, which would be against the pragmatist agenda, but rather in the weaker sense as designating significant values that orient philosophical commitments.

This section will examine how common themes in Dewey, Peirce and James can be interpreted as principles—namely the principles of indeterminacy, reflection, habit and community—which, in turn, can generate criteria that may be pedagogically useful for guiding morally imaginative educational practices.[424] The aim of this section is to help bridge the theoretical chapters of this thesis with the upcoming case study chapter by setting up what a morally imaginative educational practice ought to look like; or, to maintain the metaphor I have

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[423] Barrie, 1911, 4.

[424] For the sake of coherence, the principles are presented separately but they are all connected. Additionally, while the labels ascribed to these principles may be familiar terms in other philosophical frameworks, in this essay they take on distinctively Peircian, Jamesian and Deweyan flavours. In some cases, the criteria may push the pragmatist triumvirate's ideas further than they would have endorsed.

been developing, what a curatorship of children's own mental landscaping might involve to assure pedagogical integrity.

i. The principle of indeterminacy

Given the pragmatist insistence on the value of scientific experimentation for philosophical thinking, it makes sense to begin with the principle of indeterminacy, that is, the commitment to following the stimulating sense of uncertainty that propels individuals to seek information, investigate a situation or solve a problem. Likening it to an inflamed nerve in need of scratching, Peirce describes indeterminacy as "the irritation of doubt"[425] that motivates thinking and "stimulates us to action until it is destroyed."[426] On his view, doubt is "an uneasy and dissatisfied state from which we struggle to free ourselves and pass into the [calmer and more agreeable] state of belief."[427] By temporarily settling our doubts, the struggle of inquiry enables our purposeful action in the world,[428] until we encounter a new source of uncertainty that reinitiates the cycle.[429] For Peirce, indeterminacy has to be genuinely felt—"there must be a real and living doubt" to fuel the inquiry struggle—but it can also be provoked through what he calls "feigned hesitancy," provided it is strong enough to cause authentic intellectual irritation.[430] Applied to educational settings, it follows that children are likeliest to experience indeterminacy if their doubt arises from their own lived experiences, although an educator could also orchestrate a conundrum that they may genuinely find perplexing.[431]

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[425] Peirce, 1997, 33.

[426] *Ibid*, 12.

[427] *Ibid*, 13.

[428] Peirce writes: "With the doubt, therefore, the struggle begins, and with the cessation of doubt it ends. Hence, the sole object of inquiry is the settlement of opinion." *Ibid*, 14.

[429] According to Peirce, "As it appeases the irritation of doubt, which is the motive for thinking, thought relaxes and comes to rest for a moment when belief is reached. But, since belief is a rule for action, the application of which involves further doubt and further thought, at the same time that it is a stopping-place, it is also a new starting-place for thought." *Ibid*, 33.

[430] *Ibid*, 14, 31.

Similarly, Dewey understands indeterminacy as a situation that commands our scrutiny because we have deemed it as problematic in light of the way it troubles or confuses our concepts, raises ambiguities or unanticipated effects in our experience or, as we shall soon see, points out conflicts in our habits.[432] For inquiry to be prompted, the indeterminacy must matter to us: we must ourselves necessarily judge the indeterminate circumstances as a problem deserving resolution and, in so doing, try to "secure equilibrium with our environment."[433] However, in the same vein as Peirce, Dewey maintains that we can also create or seek indeterminacy in order to deliberately advance research, and as such, "the educator's role is one of creating problems for students to solve, problems that demand more of humans than mere habitual behaviour."[434] As intellectual historian Robert Westbrook has insightfully noted, Dewey is more teacher-centred than many have interpreted him to be: on his account, educators have a responsibility to spark the inquiry that will strengthen their students' moral character through a kind of "direction by indirection."[435]

For his part, James depicts indeterminacy as a kind of curiosity in the face of novelty that causes natural, spontaneous interest and elicits voluntary attention—"the impulse toward better cognition in its full extent."[436] When applied to children, who are "possessed by curiosity about every new impression that assails them" and whose "attention is spontaneously held by any problem that involves the presentation of a new material object…or activity,"[437] the principle of indeterminacy encompasses unfamiliar and exciting exposures that can take on increasingly more theoretical dimensions as they grow up. Educators risk failing if they try to force the acquisition of facts: since learning is voluntary, they can succeed only "by soliciting [the child] in the first instance by something which natively makes him react. He must take the first step himself."[438] James recommends that educators use the strategy of connecting sources of children's curiosity to the learning opportunity in question, so that it "may become interesting through becoming associated with an object in which an interest already exists,"[439] and even that they turn themselves into a source of curiosity by being "alive and ready...and us[ing] the contagion of [their] own example."[440]

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[431] It is important to note that Peirce's notion of doubt is not tantamount to radical Cartesian skepticism, which he dismisses as "paper doubt," but rather the uncertainty that provokes scientific investigation. Bacon, 2012, 43. Further, while Peirce's tended to view pragmatism as operating in the realm of science, his ideas are still relevant to educational contexts.

[432] Dewey argues that in indeterminacy, there is "uncertainty as to the what of the experience together with the certainty that there is such an experience." Dewey in Boydston (ed.), 1990, 330.

[433] Bacon, 2012, 96-97.

[434] Johnson, 1995, 100.

[435] Westbrook, 1991, 107.

From a pragmatist perspective, then, as I see it, the principle of indeterminacy can help to ensure the pedagogical worth of deliberate moral imagining in education by contributing the following evaluation criterion: *A morally imaginative practice must spark or highlight problematic aspects in the children's lived experiences that inspire their genuine doubt and curiosity, and motivate their self-propelled inquiry.*

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[436] James, 1899, 46.

[437] *Ibid*, 46-47.

[438] *Ibid*, 39.

[439] *Ibid*, 94.

ii. The principle of reflection

Once inquiry is underway, stimulated by a genuine "itch" for resolution, the principle of reflection—or to borrow from Dewey, the "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends"—[441]takes on a crucial role in the orientation toward intelligent judgement and truth. However, the pragmatist relationship to truth is a complicated and variegated one, and an undeniable source of disagreement between Peirce, Dewey and James. All three thinkers embrace human fallibility, contending that since we are prone to error, any judgement we make must be deemed as not only provisional but also revisable, as life presents us with new opportunities for both uncertainty and enrichment as well as for ongoing inquiry.[442] But their distinctive takes on truth lead to particular conceptions of reflection as a principle.

For Peirce, truth, as "the opinion which is fated to be ultimately agreed to by all who investigate,"[443] can only result from the scientific method, as we have seen, because it alone enables us to address "real things, whose characters are entirely independent of our opinions about them" and then reflect reasonably on our hypotheses to establish actionable beliefs.[444] He argues our reflective capacities are too often jeopardised by the aforementioned trio of methods of "fixing belief." Applied to educational settings, given the human propensity to confuse truth with the dubious outcomes of these misleading methods, Peirce would likely argue that educators

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[440] *Ibid*, 105.

[441] Dewey, 1991, 6.

[442] Broadly speaking, classical pragmatism is fallibilist because "the settlement of a particular situation by a particular inquiry is no guarantee that that conclusion will always remain settled" or apply in a future set of circumstances. Biesta, 2003, 66. However, it does not follow that we cannot trust any of our conclusions or must constantly question them: in Dewey's words, "until we have occasion to doubt them, [they] are settled, assured." Dewey in Boydston, 1990, 149.

[443] Quoted in Dewey, 1938, 345.

[444] Peirce writes: "The willful adherence to a belief, and the arbitrary forcing of it upon others, must, therefore, both be given up, and a new method of settling opinions must be adopted, which shall not only produce an impulse to believe, but shall also decide what proposition it is which is to be believed." Peirce, 1997, 19.

"ought to allow reflection its full weight" in order for children to produce beliefs with sound scientific basis and arrive at "integrity of belief."[445]

In like manner, Dewey understands reflective thought as scientific, introducing the term "warranted assertibility" as an alternative to the notion of truth as fixed belief, in order to emphasise the *process* of verifying hypotheses to remove indeterminacy.[446] Reflection plays a crucial role in helping us to test out possible hypotheses before enacting them in real-world inquiry, where we can obtain more reliable proof and gain knowledge, understood as the "possibility of control"[447] to better direct our actions. In his words, reflection enables "the transformation of disturbed and unsettled situations into those more controlled and more significant."[448] Pedagogically speaking, as we have seen, for Dewey, "the child comes to school to *do,*"[449] not to be a spectator—children must wrestle with thinking to make it valuable; skills without thinking are purposeless. Reflection is *reconstructive* thinking with critical intelligence—the scientific attitude applied to lived problems toward the possibility of a better human life.[450] Accordingly, warranted assertions achieved through reflection are morally significant—truth is a species of the good.

James agrees with this last assessment, stating that "the true is the name of whatever proves itself to be good in the way of belief, and good, too, for definite, assignable reasons."[451] Yet his conception of truth differs from Peirce and Dewey in his focus on continuity; how a reflective combination of the old and the new may embolden future human action. On his description, we submit our newly amassed ideas to a process of apperception, which colours our interpretation by associating them with our "mind's ready-made stock" of content: "Educated as we already are, we never get an experience that remains for us completely nondescript: it always reminds of something similar in quality, or of some context that might have surrounded it before, and which it now in some way suggests."[452] And so, for James, a "new opinion counts as 'true' just in proportion as it gratifies the individual's desire to assimilate the novel in his experience to his beliefs in stock."[453] It follows that James's conception of truth is pluralistic since we may assimilate the old and the new differently for our own purposes, but also because the world's constant flux means we will need to refine our claims based on what we have previously found convincing in light of our new experiences. In education, reflection as a form of voluntary thinking becomes important in this verifying process to help children problem-solve toward warranted though no less contingent truths.[454] As James writes, "truth happens to an idea, it becomes true, is made true by events...its validity is the process of its validation."[455]

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[445] *Ibid*, 24.

[446] Dewey in Boydston, 1990, 15.

[447] Dewey, 1929, 22.

[448] Dewey in Boydston, 1990, 236.

[449] Westbrook, 1991, 102.

[450] Contrary to some popular interpretations, Dewey is not scientistic since he describes the scientific attitude as available to everyone who engages in intelligent reflection, not just specialists. As Cornel West notes: "This distinction between scientific attitude and scientific method is crucial for Dewey; those who overlook it view him as a vulgar positivist, one who makes a fetish of scientific method. But this is simply not so. Dewey indeed distinguishes dogmatic thinking from critical thinking, yet the latter is not simply the monopoly of scientific method." West, 1989, 97.

[451] James, 1987, 520.

From a pragmatist perspective, then, I am arguing that the principle of reflection can help to ensure the pedagogical worth of deliberate moral imagining in education by contributing the following evaluation criterion: *A morally imaginative practice must help children recognise that truth is provisional and revisable, emphasising reflective approaches that probe their reasons for believing and take into account their existing experiences.*

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[452] James, 1899, 158.

[453] James, 1987, 514.

[454] Türer in Taylor et al., eds., 1994, 32-33.

[455] James, 1975, 97.

iii. The principle of habit

On a pragmatist reading, an inquiry practice that is stimulated by genuine doubt and then supported by reflective thought can lead to the formation of robust though adaptable dispositions of action—this process is encapsulated by the principle of habit, emphasised by Peirce, Dewey and James alike, albeit in slightly different ways. For Peirce, habits are acquired "rules of action"[456] that shape our engagement with the world, and we distinguish ourselves from non-human animals by our "power to take on habits after reflection"[457] on our experiences, and apply these habits in future circumstances, "no matter how improbable they may be."[458] Hence, unlike natural dispositions that are largely beyond our control, habits contribute to our freedom because we have agency in their development: through reflection rooted in reasonableness, we are "giving a hand toward rendering the world more reasonable whenever, as the slang is, it is 'up to us' to do so."[459] Since these "inward actions"[460] of reflection can greatly affect our habit formation and world impact, their controlled use through reason is crucial: as Peirce writes, "the exercise of control over your own habits, if not the most important business of life, is at least very near to being so."[461] For instance, in educational settings, in order to effectively apply what Peirce calls "the guiding principle of inference,"[462] children need the appropriate habits of mind, or else they risk living according to invalid extrapolations, as epitomised by the aforementioned misleading methods of fixing belief.

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[456] Peirce, 1997, 33.

[457] Sharp, 1995, 44.

[458] Peirce, 1997, 35.

[459] Hartshorne and Weiss, eds., 1958, 1.615.

[460] Peirce describes inward actions as "actions which do not take place, but which somehow influence our habits" *Ibid*, 6.286.

[461] *Ibid*, 3.614.

[462] Peirce, 1997, 11.

According to Dewey, it is our plasticity—or our ability to learn from experience and extend our learning to new circumstances—that enables habits, which he defines as "acquired predispositions to ways or modes of response."[463] In his words:

> Plasticity or the power to learn from experience means the formation of habits. Habits give control over the environment, power to utilise it for human purposes. Habits take the form both of habituation, or a general and persistent balance of organic activities with surroundings, and of active capacities to readjust activities to meet new conditions. The former furnishes the background of growth; the latter constitute growing. Active habits involve thought, invention, and initiative in apply capacities to new aims. They are opposed to routine which marks an arrest of growth."[464]

Deweyan habits resemble Aristotle's in the sense that they "organise our responsiveness to the world."[465] Thus, the quintessential instance of intelligent habit would be wisdom—the "habit of seeking and creating connections among the disparate aspects of life."[466] With respect to childhood, intelligent habits represent a real possibility for Dewey since children's immaturity, far from indicating a lack or absence, "designates a positive force or ability—the power to grow."[467] Unlike adults, children, by virtue of their life stage, have readier access to their sense of naïveté, which enables them to think from a fresher, less biased perspective; in this sense, they are more apt philosophers—a stance that echoes my own proposal from the previous section. In contrast, as adults, "we cannot permanently divest ourselves of the intellectual habits we take on and wear when we assimilate the culture of our own time and place…we cannot achieve recovery of primitive naïveté"—though Dewey does maintain we can salvage it in part through philosophical thinking, hence the need to prioritise reflective habits in education.[468]

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[463] Dewey in Boydston, ed., 1990, 32.

[464] Dewey, 2004, 57.

[465] Savage, 2002, 384.

[466] Johnson, 1995, 100.

[467] Dewey, 2004, 46.

For James, we have habits—both virtuous and vicious—as a result of being embodied beings: "All our life, so far as it has definite form, is but a mass of habits, practical, emotional, and intellectual, systematically organised for our weal or woe, and bearing us irresistibly toward our destiny."[469] Ideally, as we grow up, we form habits when our related natural impulses are "most acutely present" and "with uninterrupted frequency…[so our] brain 'grows' to their use," with our education supporting this endeavour by ingraining and organising "that assortment of habits that shall be most useful" in our lives."[470] For instance, James offers the example of self-reliance as a useful habit that enables children to enthusiastically maintain their interest in a project, without external assistance.[471] More generally, he describes "habits of reaction" as those determining our reactions to new stimuli, striking the optimal balance between our impulses and inhibitions, so that our action, "far from being paralysed, will succeed in energetically keeping on its way, sometimes overpowering the resistances, sometimes steering along the line where they lie thinnest."[472] Educators should aim to maximise these latter types of useful habits and minimise the obtrusive variety to help increase children's powers of agency and adaptability.

From a pragmatist perspective, then, in my estimation, the principle of habit can help to ensure the pedagogical worth of deliberate moral imagining in education by contributing the following evaluation criterion: *A morally imaginative practice must motivate in children the*

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[468] Dewey, 1967, 42.

[469] James, 1899, 64.

[470] *Ibid*, 61, 70, 67.

[471] *Ibid*, 34-36.

[472] Ibid, 179.

drive to develop intelligent, useful habits that yield fresh, reasonable perspectives as well as a willingness to self-correct and adapt to circumstances.

iv. The principle of community

From a pragmatist perspective, the principles of indeterminacy, reflection and habit do not operate in a solitary vacuum: as we have seen, inquiry practices that are reflective and genuinely driven, as well as their ensuing dispositions of action, are only meaningful in an intersubjective context—hence the importance of the principle of community for Peirce, Dewey and James. For all three theorists, accountability to others is crucial to the process of arriving at truth and of shaping character—atomistic conceptions of selfhood misrepresent how we actually live. In Peirce's words, "to be a self is to be a possible member of some community,"[473] since we create our identity over time through our engagement with our environment. Further, any reliable knowing we achieve emerges from collective pursuits and collaborative problem-solving that invite alternative viewpoints, careful scrutiny and the expression of social norms—and, if all goes well, bring about consensus. By extension, reasonableness is attained communally through inclusion of diverse voices: "We individually cannot reasonably hope to attain the ultimate philosophy which we pursue; we can only seek it, therefore, for the community of philosophers."[474] In a school context, the communal commitment to reason reveals a kind of love of wisdom that tempers children's individualistic leanings and acknowledges their differences—

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[473] Hartshorne and Weiss, eds., 1958, 5.402.

[474] Peirce, 1992, 29.

“love for the tools of inquiry, love of others’ ideas, love of truth, love of each other as persons, love of the ultimate ideal, love of the world.”[475]

Likewise, Dewey upholds the notion of collective inquiry but envisions it occurring in a highly inclusive “Great Community”[476] of the competent to which “every new idea and theory has to be submitted...for confirmation and test” in order to reach warranted assertibility.[477] Referring to humans as “acculturated organisms,”[478] he calls communication not the transmission of information but “the establishment of cooperation in an activity in which there are partners, and in which the activity of each is modified and regulated by partnership”—[479]a creative process of building a shared, intersubjective space whereby “something is literally made in common.”[480] He underlines that while this need for others may appear negative, it is in fact what prevents us from becoming overly independent and impairing our capacities for democratic engagement: “From a social standpoint, dependence denotes a power rather than a weakness; it involves interdependence.”[481] And this power is especially accessible to children, whom Dewey perceives as highly socially sensitive: “Few grown-up persons retain all of the flexible and sensitive ability of children to vibrate sympathetically with the attitudes and doings of those about them.”[482] Accordingly, educators must aim to foster the community dispositions help children participate in democracy as a “mode of associated life,”[483] whose “conscience is its free and effectively organised intelligence,"[484] and by extension, reach the ultimate aim of self-realisation.[485]

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[475] Sharp, 1993, 59-60.

[476] Westbrook, 1991, 58.

[477] Dewey in Boydston, ed., 1990, 115.

[478] Dewey in Boydston, ed., 1990, 115.

[479] Dewey, 1929, 179.

[480] *Ibid*, 178.

[481] Dewey, 2004, 48.

[482] *Ibid*, 47.

[483] Johnson, 1995, 107.

From James's perspective, at the most basic level, we need others to facilitate the all-important process of imitation by which we acquire the habits that shape our character: "Each of us is in fact what he is almost exclusively by virtue of his imitativeness," he writes. "We become conscious of what we ourselves are by imitating others—the consciousness of what the others are precedes—the sense of self grows by the sense of pattern."[486] Moreover, like his fellow pragmatists, James accentuates the social nature of inquiry as key to validating our truths, but also to ensuring against the hubristic belief that ours is the only worthwhile vantage point, which causes us to neglect the insights of others' experiences and become "blind to the peculiar ideality of their conditions."[487] Pedagogically speaking, although James prizes individuality for the plurality of distinct perspectives it affords us, he warns educators not to let children lose sight of their social responsibility—his account presents "a dialectic of development in which the interaction between individual and society exists in a creative tension."[488]

In my view, then, from a pragmatist perspective, the principle of reflection can help to ensure the pedagogical worth of deliberate moral imagining in community by contributing the following evaluation criterion: *A morally imaginative practice must foster a communal spirit in children by stressing collaboration and a recognition of others' contributions to their perspectives and characters.*

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[484] Cherryholmes, 1999, 76.

[485] As Westbrook writes, for Dewey, "the critical task of education in a democratic society was to help children develop the character—the habits and virtues—that would enable them to achieve self-realization." Westbrook, 1991, 105.

[486] James, 1899, 48.

[487] James, 1977, 631.

[488] Türer in Taylor et al., eds., 1994, 34.

With these four pragmatist principles outlined, the question becomes: What might they look like when applied as evaluation criteria for deliberate moral imagining in school settings? The Philosophy for Children (P4C) program is an interesting educational approach to examine through a pragmatist lens since it was greatly inspired by Deweyan and Peircean conceptions of inquiry, and arose in response to genuine uncertainty and lived tensions in the 1960s regarding the possibility of teaching critical reasoning to young people. Though not without its critics, in terms of its educational philosophy, its conception of childhood, and its pedagogical goals and values, the P4C program represents a progressive effort with pragmatist leanings, notably in its attempt to develop children's reasonableness. I hope to argue that its promise as a morally imaginative practice also lies in its capacity to fulfill the evaluation criteria itemised in this section.

Closing remarks

In this chapter, using the theoretical framework of classical pragmatism, I have sought to examine the educative potential of deliberate moral imagining in childhood by considering how it might address the challenge of inaccurate pseudoenvironments, which I have characterised as faulty mental constructs based on misinformation and bias that hinder the reasonableness required for children to enact their evolving autonomy responsibly by yielding stereotyped thinking and misleading value judgements. Because they engender an epistemic rigidity that constrains inquiry efforts by undermining reasoning skills and skewing what might be considered valuable, stereotyped concepts and the mental picture books that propel them pose an important threat to children as emerging agents. Lippmann's notion of the "pictures in our heads" juxtaposed against common themes from classical pragmatists offer an interesting lens through which to examine the development of autonomous thought and action in children as emerging agents, notably with regard to the use of pragmatic inquiry in educational settings. Drawing on key ideas from Dewey, as well as some contributions from Peirce and a few from James, I have argued that deliberate moral imagining may destabilise the stereotypes in children's mental landscapes by promoting a set of specific learning conditions and dispositions that promote reasonableness, namely humility and acceptance of fallibility, epistemological flexibility and comfort with uncertainty.

It is my hope that the arguments and examples I have proposed in this chapter reveal how morally imaginative children may be more able than their unimaginative peers to detect the problematic normative claims resulting from the faulty mental constructs they inherit from adults, because they may be better positioned through deliberate moral imagining to weaken the hold of stereotypes so as to think and act independently of them. This is educationally significant because of the potential impact on the way children envision the overarching context of relation-to-knowledge—how they learn and what they claim to know about the world. To my mind, the evaluation criteria I have gleaned from the principles of indeterminacy, reflection, habit and community within classical pragmatism can be pedagogically useful for guiding morally imaginative practices so as to curate meaningful opportunities for children to collaboratively think about questions of value in ways that may support their evolving responsible autonomy, particularly by fuelling their perspectival identity and guiding their reflective endorsement.

Interestingly, while Dewey recognises the role of inquiry in many educational contexts—from science to aesthetics—he does not acknowledge its philosophical potential for children, perhaps in part because it seems less practical and active than other disciplines.[489] Yet as I hope to show in the next chapter, the Community of Philosophical Inquiry (CPI) pedagogical model used in the P4C program holds promise as a morally imaginative practice that promotes reasonableness by engaging children as emerging agents in the negotiation and reconstruction of their pseudoenvironments through active, shared conceptual investigation that is both embodied and affectively charged.

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[489] Dewey seems to have had a complicated relationship with past philosophers, notably Socrates, because they did not integrate science into their philosophical method. Betz, 1980, 334. Yet he seems more hopeful in his article, "The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy": "Philosophy recovers itself when it ceases to be a device for dealing with the problems of philosophers and becomes a method, cultivated by philosophers, for dealing with the problems of men." Johnston, 2006, 1.

Chapter 5: Morally Imaginative Practices in Childhood

Throughout this thesis, I have been guided by the question: How might moral imagining be conceived so as to support the cultivation of responsible autonomy in childhood? Concerned over the significant influence that children's mental landscapes can exert on their evolving autonomy, not least because their reserve of life experiences is limited by their age, I have sought to determine how the process of deliberate moral imagining might become a crucial stand-in for the lived encounters they have yet to face, enriching the fluid repertoire of meanings that they conjure up reflexively when they think and act. I have argued that when conceived as a conscious, flexible process, moral imagining may contribute to children's emerging agency by expanding and enriching their envisioned options for what they believe is worth valuing—in others, in themselves and in the world—within their current and future circumstances, thereby helping to make their autonomy more responsible.

Now I want to turn my attention to examining how this conception of deliberate moral imagining might be applied and activated in practice to support children as emerging agents. Since I am interested in creating meaningful opportunities for children to envisage and exercise their evolving responsible autonomy, I want to determine what a morally imaginative practice might involve and achieve, notably in terms of its impact on their relational openness, that is, their sensitivity to and awareness of the complexities in their relation to other, self and knowledge.

If deliberate moral imagining can be understood metaphorically as mental landscaping, then a morally imaginative practice should be described as an imaginative curatorship facilitated by adults that opens up space for children to enrich their own mental landscapes—to become their own mental landscapists. This curatorship involves careful interventions that model how such purposeful envisioning can be practised with integrity. On my view, a child can engage in deliberate moral imagining alone in her everyday life, especially if certain supports are available to her through interactions with her family, friends, school and community, like the narrative aids, conceptual resources, dialogical space and creative expression I have described. But it stands to reason that she could benefit from a more formal practice sustaining her efforts, notably one that reflects the pragmatist principles I have proposed. After all, as I have noted and will examine again in my conclusion, deliberate moral imagining is not easy—it may even seem too tough for children and thus unachievable in childhood.

But what if a pedagogy had the underpinnings to systematically enable the process of deliberate moral imagining by integrating its various features and supports, and by enabling children to explore them together, thus sharing in the work? To meet the criteria of deliberate moral imagining I have proposed, such a pedagogy would already have to be committed to an autonomy-facilitating educational approach and be capable of creating a particular aesthetic atmosphere to curate imaginative engagement so as to help bring to light a host of possibilities for what seems reasonable to value for children as they grow in their competence as emerging agents. It would also have to be mindful of the actual phenomenological experiences that matter to children in order to inspire their meaning-making, and require certain strategies to help make them more aware of the contents of their mental landscape, particularly those elements that enrich it and those that pollute it. The question becomes: Does such a pedagogy exist?

This chapter will present the Community of Philosophical Inquiry (CPI) as one candidate for a collaborative morally imaginative practice. Designed by educational philosophers Matthew Lipman and Ann Margaret Sharp as part of the Philosophy for Children (P4C) program, the CPI is an interesting case study for my argument because, in my estimation, it already has potential as a morally imaginative practice and its structure can be adjusted to support deliberate moral imagining in a more explicit, systematic way. Since its inception in the 1970s, P4C has grown into an international movement endorsed by UNESCO, and the CPI has joined the ranks of contemporary child-driven pedagogical methodologies that represent a promising shift toward an autonomy-facilitating form of education. Throughout this time, its aesthetic dimensions have been spotlighted by a handful of theorists and practitioners, and the traditional method has undergone various experimentations in different educational and cultural settings with an aim to increasing its relevance for children. On the surface, then, the CPI meets the criteria that I have outlined above and that I will be elaborating in subsequent sections.

Yet this case study seems promising to me for a further reason: I want to argue that framing the CPI as a collaborative morally imaginative practice opens up a new opportunity for deliberate moral imagining, that of elucidating children's tacit knowing—the fuzzy aspects of their experience that they perceive as significant but are hard to name and explain. If this is true, such elucidation may increase the impact of deliberate moral imagining on children's responsible autonomy by helping them to spell out deep concerns that may otherwise seem ineffable to them despite their significance. I will begin this chapter by justifying the P4C pedagogy as my case study, highlighting how the CPI aligns with my argument about cultivating children's responsible autonomy through deliberate moral imagining. I will then argue that it can create the aesthetic atmosphere necessary to curate imaginative engagement if it emphasises certain embodied, affective and tacit dimensions. Subsequently, I will expand my metaphor of mental landscaping by underlining the important role of adult facilitators, and offer suggestions as to how they can curate children's imaginative repertoire at every CPI stage with specific strategies that take into account the opportunity within risks inherent in a collaborative morally imaginative as well as the potential for enhanced child-adult relationships.

The claims, examples and recommendations in this chapter are directly informed by my own experiences as a P4C practitioner culled from facilitation, training and coaching sessions as well as from the year-long empirical study conducted with Brila's youth board, as laid out in the introduction. Of course, while I am concentrating on the CPI as my case study, this focus is not meant to be exclusionary as there are likely other candidates; pedagogical pluralism is thus preferable to maximise the possible impacts of deliberate moral imagining. That said, it is my hope that my discussion of the CPI in this chapter can serve as a basis for assessing the potential of other pedagogies as collaborative morally imaginative practices.

P4C in context

The purpose of this section is to justify my choice of the CPI as a case study by showing how its aims and process align with the argument I have been developing so far regarding deliberate moral imagining. For starters, one dimension that distinguishes P4C from other pedagogies is the extent to which it has contributed to the growing field of philosophy of childhood by problematising common assumptions regarding what children are able to be and do; it is not an accident that the majority of the philosophers of childhood referenced so far are also P4C theorists and practitioners. Given my concern over childhood agency, I was first drawn to the P4C program because of its bold stances regarding children, expressed in no small part through its commitment to nurturing their autonomous thinking in meaningful ways that are commensurate with their level of maturity and experience. Over the last decade since, my CPI research and practice alongside youth from preschool through college has helped me to articulate what a notion of evolving responsible autonomy in childhood might involve. To make this connection clear, I will begin this section by providing a brief overview of the pedagogy, then highlight its emphasis on autonomy and its potential for cultivating the three characteristics I have identified as significant for children as emerging agents—namely, empathic engagement, self-efficacy and reasonableness. In doing so, I hope to make it increasingly evident that the CPI method already has the underpinnings to be a morally imaginative practice.

Further, though Lipman does not speak at length about moral imagination in his writings, he does defend it briefly in his pivotal work *Thinking in Education*, as we will see. Accordingly, this section will also seek to demonstrate how the CPI is compatible with some of the elements I have been associating with the purposeful facilitation of deliberate moral imagining in children, that is the use of narrative aids, the access to conceptual resources, dialogic space and creative expression, and the adherence to key pragmatist principles. On this last point, the similarities between the CPI and a pragmatic approach to inquiry are not coincidental: as Lipman states, "Philosophy for Children is built unapologetically on Deweyan foundations."[490] In terms of my theoretical frameworks, although the CPI is most obviously connected with classical pragmatism because of Lipman's high regard for Dewey and Peirce, some parallels with neo-Aristotelian virtue theory and the Capabilities Approach can also be made, as I will briefly underscore. Overall, by calling attention to the CPI's underpinnings, I will be laying the groundwork for my later argument regarding its prospects as an imaginative curatorship of children's own mental landscaping when practised purposefully as an aesthetic practice that is embodied and affectively charged.

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[490] Lipman, 2004, 8.

Originally designed by Lipman and later Sharp in response to what they viewed as a lack of reasoning in the general population, the CPI aims to foster multidimensional thinking, or equal parts critical-, creative- and caring thinking—"a balance between the cognitive and the affective, between the perceptual and the conceptual, between the physical and the mental."[491] At its core, this dialogical approach to philosophical inquiry consists of a group of children joined by a contestable question they deem central to their lives and about which they seek clarity and reasonable judgements through structured conversation supported by an adult facilitator.

Adapting the main tenets of pragmatic inquiry, a CPI equips children with the means to tackle issues that matter to them in the form of philosophical concepts—from selfhood to truth, goodness to justice—by appeal to their combined knowledge and experiences, as well as through the use of specific thinking tools and dispositions. It can therefore be categorised as a form of Socratic pedagogy since it involves a collective truth-seeking endeavour intended to improve practical reasoning through deliberation techniques like scrutinising hypotheses and articulating sound beliefs.[492] Further, Lipman was highly influenced by Vygotskian social constructivist learning theories, notably the idea that with proper scaffolding on the part of adults, children can achieve together what might be too difficult for them to do alone and, as such, benefit from a "zone of proximal development."[493] In my view, the CPI model can therefore be described as aspirational in character, a notion to which I will return in my later section on imaginative curatorship.

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[491] Lipman, 2003, 200-201.

[492] Gregory, 2012.

[493] In Lipman's words: "the quality of education is to be improved through a recognition that children are at their best when engaged in cognitive cooperation with their peers and mentors, while they are at their least effective when isolated from any form of cognitive community." Lipman, 1996, 45.

According to Lipman, compared to other disciplines, philosophy is particularly powerful at cultivating autonomous thinking: "Philosophy liberates students from unquestioning, uncritical mental habits, in order that they may better develop the ability to think for themselves. It is self-corrective thinking—thinking inquiring into itself for the purpose of transforming itself into better thinking."[494] And so, as a pedagogical model committed to developing independent thinking in childhood through philosophy, the CPI can be deemed as supportive of the kind of evolving responsible autonomy I am espousing. Children are invited to share ideas from their own distinct lived experiences, be attentive to the perspectives of others, deliberate about what they value, co-construct meaning, and fulfill their obligations to fellow inquirers by taking responsibility for their involvement in the dialogical process.

Here we see clear connections with the criteria I have adapted from Friedman's account of relational autonomy: children evolve in their autonomy competence by learning with and through others to reflectively endorse deep concerns that form the basis for their burgeoning perspectival identity. We can also see parallels with the autonomy traits I have gleaned from my interpretations of my three chosen theoretical frameworks: the responsibly autonomous child is open to multidirectional influences and to historical appreciation, which affects how she semiotically engages with the world by deliberating and teleologically orienting herself towards valuable ends that reflect both her sense of individuality and of accountability. If we look more closely at the theoretical frameworks and the characteristics of responsible autonomy I have assigned to them—empathic engagement, self-efficacy and reasonableness—the link between the CPI and children's evolving autonomy competence becomes even more apparent.

i) Empathic engagement

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[494] Lipman, 1988, 41.

In a CPI dialogue, the formulation of judgements is a collaborative effort, one that epitomises the old adage that many heads are better than one. From the perspective of neo-Aristotelian virtue theory, this kind of collaboration is highly valuable: as Sherman asserts, it is "through listening to and identifying with the viewpoints of others [that] an agent's vision becomes expanded and enlarged...the agent comes to learn different ways of reading a situation and different questions to pose in order to see the picture with increased insight and clarity."[495] In a CPI, children have the invaluable chance to refine the quality of perception required for practical wisdom by exchanging with others who are dedicated to the same purpose of following the inquiry where it leads. To my mind, this exchange can enhance their empathic engagement, which I have been defining as their commitment to taking seriously the perspectives and circumstances of others by extending themselves into their experience with sensibility and judgement.

Interestingly, Nussbaum has written favourably about P4C as an educational model that can promote democracy by helping children become more practically wise so as to "see other human beings as full people, with thoughts and feelings of their own that deserve respect and empathy,"[496] and thus resist the "flaws in reasoning, parochialism, haste, sloppiness, selfishness [and] narrowness of the spirit"[497] resulting from schooling initiatives that overemphasise profit-oriented pursuits. Indeed, because the CPI model breaks the authoritative master-disciple paradigm by distributing power among inquirers, it is more democratic in style than many other pedagogies. As Lipman writes, "In a community of inquiry, there is a pooling of experience in which each is as ready and willing to learn from each other's experience as from his or her own."[498] The CPI therefore nurtures a spirit of self-correction in children, which I see as vital to their nascent practical wisdom and, by extension, to their empathic engagement. On my understanding, self-correction—or the ability to prompt and carry out the rectifying of one's errors or weaknesses without external direction—is characterised by specific criteria that can encourage virtuous character in children, like open-mindedness, resistance to bias, and mutual support, resulting in a multilayered metacognitive disposition aiming toward enhanced awareness of thought processes.[499]

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[495] Sherman, 1991, 30.

[496] Nussbaum, 2010, 143.

[497] *Ibid*, 142.

ii) Self-efficacy

Moreover, returning to Lipman's notion of philosophy as "thinking inquiring into itself," the spirit of self-correction in the CPI captures the significant role of metacognition, which I deem crucial to fostering children's self-efficacy, or their belief in their growing competence as agents who can act in the world and exercise control over their lives. For Lipman, metacognition is the reflective analysis of thought processes with the aim of evaluating and refining them, as well as the judgements they yield—"whenever one mental act is the subject of another, the latter act is metacognitive."[500] As I see it, this reflective analysis can apply to the judgements that children make regarding their own personal worth and, from a CA perspective, regarding their perceived ability to transform the resources available to them into valued capabilities and functionings.

Further, within a CPI, metacognition involves collaboratively developing knowledge about thinking strategies and their application—when and how they are likeliest to aid with a problem or challenge—which may help children feel more self-efficacious in the face of adversity. In

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[498] Lipman, 2003, 111.

[499] *Ibid*, 218.

[500] Lipman, 1988, 82.

Lipman's words, "To think about our own thinking is to objectify a mental performance we have just engaged in, whereupon we can name it, describe it, correct it, substitute a synonym for it, and so on. To become aware of our own mental acts is to *lift ourselves by our own bootstraps* until we are functioning on a metacognitive level."[501] Accordingly, in learning to self-correct and improve based on their own efforts with the resources available to them, children may become more resilient as emerging agents.

In their insightful and persuasive analysis of the CA and P4C with respect to children's well-being, Mario Biggeri and Marina Santi make a similar claim, referring to the CPI as an "apprenticeship in thinking" that "highlight[s] the power of philosophical inquiry dialogue to form capable agents and construct 'communities of agents.'"[502] In my view, children demonstrate metacognitive skills in a CPI when they make concerted efforts to question their own reasons, organise their ideas, convey their positions intelligibly, call for conceptual clarity, label their thinking moves (such as indicating an agreement, a counterargument, an example, a distinction, etc.), recognise the root of confusion or stagnation in an inquiry, and assess their argumentation progress.

Crucially, they also demonstrate an increased understanding of their thought processes when they can make connections between inquiry dialogues, between different knowledge sources, and between their experiences of the CPI and the wider world, by analysing and abstracting from their mental acts. To my mind, these metacognitive skills can translate into a stronger sense of self, as a result of the impact of both their meaningful collaborative work and the more refined judgements that result from it. As Biggeri and Santi aptly put it, "the shared experience of being part of a [CPI] increases and enriches the process of building an identity in an interpersonal context in which each and every agent is recognised as a valuable thinker, with his/her own original cognitive style, typology of knowledge and life expertise."[503]

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[501] Lipman, 2003, 143. Emphasis mine.

iii) Reasonableness

Last but perhaps most obviously, as an apprenticeship in thinking that has a clear affinity with the inquiry-based learning approaches inspired by classical pragmatism, the CPI seems well suited to support children's evolving autonomy through the development of their reasonableness. Within the context of P4C, reasonableness combines rational scrutiny and emotional sensibility, which also echoes the neo-Aristotelian and the CA emphasis on reasoning being accompanied by appropriate emotions.[504] It is not a form of disengaged rationality aimed at absolute truth or exactitude but a reliable, attentive orientation toward judgement-formation that allows children to tackle difficult, complex situations using varying thinking strategies, including the metacognitive ones previously mentioned. Lipman argues against an overly intellectualist view of thinking since it causes us to "fail to see how profoundly our emotions shape and direct our thoughts, provide them with a framework, with a sense of proportion, with a perspective, or better still, with a number of different perspectives." In his view, the process of developing reasonableness, understood as "the capacity to employ rational procedures in a judicious manner," is necessarily collaborative since it "refer[s] not just to how one acts, but to how one is acted upon: It signifies one's capacity to listen to or be open to reason."[505]

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[502] Biggeri and Santi, 2012, 386, 382.

[503] *Ibid*, 387.

[504] Lipman, 2003, 262. Lipman and Nussbaum offer similar claims in this regard. Arguing against intellectualism, Nussbaum observes how "frequently, it will be [the agent's] passional response, rather than detached thinking, that will guide her to the appropriate recognitions." Nussbaum, 1990, 79.

[505] *Ibid*, 97.

In a CPI, when inquiring into the most reasonable idea, value or action with respect to a particular question, children should strive to collaboratively formulate judgements that are at once well-reasoned (meaning they result from sound argumentation, good evidence, and a combination of critical and creative thinking) and well-informed (meaning they are supported by multiple, diverse perspectives and accountable to "the give and take of communal dialogue").[506] Here, too, the connections with classical pragmatism are unmistakable. On my interpretation, within a CPI, evidence of reasonableness in children includes their being able to:

- *identify* reasonable judgements, say by pointing them out in a narrative or argument; by locating sound ideas in their peers' thoughts; by analysing the logical thread of a series of verbal exchanges; by comparing and contrasting different claims; etc.
- *construct and interpret* reasonable judgements, say by using valid criteria and avoiding logical fallacies; by discriminating between strong and weak claims; by making helpful distinctions and addressing counter-examples; by connecting unsubstantiated ideas or actions with the reasons that account for them; by transforming examples into arguments; etc.
- *enact* reasonable judgements, say by modifying behaviour to reflect a new, refined position; by taking other people's views seriously; by modelling conduct after well-reasoned choices in others; by testing hypotheses in daily life; etc.

Conceived in this way, reasonableness can furnish children with the judiciousness necessary for their evolving autonomy to become more responsible. P4C theorist Michael Pritchard makes a comparable claim when he characterises being reasonable as involving both critical thinking and moral sensibility. Quoting W. H. Sibley, he argues that children must learn to support their positions and actions with reasons, and these reasons gain credibility when endorsed by people other than themselves:

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[506] Gregory, 2011.

> If I desire that my conduct shall be deemed reasonable by someone taking the standpoint of moral judgement I must exhibit something more than mere rationality or intelligence. To be reasonable here is to see the matter—as we commonly put it—from the other person's point of view, to discover how each will be affected by the possible alternative actions; and moreover not merely to "see" this (for any merely prudent person would do as much) but also to be prepared to be disinterestedly influenced, in reaching a decision, by the estimate of these possible results.[507]

This perspective recalls my interpretation of Friedman's account of autonomy as offering a nuanced take on relationality that retains an agent's singularity within the bounds of her accountability to others. As emerging agents, children in a CPI can become more reasonable—and by extension more responsible—in their expression of autonomy thanks to their interactions with others.

Beyond the CPI's potential for cultivating children's evolving responsible autonomy through empathic engagement, self-efficacy and reasonableness, its very stages are also highly compatible with the elements I have been associating with the purposeful facilitation of deliberate moral imagining in childhood: the use of narrative aids, the access to conceptual resources, dialogic space and creative expression, and the adherence to key pragmatist principles. The CPI method is designed as a five-stage process of dialogical inquiry among children, under the guidance of a trained adult facilitator who keeps track of their dialogue's evolution, naming their thinking tools and dispositions, helping them navigate their various ideas, and offering valuable procedural prompts in service of multidimensional thought. As originally conceived, the method proceeds according to the following stages, which I will briefly examine in turn:

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[507] Pritchard, 1995, 3.

Lipman's Stages of Dialogical Inquiry

Stage 1: The offering of the text. Students read or enact a philosophical story together.

Stage 2: The construction of the agenda. Students raise questions for discussion and organise them into an agenda.

Stage 3: Solidifying the community. Students discuss questions as a community of inquiry facilitated by an adult with philosophical training.

Stage 4: Using exercises and discussion plans. The philosophical facilitator introduces relevant activities to deepen and expand the students' inquiry.

Stage 5: Encouraging further responses. These include, e.g. self-assessment of philosophy practice, art projects and action projects.[508]

i) Narrative aids for moral imagining

To begin, the first stage of the CPI links nicely with the use of narrative aids, which I have argued can support deliberate moral imagining by fostering children's "inner eyes" so as to refine their perception. According to Lipman and Sharp, dialogical inquiry is best stimulated by a special type of narrative aid—the philosophical novel—that connects children to the philosophical dimensions of their lived experience and inspires their conceptual inquiry into questions that puzzle them so they may deliberate toward a tentative resolution. The original P4C curriculum of philosophical novels was written by Lipman himself from the 1970s through the 1990s, with each book intending to serve as a springboard for shared, co-created philosophical inquiry across the discipline’s branches, from logic, epistemology and metaphysics to ethics, aesthetics and political philosophy.[509] Though an academic philosopher by profession, during his tenure at Columbia University, his uneasiness regarding his students’ inability to think critically, creatively and compassionately about the controversial issues of the day, notably the Vietnam War, led him to envisage a new way of doing philosophy with youth through an adaptation of two key facets of the philosophical tradition: narrative writing and dialogical practice.

Lipman envisioned the philosophical novel for children as a series of fictional though realistic scenarios depicting young protagonists exploring and discussing the puzzling philosophical aspects of their lives together and with adults—in sum, “trying to solve age-appropriate and, at the same time, philosophically real problems.”[510] His description of his first book, *Harry Stottlemeier’s Discovery*, a tale about a young boy learning to use informal logic and hypothetical thinking to solve mental dilemmas, applies just as well to the other novels:

> The events that follow in the classroom and outside of school are a recreation of the ways that children might find themselves thinking and acting. The story is a teaching model, non-authoritarian, and anti-indoctrinating. It respects the value of inquiry and reasoning, encourages the development of alternative modes of thought and imagination, and suggests how children are able to learn from one another. Further, it sketches what it might be like to live and participate in a

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[508] Gregory, 2007, 163.

[509] The original series of philosophical novels include: for primary school, *Elfie*, *Pixie*, *Kio and Gus* and *Nous*; for middle school, *Harry Stottlemeier’s Discovery* and *Lisa*; for secondary school, *Suki* and *Mark*.

[510] Interestingly, Lipman shares many of his insights about his P4C program in a philosophical novel he writes for adults fictionalising an ongoing exchange between himself and a journalist interested in his pedagogical approach. Lipman, 1996, 123.

> small community where children have their own interests, yet respect each other as people and are capable at times of engaging in cooperative inquiry.[511]

In his assessment of Lipman's texts, P4C theorist Darryl De Marzio characterises this writing style as "a blend of both expository and narrative discourse"—of rationality and creativity as modes of higher-order thinking—that strives to "connect to a lost tradition of philosophy in which the role of the text was recognised as performing a transformative function."[512] In addition to inspiring a new genre of children's literature, with crops of original, adapted and translated stories emerging all over the world, the philosophical novel used in the CPI's first stage can also convey the fictional, hypothetical and actual instances I have presented as narrative aids in deliberate moral imagining. Though the characters and situations are make-believe, they are inspired by real life as well as by the philosophical ideas of intellectual history, and the wonderings of the young protagonists often lead them to hypothesise about alternative worlds so as to better understand their actual circumstances.

Although I think the existing stories already showcase children engaged in some level of morally imaginative deliberation, since the peculiar format of the P4C novel seeks to model cooperative inquiry among fictional youth in an effort to inspire the same rapport between actual children, I find it lends itself well to depicting my proposed features of deliberate moral imagining if written explicitly with this aim in mind. This potential to generate narrative aids that are themselves deliberately morally imaginative makes the CPI model all the more promising as a morally imaginative practice, as I will be further explaining soon.

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[511] Lipman, 1980, 52.

[512] De Marzio, 2011, 33, 35.

ii) Access points for moral imagining

Moreover, the CPI stages mirror the three opportunities that I have associated with deliberate moral imagining framed as a complex capability. The first stage can provide access to conceptual resources by exposing children to philosophically rich stimuli that expand their frames of reference and complicate their everyday realities. Though Lipman and Sharp recommend the curriculum of philosophical novels described above, many P4C practitioners worldwide complement these stories with a variety of other stimulus materials, including art, multimedia and artifacts, in order to connect children to many possible sources of meaning. And so, as I will further elaborate in a later section, the careful choice of CPI stimuli that model and inspire deliberate moral imagining can open children up to new options for what they believe they have reason to value.

The second, third and fourth stages can provide access to dialogical space: the formulation of philosophical questions immerses children in the process of problematising issues raised by the stimulus in ways that they might not have done alone, not only in the Vygotskian sense of zones of proximal development, but also in the sense of seeing certain issues as possibilities or problems for the first time because their dialogues with others have broadened the scope of what matters to them. Subsequently, during the dialogue itself, the process of trying to answer the selected philosophical question creates live exchanges between children and their values, uncovering limitations of perspective and highlighting areas of commonality as well as conflicting considerations. The complementary exercises and discussion plans supply further chances for children to grapple with the tensions and inconsistencies arising from their collective inquiry, thus enabling the envisioning of deep concerns and, eventually, their reason-driven reflective endorsement.

Finally, the fifth stage can provide access to creative expression by allowing participants to take on projects that ingrain, personalise and concretise the meanings springing from their collective inquiry so they can return to their subsequent CPI session with an expanded sense of themselves as emerging agents capable of communicating what they find worthy of their valuing. As I will illustrate at the end of this chapter, though often overlooked in P4C practices, I find this last stage especially pertinent because of the metacognitive reflection it enables and the access to creative expression it can provide if well designed, both of which can bolster children's sense of themselves as actors with the power to affect their social, political and even epistemological contexts.

iii) Pragmatist principles for moral imagining

In terms of adhering to the four pragmatist principles I have identified, the CPI can set favourable conditions for pragmatic inquiry by fostering in children the dispositions necessary to reframe not only stereotypes and pseudoenvironments but also the unsound reasoning methods that entrench them. For instance, the hypothetical investigation into the Peter Pan Picture previously outlined clearly reflects the dialogical stages in a CPI. First, children share a philosophically rich stimulus—the intricate pseudoenvironment occasioned by *Peter and Wendy*. Second, they formulate a philosophical question based on the problematic themes they find within the stimulus, like the stereotyped concept and normative claims it enkindles. Third, they engage in structured dialogue using multidimensional thinking skills and dispositions: they explain their own views of the pseudoenvironment in question (offering hypotheses, definitions, comparisons); they explore its limitations (identifying assumptions, counterexamples and opposite viewpoints); they determine its possible real-world impact (imagining consequences, alternative possibilities, missing perspectives). Finally, equipped with a more refined position with regard to their question, they evaluate their collective progress as a community through a metacognitive assessment, planting the seeds for future inquiries.

Additionally, the CPI in its various stages is primed to satisfy the evaluation criteria I have suggested to assess the pedagogical merits of a morally imaginative practice. Starting with the principle of indeterminacy, P4C-style dialogues can inspire genuine doubt, particularly if prompted by Lipman-esque stimulus materials that portray "children's attempts to come to grips with their problems" and "present their subject matter to them as a constant invitation to inquiry."[513] If well selected, such materials not only serve as narrative aids and offer access to conceptual resources, they also create an atmosphere that makes inquiry appear irresistible: to borrow from Williams, "reasons, causes, abstract conceptions, suddenly grow full of zest."[514] Further, since children in a CPI experience lived doubt together, their exchanges become a "crucial form of communicative action"[515] that enables them to question their set of values and then reflectively endorse those that meet the criterion of warranted assertibility.[516]

In turn, this connects to the principle of reflection: during the dialogue, by weighing different reasons for adopting a given philosophical position with regard to their common question, children can gain an appreciation for conceptual complexity and for refinement of their own beliefs in light of evidence that resonates with their experience. In a CPI focused on normative claims, like the case of the Peter Pan Picture, children can learn to detect and debunk dangerous assumptions affecting their pursuit of truth.[517] Just as Lippmann attacks the divisive impact of stereotypes on individuals for "interfere[ing] with the full recognition of their common humanity,"[518] Lipman critiques the pernicious effects of assumptions on children:

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[513] Johnson, 1995, 118 and Cam, 1994, 174. Of course if the chosen inquiry question is not contestable enough to provoke serious investigation, particularly if children see the answer as self-evident, then deliberate moral imagining can be mobilised to help complexify the picture. Further, a stimulus infused with the features of deliberate moral imagining could help, as the section on curatorship will describe.

[514] James, 1899, 47.

[515] Kennedy, 2012, 6.

[516] Lipman, 2003, 107.

> If youth are not given the opportunity to weigh and discuss both ends and means, and their interrelationship, they are likely to become cynical about everything except their own well-being, and adults will not be slow to condemn them as 'mindless little relativists.' How better to guarantee the amoralism of the adult than by teaching the child that any belief is as defensible as any other?[519]

Moving on to the principle of habit, since the CPI cultivates self-correction in children, notably in the third and fourth stages, it can sensitise them to the habits that will help them yield fresh, reasonable perspectives, such as the learning dispositions of humility and comfort with uncertainty explored in chapter four. If they can see that their strength as inquirers comes from being humble rather than from dogmatic conviction, when they are faced with stereotypes they can learn, as Lippmann stresses, "to hold them lightly, to modify them gladly."[520] Though often challenging intellectually and emotionally, the resulting comfort with uncertainty may free children from the safety zone of bias. In the words of P4C theorist Maughn Gregory:

> In a community of inquiry, I have made myself accountable to a community of my peers, who have challenged my ideas; I have double-checked my reasons for believing—the methods of inquiry or the authorities I've relied on; I've been willing to self-correct; recognise that my current beliefs help me cope with

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[517] It remains unclear, however, whether in all instantiations of P4C practice, children actually get the chance to revisit past CPI topics to test the continued warrantability of their hypotheses. Though important, restraints like time and concern for momentum might make this difficult.

[518] Lippmann, 1922, 87.

[519] Lipman, 1988, 15.

> experience—help me understand it in ways that enable me to act intelligibly. On this construction, to be rational is simply to discuss any topic—religious, literary, or scientific—in a way which eschews dogmatism, defensiveness, and righteous indignation.[521]

By extension, throughout the stages, children learn to "anticipate together"[522] and become a "unity-in-multiplicity"[523] in such a way that encapsulates the principle of community. The CPI model invites children into a communal dialogue on salient topics—a foundation for not only their responsible autonomy but also their democratic citizenship.[524] As P4C theorist Jennifer Bleazby has noted, "Dewey argues that thinking is the internalisation of social processes. Thus, in order to think for oneself, one must be a member of…an open, pluralistic and inquiring community." Since the CPI model strives to create this kind of community throughout its dialogical stages, it "is able to facilitate the development of reflective, caring, reasonable, and autonomous individuals who also recognise their interdependence and interconnectedness with others."[525]

In sum, by calling attention to the CPI's underpinnings, specifically how the model's aims and process show its potential for cultivating children's responsible autonomy by enhancing their empathic engagement, self-efficacy and reasonableness, and how its dialogical stages accord with the elements I have been associating with the purposeful facilitation of deliberate moral imagining, I have striven in this section to lay the groundwork for justifying the CPI as an

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[520] Lippmann, 1922, 90-91.

[521] Gregory, 2011, 215.

[522] Dewey, 1929, 178.

[523] Mulvaney, 1986, 7.

[524] For Lipman, "communities of deliberative inquiry [are] microcosms of democracy not simply because they are self-governing groups but because their modes of self-regulation and self-correcting can be carried over from the smaller groups to the more massive societies." Granger and Gregory, 2012, 14.

imaginative curatorship of children's own mental landscaping. That being said, the descriptions sketched out above represent the ideal conditions of practice; problems at the level of content and procedure of course occur, some of which can be damaging to children as emerging agents, as I will explain in a later section. It is therefore my contention that the CPI might be more successful at cultivating responsible autonomy in childhood when it is deliberately morally imaginative: Since children are co-responsible for intertwining their individual perspectives and locating shared aims, they may gain immensely from activating my proposed features in their dialogical exchanges, while the process itself may benefit from intentionally integrating them into its stages.

Further, in my view, children's efforts of deliberate moral imagining are magnified when the work is shared among fellow inquirers dedicated to the same purpose—it is precisely the multiplicity of voices that stand to deepen and authenticate the process of envisioning contexts from multiple frames of reference, so as to support their reflective endorsement as emerging agents. Framed this way, as I see it, a CPI is both a lived experience in itself and an inquiry into lived experiences through collaborative deliberation that can be highly morally imaginative in content and procedure.

To ensure this latter potential, however, I think deliberate moral imagining must be taken seriously so that it can succeed in its goal of bringing to light possibilities for what seems reasonable to value for children. This stance corresponds with Lipman's own succinct but powerful statement on the subject:

> Moral imagination is sometimes treated as though it were a merely playful dealing with fictions. On the contrary, it is a procedure that makes moral

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[525] Bleazby, 2006, 30-31.

> seriousness possible. It is when we do *not* put ourselves in the other person's place that we are merely playing at being ethical. To be sure, the empathic act does not require that we accept the other's evaluation: We still have a judgement to make. But now we have better reasons, and the judgement we make can be a stronger one.[526]

It is worth noting that this short quotation captures many of my concerns: deliberate moral imagining may help children empathically engage without compromising their reasonableness; in its absence, they are merely pretending to be responsible agents rather than actively envisioning what such agency might entail, so as to develop the self-efficacy to make its enactment more likely. Since the CPI is itself a lived experience, its potential as a morally imaginative practice depends in part on its ability to curate a certain aesthetic atmosphere for children to engage in deliberate moral imagining—I will now turn to this aesthetic dimension.

Aesthetic atmosphere

In my initial sketch of deliberate moral imagining, I suggested that the process can be considered an aesthetic practice in the widest sense because it connects to actual phenomenological encounters. Although its objects of consideration are not limited to the artistic realm, it fits the broader definition of an aesthetic experience often adopted by phenomenologists. For instance, Mark Johnson, whose ideas about moral imagining will help frame a subsequent section, has associated aesthetics with a range of embodied and affective elements—"the qualities, feelings, emotions, and bodily processes that make meaning possible" for humans to construct and to experience, far beyond their formal study of art.[527]

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[526] Lipman, 2003: 270.

Indeed, though the process of deliberate moral imagining deals with the immaterial in the form of imagined possibilities—envisioned options for lives that seem worthy of valuing—since these immaterial considerations are oriented toward the construction of meanings and values that shape deep concerns, the process remains an embodied, affectively charged experience with appreciable sensory, stimulating, stirring qualities, which infuse it with an important aesthetic dimension. I think this is especially true when deliberate moral imagining is practised collaboratively with others because the *co*-construction of meanings and values is laden with corporeal and affective elements—bodies, feelings, thoughts, beliefs intersecting through imaginative engagement.

Accordingly, any pedagogy warranting the label of a morally imaginative practice should be capable of creating the aesthetic atmosphere necessary to curate children's purposeful envisioning so as to help bring to light a host of possibilities for what seems reasonable to value for them as they grow in their competence as emerging agents. Although descriptions of the CPI in scholarly writings and training materials tend not to emphasise its aesthetic, embodied and affective qualities, P4C co-founder Sharp has asserted in no uncertain terms that "the aesthetic dimension permeates every aspect of communal inquiry," requiring both bodily and affective investment.[528] Building on this assertion, in this section, I will defend two claims: first, that the CPI already has aesthetic dimensions and second, that when integrated purposefully as an embodied, affectively charged aesthetic practice, it can activate deliberate moral imagining in such a way as to elucidate children's tacit knowing. I will begin with what I see as the CPI's embodied and affective elements, with respective references to the notions of chiasmatic relations in Merleau-Ponty and affectivity in Spinoza, then speak of its elucidation of tacit knowing by drawing on ideas from Michael Polanyi.

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[527] Johnson, 2007, x.

i) The embodied dimension

Though the traditional P4C pedagogy tends to focus on the power of conceptual exchanges rather than embodied thinking, philosophising with others on questions of deep existential significance can be a transformative experience for children on intellectual as well as corporeal levels. As co-inquirers in a CPI, children share the fulfillment and frustration of collaborative dialogue not only through the content of their talk but also through their dialoguing bodies. Sitting in a circle, visible to one another and in close proximity, children encounter each other's lived experiences and resulting philosophical positions in the form of words as well as body language—they connect with each other's tone of voice, facial expressions, gestural style, and overall bodily energy.

This embodied thinking reflects a sensory, intercorporeal quality of the CPI that would be lost or at least greatly compromised if the dialogue were attempted in a teleconference or online virtual space. And yet, with a few notable exceptions, the P4C scholarly literature focuses almost exclusively on the intellectual outputs of this form of philosophical inquiry, with little regard for the role bodies play. To my mind, however, if the CPI is to be taken seriously as an aesthetic practice, the power of embodied thinking must be further accentuated. In the words of Kennedy,

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[528] Sharp, 1997, 76.

whose perspectives have greatly inspired my thinking in this area, "Thought moves us. Even before we open our mouths we are making meaning together."[529]

On the argument I am advancing, and based on my own experiences as a philosophical practitioner, when the CPI has created an aesthetic atmosphere, children take on a very specific, heightened state of attentiveness that greatly affects the ideas being voiced. In my view, this heightened state is not sought nor stressed sufficiently by P4C practitioners, even though it can serve as evidence of children's growth as a community and points to a major reason why the CPI can be such a meaningful, transformative experience for them. When young inquirers feel safe with one another, their bodies gain in composure, allowing for a contemplative mood that is conscientiously at ease without being fully relaxed. Their corporeal role in the dialogue alternates between that of the speaking body and of the listening body, assimilating gestural signs already built into the CPI model to indicate when they want to talk and how to nominate the next interlocutor.[530]

In deference to the difficult intellectual task at hand, their dialoguing bodies are careful (if not always successful) not to distract others with unnecessary physical movement while also revealing excitement about conversational themes, quandaries and epiphanies through bodily motions—sitting upright, shifting weight, leaning forwards, nodding, gesticulating with hands and bouncing with feet, or a host of these and other actions in tandem. The combined pressure and delight of collective inquiry is felt in their dialoguing bodies trying hard to give each other the attention needed for quality mental exchanges, while their nonverbal movements politely ask—or at times impatiently demand—"but what do you mean exactly?" As I see it, this intercorporeal experience highlights the aesthetic components of the CPI method—the particular atmosphere that is formed when children attempt to co-construct meaning, experiencing moments of convergence while maintaining their distinct individuality. It also reveals the CPI's potential as a morally imaginative practice, priming children corporeally for the aforementioned learning dispositions that will aid in their deliberate moral imagining, namely humility, acceptance of fallibility, epistemological flexibility and comfort with uncertainty.

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[529] Kennedy, 2010, 207, 193.

[530] The specific gestures may vary from one CPI to another but usually involve raising or extending a hand to indicate a desire to speak, making eye contact with other inquirers to gauge who wants to build on the given position, and pointing to the next interlocutor when finished speaking. Children can also offer their own gestures to designate different metacognitive moves, as deemed necessary by the given group.

Phenomenologically, this corporeal dimension of the CPI recalls Maurice Merleau-Ponty's notion of chiasmatic relations between the self and others: his notion of flesh captures the constant intertwining or crisscrossing that occurs between sensing and being sensed, perceiving and being perceived.[531] In his words, "my body and the other person's are one whole, two sides of one and the same phenomenon"[532] and yet there is always a necessary *écart* (or gap) between them; the self and other cannot be conflated completely since "in order that there be communication, there must be a sharp distinction between the one who communicates and the one with whom he communicates."[533] With respect to childhood, in his essay "The Child's Relation with Others," Merleau-Ponty argues that this chiasm is gradually understood by children as they evolve from a "me which is unaware of itself and lives as easily in others as it does in itself" to an awareness of the "objectification of one's own body and the constitution of the other in his difference."[534]

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[531] For Merleau-Ponty, the flesh is different from skin: "The flesh is not matter...it is not fact or sum of facts 'material' or 'spiritual'...the flesh is in this sense an 'element' of Being" Merleau-Ponty, 1968, 139.

[532] *Ibid*, 215.

[533] Merleau-Ponty, 2007, 148. As Douglas Low explains in *Merleau-Ponty's Last Vision*, "this chiasm cannot be complete. There cannot be total fusion, for then the experiencer and the experienced would conflate, would become one, thereby making experience impossible. There must be an experience that puts us in contact with the world outside and yet separates us from it, keeps us at a distance from it," Low, 2000, 25.

[534] Merleau-Ponty, 2007, 149.

The self-other chiasm further extends to dialogue: despite a perpetual degree of divergence between views, "there is constituted between the other person and myself a common ground; my thought and his are woven into a single fabric...Our perspectives merge into each other, and we co-exist through a common world."[535] Applied to the CPI, the chiasmatic relations between self and other accentuate the potential for dialogue to enable an intersubject—which Kennedy defines as an "emergent whole that includes the other and that is always building and being built."[536] He describes the CPI as "a space of interrogation that is characterised by self-othering, or experiencing self as an other. In dialogue, we enter into the experience of lived difference—we no longer operate from the position of the boundaried, thematising subject."[537]

To my mind, this self-othering is especially possible if the CPI emphasises deliberate moral imagining because children's philosophical explorations are oriented toward identifying and destabilising their fundamental assumptions about their relation to other, self and knowledge. As children strive to imagine both independently and collaboratively, the intertwining of self and other can contribute to their evolving responsible autonomy, helping them learn to recognise what Kennedy calls the "radical incommensurability of individual perspectives"[538]—the fact that in spite of similarities, their personal vantage points are distinctly their own—while also remaining open to being changed by encounters with the other and their viewpoints. As a result, my three proposed features of deliberate moral imagining stand a strong chance of being activated since the CPI can create a space in time for children to envision the overarching contexts I have been referencing: through their shared knowledge construction, children become co-creators of themselves and of others, in a constant negotiation to define their subjectivity as a "diverse unity."[539]

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[535] Merleau-Ponty, 1958, 354, 413.

[536] Kennedy, 2010, 81.

[537] *Ibid*, 42.

[538] *Ibid*, 105.

These chiasmatic relations between self and other are experienced not only intellectually through their dialogical exchanges but also corporeally as they share a common physical space with their dialoguing bodies. Describing the CPI in part as a "community of gestures," Kennedy underlines the power of preverbal dialogue, which comprises the myriad exchanges that occur through body language before inquirers even begin to speak. With reference to what Merleau-Ponty called our "total language"—our gestures, posture, gaze, kinesic style, etc.—Kennedy remarks that when children enter a CPI, what takes places is not only an exchange of ideas but a "dialogue of body images."[540] As a result, from my perspective, a community of child inquirers that grows close over time in this kind of aesthetic atmosphere begins to apprehend the idiosyncratic body talk of its members: what was once unforeseeable or unfamiliar becomes endearing in its predictability—a sign of increasing intimacy—and reflects a recognition of each inquirer's particular contributions to the group. The community gets to know each other not only intellectually but corporeally, which constitutes a powerful embodied dimension of the CPI. Though this angle has not received the conceptual attention it deserves, I see it as greatly improving the CPI's prospects as a morally imaginative practice.

ii) The affective dimension

Moving on to affectivity, the discussion above begins to suggest how an emphasis on intercorporeality can cause the CPI to become affectively charged. Such dialogues generate affects in the Spinozan sense of producing motions that impact individual powers of activity. For instance, in the case of the CPI, the affects of curiosity, wonder and doubt produced by the philosophical novel through virtual encounters between fictional youth leap off the page to find their new home in live dialogues among children. According to Spinoza, such affects can be deemed active—and thus desirable—when the change in activity they occasion originates within the individual's nature and corresponds to her reason. When their source is external, they are deemed passive, trapping the individual in "inadequate ideas" and enslaving her in a "bondage" of passions.[541]

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[539] *Ibid*, 138.

[540] *Ibid*, 194.

Applied to children, though taxing and not always feasible, they must strive for active affects that positively increase their power to act by restricting the influence of their passions through reason—acting autonomously rather than being passively acted upon. From this viewpoint, especially thanks to its prioritising of metacognition and self-correction, the CPI can be seen as the coming together of learning bodies in a "collision" of powers to act and be affected. In dialogue, children can actualise the novel's plurality of voices, transforming the affects of curiosity and wonder into a dynamic aesthetic atmosphere of openness, cooperation and interdependence. As an affectively charged practice, the CPI encourages the kind of internally motivated, reason-driven actions that Spinoza advocates by heightening both their sense of individuality and commonality.

Lipman shares Spinoza's ideas about reason being affectively charged but also vulnerable to irrational passions. The fusion of cognitive and affective orientations reveals itself in children's mental acts of "doubting, wondering, fearing, hoping, admiring, respecting, and believing."[542] In his estimation, children in a CPI "form their own understanding of the world, and develop their own conceptions of the sorts of persons they want to be,"[543] by collectively reflecting on what matters to them most. P4C theorist Matthew Schertz's description of the CPI captures its affective promise:

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[541] Spinoza in Curley, ed., 1996, 113-116.

[542] Lipman, 1988, 95.

> It is a place of 'lived difference' where the 'thematised subject' is challenged through intersubjective mediation. Within the dialogical encounter our bodies kinesthetically, vocally and aurally meet, which establishes an affective exchange while simultaneously providing a place for increased cognition and metacognition...the communal pursuit of knowledge actualised within [the CPI] promotes a gestalt phenomenon that allows participating subjectivities to collectively mediate, connect, challenge and reconstruct themselves.[544]

On my interpretation, by learning to conquer unreasonable judgements through their stronger, bolder affects—what Lipman describes as "their natural love of meaning, their desire for understanding, their feeling for wholeness"—[545]children in a CPI can further cultivate their evolving responsible autonomy. In her analysis of P4C and affectivity, Juliana Merçon makes a similar claim, contending that participatory dialogue based in reasonableness can heighten agency: "through thinking together and being open to different ideas we are less passive. Since reason can only be produced as a result of affects, in other words, since reason is always affective, our openness to being affected by others is a necessary condition for self and communal empowerment."[546]

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[543] Lipman, 2003, 25.

[544] Schertz, 2006, 9.

[545] Lipman, 1980, 185.

[546] Merçon, 2007, 224.

As I see it, affect is what motivates children's itch for meaning by shrouding a given situation in confusion, wonder, curiosity, and the like, so that they experience it as problematic and feel compelled to put their imagining to work. To be clear, affect in this sense is not merely a synonym for emotion, as might be suggested by colloquial or field-specific descriptions. Contemporary affect theory offers almost poetic language to describe this nebulous concept: affect denotes "impersonal intensities that do not belong to a subject or an object,"[547] "forces of encounter…[that] need not be especially forceful,"[548] "vivacity of context,"[549] and "vital forces insisting beyond emotion" that "arise in the midst of inbetween-ness: in the capacities to act and be acted upon."[550] Affect is indeterminate and volatile,[551] yet it is also "sticky"—"it preserves the connection between ideas, values, and objects" and explains "how we are touched by what we are near."[552] This makes affects notoriously hard to assess since, unlike emotions, they exist as pre-individualised, unmeasurable states: "Affect is social in that it constitutes a contagious energy, an energy that can be whipped up or dampened in the course of interaction...a 'circus of affective responses' can result from a single stimulus and differ in any one body at different times."[553]

Anticipating the next section, this kind of characterisation would make the facilitation of the CPI as a morally imaginative practice a form of affective labour, which Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri insightfully describe as immaterial work that yields intangible products and emotional responses through the creation and manipulation of affects, producing such feelings as

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[547] Anderson in Gregg and Seigworth, eds., 2010, 161.

[548] Gregg and Seigworth, eds., 2010, 2.

[549] Massumi, 2002, 220.

[550] Gregg and Seigworth, eds., 2010, 1.

[551] Wissinger in Clough and Halley, eds., 2007, 238.

[552] Sara Ahmed, "Happy Objects," in Gregg and Seigworth, eds., 2010, 30-32.

[553] Clough and Halley, eds., 2007: 232.

"ease, well-being, satisfaction, excitement, or passion."[554] Though misused by capital, these features of affective labour reveal great "potential for subversion and autonomous constitution"—[555]or what Hardt and Negri call "biopower from below."[556] The "multitude" emancipates itself through the inclinations, skill-sets and products that affective labour helps foster, and within it, "while remaining different, we discover the commonality that enables us to communicate and act together."[557] Applied to the CPI, the élan of the philosophical novels can spur children's power to act and be affected within cooperative dialogue, turning them into a mini "multitude"-in-the-making defined by autonomy and commonality. This affectively charged dimension of the CPI thus enhances its prospects as a morally imaginative practice as it includes the possibility of "biopower from below"—children in a CPI can create new ways of being, interacting, sharing and converging through their shared quest for meaning.

iii) The tacit dimension

Based on the descriptions above, the CPI's embodied and affective elements reveal its appreciable aesthetic dimensions. To my mind, however, for the CPI to become a morally imaginative practice that makes possible the enrichment of children's mental landscapes, it must be much more explicit and systematic in its creation of an aesthetic atmosphere. While my next section will suggest ways this can be achieved, I want to first present another reason why such an emphasis is worthwhile. I think that when facilitated purposefully as an embodied, affectively charged aesthetic practice, the CPI may activate deliberate moral imagining in such a way as to elucidate children's tacit knowing by helping them to name and colour in the contours of the fuzzy but existentially significant aspects of their phenomenological experiences.

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[554] Hardt and Negri, 2004, 108.

[555] *Ibid*, 90.

[556] As Hardt puts it, "These dangers, however—important though they might be—do not negative the importance of recognizing the potential of labour as biopower, a biopower from below." Hardt, 1999, 100.

[557] Hardt and Negri, 2004, xiii.

Specifically, if they can initiate deliberate moral imagining collaboratively, they may be in a better position to express the ineffable qualities of their tacit knowing, notably through interpretive acts of meaning-generation that are affectively charged, as I will highlight in a later section. This is important to evolving autonomy in childhood because children's mental landscape likely contains more tacit elements given they are generally less experienced and language-savvy than adults—they might "know" a lot more than they can explain yet the fuzziness of this knowing still stands in the way of its transformation into deep concerns despite its felt importance. In a world where formal, propositional knowledge tends to be privileged, children's tacit knowing can be unfairly neglected despite the fact that they draw on sensory, affective information to interpret their circumstances. As Polanyi has noted, "To assert that [we] have knowledge which is ineffable is not to deny that [we] can speak of it, but only that [we] can speak of it adequately"—it therefore lurks low in the "domain of sophistication" presided by propositional types of knowledge that are more readily codifiable.[558]

Applied to children, tacit knowledge remains intact and largely unproblematic until they attempt to explain it and find themselves hitting a wall of linguistic limitations, realising it eludes articulation despite their embodied grasp and genuine valorising of it. For Polanyi, it is imagining that strives to fill the gap between what is tacitly known in intuition and what is sought: "it will be persistent, deliberate, and transitive; yet its whole purpose is directed on ourselves; it attempts to make us produce ideas…and the action induced in us by this ransacking

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[558] Polanyi, 1967, 95. Varied examples in the literature on tacit knowledge, from humour and artistic taste to business savvy and the application of moral concepts, as well as especially embodied activities like dance, surgery or woodworking, suggest that we have access to unspoken knowings that significantly impact our phenomenological

[of our brain] is felt as something that is happening to us…we are actually surprised and exclaim: Aha! when we suddenly do produce an idea."[559] Whether the knowing is stored in muscle memory or in sensory responsiveness, Polanyi argues that tacit knowing is apprehended through and within the body, via imagination: it has "existential meaning" for us; what we understand about it is personally significant even if not easily explicable.[560] By extension, children's tacit knowledge should not be discounted despite its reluctance to be made explicit since it comprises sources of meaning in their mental landscape that can fuel their deep concerns and burgeoning perspectival identity, and affect their envisioning of the overarching contexts of relation to other, self and knowledge. But exactly what type of tacit knowing could the CPI help to elucidate by securing a role for deliberate moral imagining in both its content and its procedure?

Building on Polanyi, in his classification of types of tacit knowledge, sociologist Harry Collins aptly portrays the category of social knowing as particularly hard to make explicit because it involves the intricacies of socialisation across particular contexts, including assimilation and application of rules, practices, mores, values and conventions—or the "cultural fluency" resulting from social immersion. According to Collins, "to understand how these things are to be done we have to engage with social life."[561] To my mind, this category poses a particular challenge for children since they are trying to negotiate a world they are inheriting

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experiences yet do not lend themselves well to the kind of direct, accurate descriptions we have come to expect from our knowledge bases.

[559] Polanyi in Krausz *et al.*, eds., 2009, 159-160. Polanyi offers a rather broad description of imagination as constituting "all thoughts of things that are not present, or not yet present—or perhaps never to be present" and argues that "the imagination must attach itself to clues of feasibility supplied to it by the very intuition that it is stimulating; sallies of the imagination that have no such guidance are idle fancies."

[560] Polanyi, 1962, 94.

[561] Collins, 2010, 120-123. Examples of collective tacit knowledge seem to centre on socially embedded knowing regarding performed acts: beyond the bicycling example, Collins describes the skills required for improvised dancing in public, noting that "social sensibility is needed to know that one innovative dance step counts as an improvisation while another counts as foolish, dangerous, or ugly, and the difference may be a matter of changing fashions, your dancing partner, and location."

from adults yet often find perplexing, and they must “borrow” from socially owned knowledge to make sense of their phenomenological experience.[562] Yet the challenges of cultural fluency seem to also apply to interpretive acts conducted in children’s mental landscape in response to what they witness—they may draw on collective tacit knowledge to make sense of how socialisation is enacted in befuddling ways that give them an itch for elucidation. It may not be clear whether the itch is felt by others too but at the phenomenological level that does not matter since they themselves experience it as problematic: as Polanyi observes in a nod to classical pragmatism, “nothing is a problem in itself; it can be a problem only if it puzzles and worries somebody.”[563]

For instance, returning to the example of perceived injustice from my initial sketch of deliberate moral imagining, some might find the intersubjective intricacies of justice obvious to explain because these do not present interpretive hurdles for them. As an example, political philosophers who have thought extensively about the topic’s myriad manifestations and associated levels of cultural fluency will be able to verbalise what they know in the face of, say, crimes against humanity, which may not be true of a young child whose comparatively limited but no less profound encounters with justice and attempts to interpret them remain genuine problems of articulation. In this sense, though fed by “the rich layers of meaning from our collective history,”[564] the degree to which this tacit knowing is ineffable is relative to the child experiencing it based on her present mental landscape, yet it is felt as existentially worth elucidating because it points to something significant but fuzzy in her phenomenological experience.

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[562] As Collins notes, when it comes to collective tacit knowledge, “we can only ‘borrow it’: it is not our property but is social and collective.” Collins, 2010b, 30-31.

[563] Polanyi, 1962, 129.

Powerful philosophical concepts like justice present particular challenges for articulation, which is why the CPI is such an interesting candidate of a morally imaginative practice committed to developing independent thinking in childhood through philosophy. To borrow Polanyi's words, "we must use the word 'justice', and use it as correctly and thoughtfully as we can, while watching ourselves doing it, if we want to analyse the conditions under which the word properly applies. We must look, intently and discriminatingly, through the term 'justice' at justice itself, this being the proper use of the term 'justice', the use which we want to define."[565] This is a difficult task—one that seems easier to tackle collaboratively and may benefit from the kind of purposeful envisioning I have proposed.

So how can deliberate moral imagining elucidate children's relative tacit knowing in a CPI? If we think of the elucidation as taking place in their mental landscape—which combines not only their personalised repository of fluid conceptual and sensory information, but also socially owned knowledge on extended loan, so to speak—we can begin to see how deliberate imagining can elucidate their relative tacit knowing by helping them to name and colour in the contours of those fuzzy but meaning-laden aspects of their phenomenological experiences. As a conscious, flexible and pre-critical process of meaning-making that is shared and collaborative, deliberate moral imagining can facilitate carefully constructed interpretive acts—notably figurative language constructions and thought experiments, as we will soon see—with the aim of unfolding tacit meanings existing within children's mental landscape. When effective, these interpretive acts become what I call arresting aesthetic encounters: they seize elements of children's embodied knowing with affective force and bring them to the surface of intelligibility,

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[564] Collins, 2010b, 30-31.

[565] Polanyi, 1967, 122.

illuminating both details and context—in Dewey's words, they "concentrate and enlarge an immediate experience."[566]

And so, in a CPI setting, this process of elucidating tacit knowing through deliberate moral imagining can be highly embodied and affectively charged, thus contributing to the aesthetic atmosphere. When children's phenomenological experience confronts them with enactments of social knowing that they find hard to interpret, the affects of that situation travel into the process of deliberate moral imagining that they initiate to elucidate what they have witnessed, then intermingle with the affects already connected with their collective tacit knowledge, and continue to resonate throughout the interpretive process on intellectual as well as corporeal levels. In this sense, no matter what emotions are subsequently evoked in their bodies, "the atmosphere is already angled; it is always felt from a specific point."[567] In short, in the process of imaginative elucidation, arresting aesthetic encounters are what spurs their recognition of their relative tacit knowing so that they may get to a point where it is no longer ineffable to them. In turn, deliberate moral imagining may have a greater impact on children's responsible autonomy by helping them to express deep concerns that might have otherwise remained inaccessible.

Framed in this way, P4C is not merely a thinking program; it is a form of aesthetics education. In his account of aesthetics education, Boyd White describes aesthetic experience as a multifaceted, individualised occurrence that progresses from multi-sensory perception at the physical level to a state of awareness connecting to related or universal experiences at the spiritual level, and finally to a sense of personal significance at the mental level, and as such "involves the whole person—body, mind and spirit."[568] Based on this description, it is easy to see the similarities between an encounter with artwork and an engagement with CPI-style philosophy since both are holistic in like ways: they constitute a powerful, potentially transformative process that is embodied and affectively charged, while also enabling meaning-making that can feel transcendent in its capacity to elucidate tacit knowing and help frame a given context differently.

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[566] Dewey, 2005, 285.

[567] Polanyi, 1967, 37.

[568] Boyd, 2017, xiv.

Lipman himself described collaborative philosophical inquiry as a kind of aesthetic encounter since "a mental act is an achievement, a performance. One can feel oneself moving toward the making of a decision and then making it...A mental act is therefore like a tiny work of art."[569] So how can such tiny works of work be facilitated to enrich children's collaborative meaning-making through deliberate moral imagining? The next section will consider how mental landscaping comes into play, specifically the important role that adult facilitators have when faced with the opportunity amidst risks inherent in the CPI as a collaborative morally imaginative practice.

Mental landscaping

Throughout this thesis, I have used the metaphor of a mental landscape to help capture the vast expanse of intertwined concepts, social imaginaries and personal experiences (symbolised by memories, beliefs, feelings) that make up the scenery of the mind. I have argued that this living, fluid repertory can exert a significant influence on children's evolving autonomy by colouring what they believe they have reason to value despite the fact that they have not yet had the chance to live out this valuing in the real world because their reserve of experiences is limited by their age. Of note, since they may not be fully conscious of their mental landscape's contents—especially those elements that enrich it and those that pollute it—this purposeful envisioning can both help to shed light on what seems worthy of their valuing and, if done collaboratively with others, specifically elucidate those fuzzy aspects of their phenomenological experiences that are hard to express despite their felt significance. The eludication can help to make the tacit facets of their mental landscape more accessible as envisioned options that can form the basis of their valuing as they grow in their competence as emerging agents.

In this light, deliberate moral imagining becomes a mental landscaping practice for children that captures a wider, more nuanced view of a given context so they can metaphorically see the bigger picture, thereby contributing to making their autonomy more responsible on various relational levels—how they relate to others, to themselves, to knowledge. This section will begin with a deepened exploration of the metaphor of mental landscaping, then consider why and how it represents an opportunity amidst risks, focusing on the specific instances of what I am referring to as high-stakes moments and affect aliens.

By including a case study chapter as part of my argument, I am attempting to concretise what this mental landscaping might entail when purposively facilitated through a morally imaginative practice like the CPI. In keeping with my metaphor, like the art of actual landscaping, deliberate moral imagining will likely fare better when informed by an understanding of the terrain—its cultivation needs, its native flora, its invasive species—which can be refined through training, in the form of careful pedagogical interventions designed to create meaningful opportunities for children to envision and exercise their evolving responsible autonomy. Such interventions entail an important role for adults as facilitators of collaborative morally imaginative practices in which children learn to engage as their own mental landscapists, which to my mind represents an

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[569] Lipman, 2003, 143.

opportunity amidst risks toward the development of more innovative, careful and emboldening child-adult relationships.

What do I mean by an opportunity amidst risks? It is hopefully clear by now why this purposive facilitation of deliberate moral imagining can be considered an important opportunity: if it is indeed tenable that children are well positioned—maybe even better able—to excel at morally imaginative practices due to the particular receptivity that tends to characterise childhood at intellectual, corporeal and affective levels, then it seems promising to unite children in this purposeful envisioning so that their reason-driven endorsement may be informed by more varied frames of reference, including those that may be tacit to them. To this end, the CPI seems like a viable model, notably because of the facilitative role it bestows on adults and because of its force as an equaliser for all those involved, young and old alike.

Yet at the same time, to my mind, the facilitation of a CPI in general, and as a morally imaginative practice in particular, is risky business. Regrettably, the creation of a collaborative space for children to voice their thoughts about possibilities for what seems reasonable to value is not a uniformly prized proposition, not least because of the ongoing influence of contentious conceptions of childhood. This may be due to flat-out ageist and adultist views that ought to be called into question but could also stem from genuine concern on the part of adults regarding what children can and should be expected to handle. On the account I am espousing, responsible autonomy is about children reflectively endorsing deep concerns that shape their perspectival identity and thus their world action; at times, however, these concerns and the associated features they care most about themselves are not only tacit but volatile. Simply put, without careful guidance on the part of the adult facilitator, the process of deliberate moral imagining in a CPI could be misemployed, causing children to elucidate and endorse relationally dubious perspectives, in the sense of being possibly damaging on ethical, political and psychological levels. Should children be expected to bear responsibility for this misapplication and endure its impacts? While it is important for children to have concerns and ideas that are their own—concerns they can explore and express so they can later act in accordance with them—what happens if these are problematic?

One could argue that this danger is precisely why it is crucial for deliberate moral imagining to be practised collaboratively among children since the multiplying of frames of reference may lessen the likelihood of dubious claims holding up to collective reasoning. Yet the facilitation of a CPI, just like the process of deliberate moral imagining, is complex and demanding: by opening up a space for children to become mental landscapists in this way, adult facilitators who lack training or sensibility may be clearing the way for problems to triumph. Metaphorically speaking, as facilitators of collaborative morally imaginative practices that affect children's own mental landscaping, they may be encouraging common weeds, even alien invasive species, to come to the fore without realising it or knowing how to pinpoint them. Worse still, in response to these problems, adult facilitators may be overly manipulative. Arguably, as I have maintained by favouring a weak/moderate substantive account of autonomy, a certain degree of the facilitative paternalism espoused by Mullins may be justified to enable emerging agency in children without endangering them. To reiterate my earlier point, children ought to be protected from expressions of autonomy that are oppressive or marginalising, and thereby threaten their efforts to become responsible actors in their social settings.

However, within a CPI, adult facilitators stand a chance of manipulating the inquiry by steering it toward values they themselves have reflectively endorsed or subconsciously internalised, either intentionally because they think they know best or accidentally because they lack awareness of their own sway when intervening.[570] While bias cannot be completely avoided here either, such instances are a clear move away from "autonomy-oriented paternalism" toward the more perilous zone of indoctrination, where adults take on the position of mental landscapists themselves rather than curate the space that helps to equip children with the dispositions to become their own mental landscapists. And so, the way that adults enter into their role of facilitators is crucial, as I will be explaining. Beforehand, though, I want to address what I see as two major risks faced by the CPI as a morally imaginative practice: one at the level of content—what I will call "high-stakes moments"—and one at the level of procedure, which I will describe through reference to the existing notion of "affect aliens." These two elements represent risks because the adult facilitators involved can either take up or miss opportunities for the CPI to be successful as a collaborative morally imaginative practice.

i) High-stakes moments

In a well functioning CPI, lived experience is under a kind of nuancing microscope: children critically examine aspects of life to pinpoint the subtleties that often get overlooked, enabling them to problematise their epistemological, ethical, metaphysical, aesthetic, logical and political assumptions, and determine how the presumed definitions, criteria, categories, etc. with which they assess the world may be refined to help them better understand and engage with their everyday realities. This nuancing examination process affects not only the ways in which inquirers converse with each other—the effort towards clear, precise yet also illustrative language as well as sound, thorough and summative argumentation—but also the subtle manners with which their bodies interact as the dialogue progresses.

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[570] It is not uncommon for teachers in a P4C training to say that they are interested in integrating the pedagogy because it will allow them to teach their values and they know "they have the right ones," or for teachers to get overly caught up in the inquiry because of their own interest in the question, confusing the role of facilitator and the role of inquirer in questionable ways.

However, if the group is too homogenous in its envisioning of a given context, children may be more prone to various fallacies, notably confirmation bias, which may result in adherence to arbitrary or even morally dubious perspectives due to the fact that they lack the strategies to diversify and problematise their perspectives. As we have seen, this sort of instance can be interpreted as a failure or dearth of moral imagining because their moral lens is limited to only a select few frames of reference when they approach and assess lived experience, in this case within their CPI dialogues. According to Sharp, "What is involved in any knowing is always heavily dependent on what questions are asked, what kind of knowledge is sought, what assumptions are taken for granted, what perspectives are taken into account and the context in which the inquiry is undertaken."[571] Returning to the pragmatic principles presented in the last chapter, in terms of reflection toward truth, children risk deluding themselves into believing the version of events they have concocted is the real or right one, trapping themselves in relativistic or narcissistic thinking ("my story, my truth") and "inquiring what belief is most in harmony with their system," as Peirce cautions against.[572]

What I am calling *high-stakes moments* capture the severity of such instances and underline the importance of an adult's facilitation through the careful integration of deliberate moral imagining. Specifically, a high-stakes moment designates a juncture within a CPI dialogue when something is said or intimated that points to one of the challenges to responsible autonomy I have identified, and thus calls for immediate intervention on the part of the adult facilitator. The moment is critical because the utterance or intimation, if left unaddressed, risks jeopardising children's thoughts and actions as emerging agents by allowing narrow empathetic scope, conversion inhibition and/or inaccurate pseudoenvironments to persist unchecked. Although debates abound within the P4C movement regarding adult involvement—when and how facilitators should interject rather than let children conduct the inquiry themselves—I want to argue that high-stakes moments unequivocally demand intervention, while conceding that such moments are not always easy to detect or deconstruct. Let us consider examples drawn from real CPI dialogues for each of the three challenges to responsible autonomy:

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[571] Sharp, 1993, 55.

- *narrow empathetic scope*: Curiously, the case of thieves seems to resurface time and again among elementary-aged children, often in their counter-examples for a type of individual who is assuredly unworthy of their empathy. This was consistently the case at a local elementary school engaged in their first year of regular P4C practice: regardless of the inquiry question, students from grades two through four repeatedly referenced thieves as exceptions to candidates deserving moral concern, seemingly without feeling the need to justify their stances.[573] Such a tendency uncovered their narrow empathetic scope in that they empathised to an insufficient degree due to limited frames of reference that oversimplified or misconstrued the circumstances of thieves—not unlike the hypothetical case of Charlie and the bicycle robber in chapter two.

  On a few occasions, these counter-examples turned into high-stakes moments that demanded intervention: the children determined that the consequences of being a thief should be extreme, from the removal of basic rights and the loss of human dignity to major suffering such as death by knifing. Though the restricted empathy was already

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[572] Peirce, 1997, 44.

[573] This example is drawn from one of Brila's local partners—a francophone primary school whose whole teaching faculty has been trained to conduct biweekly CPI sessions.

concerning, the severe implications of their stances risked jeopardising their envisioning of the overarching context of relation-to-other: how they view and consequently treat the people in their lives. The strength in numbers produced radical dogmatic beliefs that prevailed at the expense of a more morally imaginative generosity of spirit. Such utterances therefore counted as high-stakes moments because they begged to be unpacked, lest the narrow empathetic scope expressed during the CPI dialogues translate into morally questionable real-world action.

- *conversion inhibition*: During an extra-curricular workshop series, a group of fourth-graders were invited to generate some criteria to determine what makes a life worth living, considering not only the human context but others as well. One child whose otherwise avid, insightful contributions clearly showcased her many strengths of character and quality of thinking, admitted with some reluctance that she felt social media was among the most important aspects of contemporary living because of the "importance of being noticed." When asked to elaborate on her position, she explained that being connected through this kind of self-branding had to take priority over even environmental stability because it was the only real way to have others pay her any attention.

Though her words were not as blatantly concerning as the more violent ones above, they pointed to possible conversion inhibition in that they divulged her negative judgements about her personal worth that could in turn affect her envisioning of the overarching context of relation-to-self: how she perceives and values herself. Her preoccupation with social status as the only means to be recognised as worthwhile by others, coupled with her conviction that she could not be a "somebody" without it, represented a high-stakes moment because it risked flattening her mental landscape and impoverishing the reasoning driving her reflective endorsement when considering the lives she believes she has reason to value and pursue. As we have seen, this could also make her more susceptible to the toxins that others might represent in her mental landscape, making her less able to shield herself from interfering conditions, notably those of the social media followers she so esteemed.[574]

- *inaccurate pseudoenvironments*: During a series of outdoor CPI dialogues in local public parks on the philosophy of urban life, a group of children explored the question: "If you had a magic wand and could fulfill a wish for your city, what would it be?"[575] An eight-year-old boy suggested that the group should find a way to divide the good people from the bad ones, then send the latter away so they would not threaten the city's character. Though the child's intentions were clearly not harmful, his recommendation revealed an inaccurate pseudo-environment manifested through a stereotyped concept of goodness and an implied normative claim about the worthiness of certain individuals over others. He assumed there were two easily identifiable categories of individuals, making it therefore reasonable to want to populate his city with "good" people so as to ensure that it remained "good" itself.

Needless to say, such presuppositions have been at the origin of some of the greatest atrocities in human history: the notion of a perfect human being has inspired and justified the exclusion and even genocide of large sections of the population deemed undesirable according to suspicious, indefensible criteria. The boy's utterance therefore represented a

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[574] This example is drawn from an after-school Brila project with local anglophone youth ages nine through 12.

[575] This example is drawn from an urban project in which Brila participated that was funded by the municipal government to get young people's perspectives on their city. Data from the resulting study will be available in late 2018.

> high-stakes moment because it risked triggering a set of opinions and prejudices that could affect his envisioning of the overarching context of relation-to-knowledge—what he claimed to know about the world and its impacts on how he learnt about it. The stakes raised even higher since his suggestion seemed to influence the point of view of his peers: the others keenly nodded, agreeing it would naturally be better to eliminate the "bad guys" from their beloved city. In such cases, when spoken or hinted stereotyped concepts risk leading to prejudice with respect to complex social determinants like racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, classicism, and the like, the moment would count as high-stakes.

While I am arguing that high-stakes moments like these demand intervention on the part of adult facilitators, I also think their manifestation should be welcomed. In everyday vernacular, a "high-stakes" situation is one involving serious risks if the parties in question do not succeed, thereby making it highly pivotal—the oft-used examples of poker games or business negotiations illustrate this well. If they do succeed, however, in the form of gains in money or power, the risks are deemed to have been worthwhile. Similarly, while high-stakes moments may lead to significant losses in a CPI if not well addressed, the possible gains should not go overlooked. In the examples above, for instance, the high-stakes moments sparked highly productive philosophical exchanges that mobilised deliberate moral imagining to help children broaden their moral lens, all the while strengthening the child-adult relationships because they felt their ideas (even if drastic) were taken seriously by adults.

Yet I want to make another claim that is more controversial still. I want to argue not only that high-stakes moments in a CPI demand intervention from adult facilitators but also that they should somehow be genuinely provoked in order to create occasions for children to engage in deliberate moral imagining under the careful guidance of adults. Many people interested in P4C seem attracted to it because of the possibility for delving into positive concepts with young people, from happiness and peace to kindness and compassion. Chief among these practitioners is Frédéric Lenoir, whose very organisation (the SEVE Foundation) is an acronym for *savoir être et vivre ensemble*, which roughly translates into knowing-how-to-be and living-togetherness.[576] Although I grant that such concepts can lead to beautiful dialogical exchanges among children (and I have witnessed many of these firsthand), as someone who is concerned with the development of responsible autonomy in childhood, I find this softer route is often insufficient since it can prevent problematic thinking from surfacing.

Indeed, in my experience, when children are invited to inquire into concepts with clear positive connotations like peace and happiness, they tend to relay what they think the adult facilitators want to hear, resulting in what I call "readymade responses" that are often informed by past lessons they have had on the topic. For instance, if a class is invited to share its thoughts about caring and goodwill within a school where both concepts are part of the student charter of values, the canned replies that tend to arise obscure the genuine thinking errors that may be lurking beneath the surface. Conversely, when given the chance to explore more prickly or taboo concepts of their choosing such as revenge, violence, discrimination, suffering or rebellion, children tend not to have a blueprint to follow so the philosophical provocation yields genuine, albeit perhaps disconcerting thinking. It is as though the juiciness of the topic prompts a literal or implicit "Are-we-really-talking-about-this?" reaction that opens the floodgates. Since such CPI dialogues represent uncharted conceptual territory for children, they seem more prone to say what they are actually thinking or feeling rather than try to aim at some textbook answer.

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[576] Lenoir, 2016. Since I have worked as a senior trainer and co-director of philosophy for the Canadian faction of SEVE, I

As a result, a flurry of high-stakes moments ensue, in the form of stereotyped concepts, dubious moral claims, character assassinations, self-abnegating remarks, etc.—all of which are instances of failures to morally imagine that can jeopardise their empathic engagement, their self-efficacy and their reasonableness. Yet with these problematic thoughts out in the open, a seasoned adult facilitator can really get to work, using high-stakes moments to diagnose the thinking tools and dispositions that need to be practised with the given group. To my mind, therein lies the real power of the CPI as a morally imaginative practice: through a supportive aesthetic atmosphere, children feel safe and open enough to share their current convictions—the good, the bad and the ugly—and others get a chance to mirror back to them what seems reasonable to continue believing in light of what they know and of what the adult facilitator has enabled them to question. I worry that without such provocation, adult facilitators may not have access to the weeds and invasive species in children's mental landscapes, meaning these could continue to grow undetected, contributing to the faulty reasoning and accompanying moral shortcomings that tend to characterise the public sphere today.

So how specifically should adults proceed in the face of a high-stakes moment? As facilitators of collaborative morally imaginative practices that affect children's own mental landscaping, they must learn to identify high-stakes moments and intervene immediately with a question that seeks to probe the utterance or intimation to reveal its roots. In terms of activating deliberate moral imagining, the adults in charge of a CPI are not just facilitating an experience of dialogue, they are also in a way complicating perspectives and processes: if children exhibit failures of moral imagining through perspectives and procedures that are overly simplistic, they have to be pushed to consider how such failings might have relational ramifications: on how they view and

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have an insider's understanding of the organisation's mission but do not always agree with the ways it takes shape in practice.

treat others, on how they perceive and value themselves, on how they learn and what they claim to know about the world. So beyond facilitating, adults must also be *difficultating*.[577]

When faced with a high-stakes moment, adult facilitators must cautiously but confidently anticipate the possible challenges to children's evolving responsible autonomy to determine how their narrow empathetic scope or their conversion inhibition or their inaccurate pseudoenvironments may be flattening their mental landscapes and thus influencing their thoughts and actions as emerging agents. In such cases, difficultating moves on the part of adults seek to encourage deliberate moral imagining in children in order to defuse a high-stakes moment: evidence could include the content of the inquiry actually getting conceptually muckier before it gets clearer, and children seeming more primed as co-inquirers to hem and haw or change their minds because they are less dogmatically convinced by their original stances. Of note here, the adults must intervene but this does not translate into them doing the philosophical work for the children—as we shall see in the next section, certain procedural questions on the part of the facilitator can help the group realise for themselves that thinking errors are impeding their collective inquiry and encourage them to question these by mobilising strategies involving imaginative rationality.

ii) Affect aliens

Just as the generation of content in a CPI can be risky business given the possibility of high-stakes moments, the facilitation of a CPI at the level of procedure also represents an important risk since the embodied, affectively charged aesthetic atmosphere can generate powerful—

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[577] This term was the result of a conversation I had with colleagues at the 2012 annual summer seminar of the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children, the research centre that Lipman and Sharp founded at Montclair State University. I have since used it regularly in my practice as a philosophical facilitator and trainer to capture the subtleties of the adult's role in a CPI.

though not always positive—phenomenological experiences in children. What is at stake when adult facilitators approach the CPI as an aesthetic practice in the wider sense I have been discussing so far? For his part, Lipman recognises "the different opinions that are expressed are charged with personal feelings, and as more and more views are brought forth, these differences of feeling are accentuated."[578] To my mind, while this accentuation can be extremely constructive, with children becoming more aware of what they value through their embodied, affective exchanges, it also risks becoming alienating, thus requiring careful facilitation on the part of the adults involved.

Without such intervention, strong voices may monopolise and intimidate the community toward consensus when reasonableness would demand otherwise, thus weakening the bond between co-inquirers, with stronger personalities eclipsing more timid ones, "majority rule" judgements hindering rigorous analysis, and prejudiced outlooks being forcefully defended as more equitable suggestions get overlooked. In such cases, procedure is controlling content: the aesthetic atmosphere of openness, cooperation and interdependence facilitated at other stages of the inquiry—notably through the philosophical novel—is supplanted by one of coercion, hostility and one-sidedness. Inquiry "bullies" can influence a group's ability to share control of the discussion's progress, as examples of P4C practices with juvenile delinquents have suggested.[579]

In my estimation, one particularly effective way of portraying this risk is through the notion of "affect aliens," a term coined by affect theorist Sara Ahmed to designate individuals who are estranged by the prevailing affects of their context. Though her focus is on social exclusion issues among marginalised populations, I think her examples of "feminist kill-joys, unhappy queers, and melancholic migrants"[580] can be aptly translated to the realities faced by children whose differences may preclude their sense of belonging in a CPI and reveal themselves in the form of resistance, warranted as it may be. Relative to their current mental landscape, such children may find that what they imagine as valuable and worthy of reflective endorsement is perceived as wrong, incorrect or unpopular in a classroom context that, say, privileges whiteness or heteronormativity. Their tacit knowing may be extremely ineffable to them, notably compared to the politicised adults that Ahmed references,[581] but their phenomenological experiences no less existentially profound. In a sense they are forced to exist on the margins of dominant knowledge (possibly in the form of an inaccurate pseudoenvironment) because it does not represent what they themselves find meaningful. Here, the kind of immersive aesthetic atmosphere created through a CPI, if curated carefully by the adult facilitator, could help engage them imaginatively with their tacit knowing so as to awaken them to new but unfinished meanings and spur them to challenge the cultural fluency of their classroom context so they are not affectively alienated from their inquiry dialogues or from their wider educational experiences.

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[578] Lipman, 1988, 129.

As I see it, however, the risk of affect aliens increases the more a CPI is embodied and aesthetically charged because the alienation can happen at the level of body engagement as well as through the philosophical positions shared. A child can be alienated affectively because what she says or represents to the group is rejected or misapprehended not only verbally but also corporeally. Indeed, while powerful, the experience of dialoguing bodies in a CPI is not always a

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[579] Lee, 1986, 15-16.

[580] *Ibid*, 30.

[581] Ahmed in Gregg and Seigworth, eds., 2010, 29-30.

harmonious one: Though the issue of aggressive speech has been tackled from multiple vantage points in CPI scholarship,[582] the question of bodily hostility remains largely unaddressed.

To capture one type of hostility expressed corporeally, I propose the notion of *body taunting*, or the combined “vocabulary” of flesh—gestural, postural, physiognomic, kinetic expression—with which children both deliberately and inadvertently provoke, dismiss, intimidate or alienate one another as they attempt to co-construct meaning. Body taunting describes what takes places when disagreement is communicated nonverbally in antagonistic ways that betray or contradict voiced arguments, and I want to argue that it poses a threat to the CPI as a morally imaginative practice by changing the chiasmatic relations between co-inquirers, making boundaries between self and other seem more pronounced, hindering the overall sense of intersubjectivity and causing some children to become affect aliens.[583]

Body taunting can be palpable but hard to pinpoint—it is difficult to describe out of context because it embeds itself in the dialogical reasoning particular to a CPI session. Some obvious non-contextual examples include seemingly sincere verbal statements (“That’s very interesting!” or “I see your point!”) that are contradicted by a shrug, eye roll or curled lip; or assurances of receptivity (“I’m open to that approach...”) coupled with closed, withdrawn body positioning. Another instance could be feigned humility (“I’m not sure if what I’m about to say is important…” or “Please correct me if I’m mistaken…”) accompanied by imposing, condescending posturing. In these cases, there is an attempt to keep up appearances verbally without the body's commitment.

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[582] Of direct relevance to this essay, Kennedy describes aggression that occurs within what he calls the “Community of Interest” (2010, 204-205), and also with respect to power in his articles “Power, Manipulation and Control in a Community of Inquiry” (2003) and “The Psychodynamics of the Community of Inquiry and Educational Reform” (2000).

[583] It is noteworthy that in my experience as a CPI practitioner, body taunting has been more of an issue with older children, as of upper primary (about 10 years and up). According to Merleau-Ponty’s argument in “The Child’s Relation with Others,” this may in part be because children are in the process of recognising themselves as distinct from others and can therefore more easily be receptive to competing considerations and perspectives, decreasing the motivation to body taunt. Toadvine and Leonard Lowlier, eds. 2007, 143-184.

To my mind, the more interesting cases of body taunting happen through a certain cluster of CPI "gathering" moves intended to keep the group on track and promote building between ideas. Modelled by the adult facilitator at first, in a strong CPI these moves eventually get taken up by the children, though sometimes in an antagonistic fashion that seems counter to their purpose.[584] The move to summarise, for instance, is designed to remind co-inquirers of the key points made so far to ensure earlier ideas are not forgotten, to maintain consistency and continuity in the argument, and to slow down and possibly reorient the inquiry before it gets derailed. A body taunter may offer a summary that is helpful in terms of content, but sabotaged by oppositional body language of irritability and arrogance that suggests the inquiry is inadequate, nonsensical, and not up to par.

With the move to clarify, a body taunter may achieve through verbal statements the goal of ensuring the group's understanding and relevant, useful connections, but through body language express a pedantic, dogmatic attitude that implies a sense of superiority and elitism. Finally, with the move to restate and interpret, a body taunter may succeed in identifying unacknowledged assumptions in the group's thinking and explaining the implications of previous contributions, all the while using a slow, overbearing tone and patronising gesticulations that insinuate disdain for the inquiry's direction. Whether intended or not, the rudeness happens at the level of body talk rather than in verbal exchanges, and may create affects that alienate those children who do not seek to or know how to exploit corporeal language to their advantage.

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[584] For a glossary of relevant moves and elements in the CPI method, see Sasseville's *Penser ensemble à l'école* (2012).

In these cases, the taunting element—what is provocative, dismissive, intimidating or alienating—is the incongruity between verbal and body language, and the added layer of disingenuousness. The dialoguing body is communicating something different from what has been voiced, resulting in mixed signals that estrange inquirers from one another. This incongruity complicates the interpretation effort that children already undertake to try to address their given philosophical question. Indeed, as I have argued, the CPI method is already very hermeneutically demanding: the process of expressing, understanding and building on different ideas with others constitutes intensive interpretive labour under the best of circumstances.

Referring again to Merleau-Ponty, when the "total language" seems internally inconsistent or contradictory, children may be left in hesitation, wondering what to decode—speech? gestures? tone? Either accidentally or deliberately, body taunting may cause a meaning reversal: as Kennedy observes with regard to body talk, "gesture can gloss the linguistic even to the point of making words mean exactly the opposite of their usual meaning."[585] The target of the taunt—whether another inquirer, members of the group, or the inquiry process itself—is somehow belittled or ridiculed. This politicises the interpretive work of the CPI by establishing a hierarchy between taunter and taunted, underlining power struggles that might have been loosening with the group's evolution towards an ethos of intersubjectivity.

In terms of affect aliens, I want to highlight one important loss that may ensue from such body taunting. Through hostility to other inquirers or the group, body taunting may hinder the self-othering process described above and accentuate the boundaries between self and other that were beginning to seem less noticeable, thus threatening the self-other chiasm. When body taunted, children who become affect aliens may sense the aggressive, antagonistic energy of their taunter to the degree that it silences their speech but also affects their body—they cower, recoil, sweat, shake, feel faint and stutter. Their willingness or ability to talk may decrease, resulting in missing perspectives and an imbalance of contributions, which in turn damages the community's dynamic. Here we see a clear threat to deliberate moral imagining but expressed through the body rather than speech. On this account, body taunting can be seen as affecting the self-other chiasm by inhibiting the achieved levels of aesthetic experience that contribute to the transformative feeling of a consonance of minds among community members.

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[585] Kennedy, 2010, 198.

Though the drives to body taunt may be multifaceted, four particular motivations seem reasonable to consider, and may exist alone or in combination. First, body taunting could be perceived as evidence of epistemological bias—a way of communicating the privileging of certain forms of knowing at the expense of others, which is symptomatic of a restricted envisioning of the overarching context of relation to knowledge. For instance, a child who happens to be well-versed in certain facts or intellectual traditions attached to a concept in the CPI question may not be willing to entertain other approaches, opting to validate preferred ideological structures while communicating indifference or obstinacy through a body language that asserts "My mind is made up."

Second, body taunting could reveal discomfort with uncertainty—a way of resisting the emergent, unsettled, contestable truth environment of the CPI method, which points to a lack of relational openness; the child has not learnt to enact the conditions and dispositions supportive of pragmatic inquiry. As we have seen, philosophical positions in a CPI are deemed to be open to revision as long as there is life experience to inform and nuance them: in Sharp's words, "We cannot engage in such creative transformation...if we remain wedded to the idea that there is one absolute truth, and only our world view contains it."[586] Yet if everything is open to question, a child who feels uprooted or unsettled by the process may express their aversion through bodily rigidity, while still seeming flexible in conversation.

Third, body taunting could betray a kind of intolerance—a way of conveying fear or insecurity when facing alternative perspectives or having personal prejudices challenged, which may indicate a restricted envisioning of the overarching context of relation to other. This possibility is likely heightened in very socially diverse CPI groups since, as Kennedy writes, "The more knowledge-perspectives I am exposed to—whether of gender, class, sexuality, self-understanding, religious belief, aesthetic value and so on—the more alternative versions of truth I encounter."[587] A child may know better than to voice bigotry but not manage to hide its corporeal manifestation, especially in cases where the unfolding argument defies personal preferences or beliefs communicated by someone deemed "other" or even inferior.

Fourth, body taunting could be a sign of egoism—a way of reinstating self-interest, individual expertise and claims to rightness, [588]which can be a sign of restricted envisioning of relation to self. Since a CPI environment strives to decentre the ego and foster "a form of subjectivity appropriate for a democracy…which prioritises the skills of dialogue and negotiation,"[589] a child who objects to the goal of distributed power and knowhow among the community may attempt to assert themselves corporeally as the leader, the elite, the specialist, without the decency to verbally query or disagree with other members.

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[586] Sharp, 1997, 73.

[587] Kennedy, 2010, 137.

[588] To be clear, egoism here refers to the prioritisation of the Cartesian self, thought to be capable of pure, atomistic, disembodied existence (Descartes, 1988, 59-103), not to psychoanalytic theories like those of Sigmund Freud.

[589] Kennedy, 2013, 75.

With all four motivations, body taunting risks adversely affecting the community's co-construction of meaning by demarcating the self and other, thus influencing the chiasmatic relations between inquirers and producing affect aliens who disengage from the process, resulting in less collaborative efforts toward deliberate moral imagining. Worse still, body taunts may be contagious among dialoguing bodies, resulting in greater estrangement between children, and a more sharply felt self-other boundary. Accordingly, the potential for multidimensional thought achieved intersubjectively may also be impeded, unveiling a dearth of moral imagining: some perspectives or people may no longer be taken seriously (lack of caring thinking); there may be reluctance to engage with and evaluate unfamiliar views and arguments (lack of critical thinking); and inquirers may not perceive the need to look for missing perspectives, test possibilities and envision the implications of ideas (creative thinking).

In response, adult facilitators must oscillate between facilitating and difficultating here too. They should be especially sensitive to the intersecting social determinants that may already estrange certain children and strive to prevent affect aliens by highlighting inconsistencies between voiced ideas and body talk when they arise. Further, when an inquiry does produce affect aliens, whether through body taunting or some other aspect of the aesthetic atmosphere, adult facilitators must create for those alienated children a safe space to share their experience so it does not remain tacit or ineffable, and so it can become a point of self-correction for the group as they progress.

In closing, though both high-stakes moments and affect aliens represent the kind of risks inherent in the CPI as a collaborative morally imaginative practice, they also point to a significant opportunity to transform child-adult relationships through an approach to facilitation that is interventionist without being exploitative or alienating, and maintains the aesthetic atmosphere necessary for imaginative engagement. I will now elaborate on how a CPI emphasising deliberate moral imagining can be understood as an imaginative curatorship of children's own mental landscaping when guided purposefully and carefully by adult facilitators.

Imaginative curatorship

Now that I have examined the underpinnings of the CPI, its capacity to create an aesthetic atmosphere conducive to deliberate moral imagining, and the opportunity amidst risks that exists in facilitating such a collaborative morally imaginative practice, I want to specify the CPI's prospects as an imaginative curatorship of children's own mental landscaping. I have argued that the CPI must be much more explicit and systematic as an aesthetic practice in order to ensure deliberate moral imagining is modelled and exercised with pedagogical integrity; the facilitation should be attentive and intentional to enable the desired relational impact. In preserving this potential in spite of threats at the levels of content and procedure, adults are critical as facilitators—they must carefully intervene at the right junctures to address and transform risks like high-stakes moments and affect aliens.

To be consistent with the philosophy of childhood I have been defending throughout this thesis, and to move toward more innovative, careful and emboldening child-adult relationships, I want to argue that such interventions ought to be as pedagogically transparent as possible. In my view, adult facilitators should speak with children in an open, age-appropriate fashion about the CPI's aims and process, while clearly modelling the very features of deliberate moral imagining they want to encourage in them, not only in the pedagogical choices they make but in the ways they act with the group. In this section, I will qualify what I mean by an imaginative curatorship of children's own mental landscaping, starting with the issue of motivating children to aspire toward the responsible autonomy traits that a collaborative morally imaginative practice can help foster, then proposing how this curatorship can happen in the various CPI stages, namely in the stimulus materials and questions, the dialogue, the supporting activities and the metacognitive reflection.

I want to begin with the important question of motivation: How can adult facilitators motivate children to do the hard work involved in learning to enact the dispositions necessary for deliberate moral imagining in a CPI so as to help cultivate their responsible autonomy competence? To my mind, adult facilitators should perceive their role in the CPI as a curatorship—one that seeks to look after the “tiny works of art” that Lipman considers mental acts to be, so as to enrich children’s collaborative meaning-making through the features of deliberate moral imagining I have proposed. The notion of a curator—from the Latin *curare*, meaning to take care—helps to further emphasise the aesthetic atmosphere that I am associating with a collaborative morally imaginative practice. Like curators carefully choosing and arranging an exhibition’s artwork to suit a particular gallery, if adult facilitators are to motivate children to inquire imaginatively together and become their own mental landscapists, they must be selective and discerning about the various elements of the CPI, from the principles, procedures and pedagogical materials that make up the method’s steps, to the embodied, affective and tacit dimensions that create the aesthetic atmosphere conducive for an intersubjective group dynamic. Though the philosophical question may change every session, adult facilitators must continue to curate the same affects of wonder, curiosity, doubt, tenacity, mutual support, thoughtfulness and exuberance, to perpetuate in children the desire to be motivated enough to persist through the CPI stages across dialogues toward a stronger autonomy competence.

In my view, to be genuinely effective, children's engagement in the CPI as a collaborative morally imaginative practice should be spurred by their own aspirations for growth as emerging agents so that they take on the active, participatory role of imaginative inquiring willingly and energetically[590], and grow in their capacity and comfort with their own mental landscaping. Though the CPI model is lauded for enabling an educative environment that is relevant to lived experience, it is precisely because it aims beyond children's current scope and expectations in terms of their relationships, identity and knowledge—the overarching contexts of their relation to other, self, knowledge—that it can be regarded as aspirational. Yet this idea of going beyond is also makes the process difficult and demanding. And so, to enhance this idea of an imaginative curatorship of children's own mental landscaping, I want to propose the notion of *aspirational eros* as the energy of wanting to achieve—the desiring drive that makes children want to experience the passion of higher-order pursuits like the CPI as a collaborative morally imaginative practice, in spite of the difficulties and efforts involved, in order to become capable, confident mental landscapists for themselves. According to my hypothesis, if adult facilitators can harness this energy of wanting in children, then they will be indirectly supporting the cultivation of their responsible autonomy because the CPI group will be driven to make the most of the curated space designed to expand and enrich their envisioned options for what they believe is worth valuing. On this view, aspirational eros becomes the fuel for deliberate moral imagining toward the development of children's evolving autonomy competence.

My interest in eros stems from the small but important scholarly literature on this elusive notion, understood as a dynamic mainspring for learning that activates the genuine desire for knowledge and wisdom, which I see as crucial for engaging in the CPI as a collaborative morally imaginative practice. Drawing chiefly on Plato's dialogues, these studies reference Socrates's description of eros as a "divine madness"—a love of life's true beauty that can be reined in to push reasoning capacity to greater heights, and prevent it being overshadowed by a lifeless sense of logic.[591] To illustrate this divine madness, in the *Phaedrus*, Socrates compares the human soul to a charioteer trying to guide two winged horses—an obedient, disciplined one and a wild, unruly one. The noble soul learns to channel the wild horse's desiring energy towards higher-order pursuits whereas the weaker soul falls prey to basal impulses, confusing those sensual pleasures with philosophical fulfillment, instead of recognising their possibly dangerous influence and indulging them only in moderation.[592] This perspective echoes the depiction of Eros in Greek mythology as an intense source of passionate energy—"a personification of the life force engender[ing] change and growth"[593]—that can foster human fulfilment but also threaten reason and morality if mishandled.[594] Conceived in this way, eros connects well with my account of an evolving childhood autonomy that is *responsible*: children need the desiring energy to want to think and act autonomously but they must learn to orient it appropriately.

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[590] As Lipman argues, "The student who learns only the products of inquiry in the various disciplines does not thereby become an inquirer but merely a learned student." 1988, 39.

Eros's potential to sustain such a longing for the good also forms the focus of Diotima's speech in the *Symposium*, in which she introduces the ladder metaphor to differentiate between a love for particular instantiations of beauty and a philosophical love for beauty itself: "One goes always upwards for the sake of this Beauty, starting out from beautiful things and using them like rising stairs...in the end he comes to know just what it is to be beautiful."[595] Here, eros takes on aesthetic dimensions as an appreciation of beautiful experiences, both physical and conceptual, which connects to my depiction of the CPI as an embodied, affectively charged practice of aesthetics education. Further, eros so conceived mirrors my view of deliberate moral imagining as enabling children to see the bigger moral picture: it is akin to a yearning for otherness that broadens horizons of value—like an unfamiliar lifestyle, worldview or person—and becomes "a creative poetic force that makes novel meanings and eventually makes us who we are."[596]

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[591] Cooper & Hutchinson, 1997, 523.

[592] *Ibid*, 524.

[593] Hull, 2002, 26.

[594] Thogersen, 2011, 405.

[595] Cooper & Hutchinson, 1997, 493.

From an educational viewpoint, then, eros can support child-driven pedagogies since it propels the lifelong striving to fulfill varying levels of desires, from simple pleasures to the quest for truth. Educational reformer Joseph Schwab's simple but insightful view of eros as "the energy of wanting" helps to illustrate how desires may be educated in a CPI in ways that reconcile eros's inherent tensions. Adapting Plato's charioteer analogy, he describes liberal education's aim as "harness[ing] eros in the controlling reins of reasonableness in order that we may borrow energy from her for intellectual purposes and, conversely, enjoy to the fullest the capacities for feeling and action she confers."[597]

On my interpretation, to cultivate such aspirations in children, the energy of eros must be harnessed to raise them to new heights—like the ascending rungs of Diotima's ladder—exposing them to challenges beyond what they might presently judge themselves as capable of addressing, like the CPI as a collaborative morally imaginative practice. In Socratic terms, this translates into channeling their desiring energy towards higher-order pursuits characterised by a "reason-dependent sort of love,"[598] notably of the meaning-making kind, while preserving the divine madness that enables them to wholeheartedly commit to the exacting tasks. The cultivation of aspirational eros as part of the imaginative curatorship of children's own mental landscaping is thus an invitation to the process of becoming—a process of coming to be, know and experience in novel, enriching ways.

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[596] Garrison, 1995, 409.

[597] Schwab, 1954, 54.

[598] Soble, 1989.

More specifically, it involves adult facilitators carefully attending to the motivations for growth occurring within the CPI group so that in time children may independently recreate the sustained engagement needed to support the aspirations they choose for themselves as emerging agents, including the difficult but important work of mental landscaping. It is worth noting that on the view I am defending, this process of becoming is never complete, and thus the invitation extends to both children and their adult facilitators to foster eros as "a form of desire which provides the condition of possibility for seeking union with our highest potentialities."[599]

Yet to successfully harness children's energing of wanting, the curatorship should not be limited to the space: to my mind, it should extend to the adult facilitators as elements of the space, as this too can contribute to transforming child-adult relationships. I emphatically agree with Schwab that adults must "constitute [themselves] a curative experience,"[600] meaning their very presence should help curate the space both physically and metaphorically. Applied to the CPI as a collaborative morally imaginative practice, adult facilitators must model aspirational eros in ways that are infectious, alluring and inspirational, deploying divine madness without letting it wreak havoc, so that children will eagerly desire to accompany them on challenging imaginative inquiry journeys, deeming these as worthwhile efforts and developing their own aspirations for growth from witnessing an adult's desiring energy.

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[599] Burch, 1999, 124. It is important to note that to foster aspirational eros in a CPI is not to suggest that children in their current states are somehow inferior to their adult facilitators, but rather to emphasize the openness to evaluation that eros involves in all phases of life as it "pushes us to advance beyond a given stage in the development of our consciousness towards a higher stage, as yet unknown." Tsabar,78.

[600] Schwab, 1954, 57.

The facilitators' emphasis on growth does not entail a blind conviction in children's potential to accomplish particular tasks, but rather a real, palpable confidence in their capacity to harness their desiring energy even if do not always succeed—a focus on process rather than on results that involves "neither syrupy friendship nor awful judgement but correction and assistance" while recognising the "need to be assured that attempts at doing and thinking will be accepted as attempts...and not as definitive measures of powers or limitations."[601] In time, just as Plato's love for Socrates eventually transforms into a love of wisdom, children's love for their adult facilitators may transform into a love of the CPI and of the possibilities afforded by deliberate moral imagining. So in terms of children's motivation, aspirational eros might well help to curate the aesthetic atmosphere of the CPI. But adult facilitators should also pay special attention to curating each stage of the CPI so that the overall process becomes more morally imaginative and, by extension, more likely to help children enrich their own mental landscapes. This can be achieved in myriad ways but I will consider some specific approaches that I find particularly fruitful based on my own experiences as a P4C practitioner.

The stimulus materials and questions

As I see it, the imaginative curatorship of children's own mental landscaping can take place from the very first stage of the CPI, through the careful creation of stimulus materials that are themselves deliberately morally imaginative, presenting children with assorted options for what they might find worthy of their valuing in their present and as they grow up. As I have noted, though some of the P4C curriculum and other children's literature already showcase children engaged in some level of what I would call morally imaginative deliberation, the CPI seems especially promising to me as a collaborative morally imaginative practice because the particular format of the Lipmanian philosophical novel lends itself well to depicting my proposed features of deliberate moral imagining if written explicitly with this aim in mind.[602] And so, when authoring philosophical stories, adults should strive to portray children being deliberately morally imaginative together with respect to concepts and contexts that tend to be stereotyped or misconstrued so as to model how such a purposeful process can address challenges to relational autonomy like those I have identified. The hope is that children engaged in this kind of CPI will get a chance to imagine a given set of circumstances alongside their fictional counterparts before encountering similar ones in reality.

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[601] *Ibid*, 54.

To create these kinds of settings and exchanges, the adult author must become affectively invested in her own wide-ranging interests as a philosophically curious person in order to reflect the nuances of conceptual thinking. She must also herself engage in deliberate moral imagining so as to become attuned to the existential impact of these interests and breed an aesthetic atmosphere of genuine infectious, passionate inquiry in her characters. In other words, through her writing, she must not only model thinking but also embody a certain morally imaginative orientation toward philosophical thought that reveals its potential for illuminating deep concerns through intersubjective exchanges. This affective investment is rendered all the more valuable for the author because the modelling is crafted with children's fulfillment in mind: as Lipman writes, "The ability of children to become such [thinking] people depends considerably on the availability of models—even fictional models—with which to identify."[603]

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[602] Incidentally, this morally imaginative approach to writing philosophical novels will form the focus of my postdoctoral research fellowship alongside adolescent participants who will co-write the narrative and pedagogical guide with me.

[603] Lipman, 1988, 95.

The authoring of philosophical stories can therefore be seen as a form of affective labour as described by Hardt and Negri, constituting immaterial work that yields intangible inner experiences and emotional responses through the creation and manipulation of affects. That being said, while this may seem like a relatively benign goal, the adult author must remain aware of the opportunity amidst risks previously explored: though her curatorship role demands that she make creative and pedagogical choices throughout the writing process to be effective, she will inevitably affirm certain values, viewpoints and lifestyles at the expense of others. Accordingly, she may generate unintended affects—estrangement, apprehension, inhibition—that can produce affect aliens in her readers, thereby detracting from the original purpose of the story as a dialogue stimulus. Paradoxically, because of the affective investment required in writing philosophical stories aimed at supporting children's autonomous thinking through deliberate moral imagining, the author may depict her young characters incarnating values which she herself has reflectively endorsed—a tendency that is expected, even revered, in novelists but viewed with suspicion in curriculum writers whose impartiality is stipulated.

Indeed, whereas artists tend to have *carte blanche* when expressing their own ideas about reality, as evidenced by literary classics where novelists paint a particular picture of the world to give voice to their existential experience, the author of philosophical stories carries the added pedagogical burden of inclusiveness and impartiality, making the imaginative curatorship of children's own mental landscaping all the more exacting. As Kennedy writes, the Lipmanian novel presents "one mind ventriloquising" with the explicit intention of provoking children's philosophical reflection.[604] Yet the novel ought not be a vehicle for the author's voice alone nor for a handful of preferred interpretations, but one that encompasses as many types of experiences as possible without compromising intelligibility, so as to model the relational openness toward life that characterises morally imaginative agents—what it might look like to acknowledge limited perspectives, recognise commonality and identify competing considerations.[605]

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[604] Kennedy, 1992, 54.

This is a tall order, to be sure, especially since the scenarios devised by the adult author are meant to be mirroring the experiences of children.[606] Questions about intention thus become crucial: Who should write philosophical stories? Whose voices and circumstances should they represent? What parts of the philosophical canon should be stressed? Who benefits from the stories? Who is unwittingly ostracised?[607] A failure to morally imagine on the part of the adult author can have important consequences when the philosophical story is transplanted into another context. For instance, an account of Guatemalan children reading *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery* can be interpreted as raising the issue of affect aliens through the uncritical use of "Harry's Gringo brand of critical thinking" since this narrow focus risks further oppressing countries still recuperating from colonial legacies and in need of more culturally relevant narratives.[608]

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[605] Even if adult authors succeed in maintaining a justifiable degree of impartiality, the philosophical novel itself as part of the CPI model affirms a specific take on the values of inquiry, reasoning and deliberation, thus encouraging particular conceptions of growth and self-affirmation in children as beings capable of autonomous thought and action. This excludes the still popular conceptions of children as empty vessels ready to absorb their culture's heritage from knowledgeable elders—perhaps a reason why *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery* garnered so much resistance in the United States when it was first published, with bumper stickers adamantly demanding "Get Harry Out of Our Schools!" Gregory, 2011, 202.

[606] One alternative to this adult ventriloquist problem has been to have children write (or contribute to writing) philosophical texts themselves, as I will be striving to do as part of my postdoctoral research. For those P4C theorists and practitioners who endorse this idea, the writing process is thought to help young people deepen their philosophical understanding while the resulting affects and scenarios are deemed more authentic since they evade the adult-writing-as-child predicament. Yet if the philosophical novel is supposed to model genuine childlike dialogue as well as symbolise the major philosophical ideas of intellectual history, it seems inevitable that an adult with philosophical knowledge will have to enter the equation eventually. For instance, the Association Québecoise de Philosophie pour Enfants (AQPE) showcases a variety of "stimulus" materials designed to encourage dialogue through a by-youth-for-youth (French only).

[607] Interestingly, these questions have arisen not only for the authors of original philosophical novels but also for those in charge of translating existing novels. Didier Dupont describes the attention to detail required to maintain the affective purpose of Lipman's novel *Lisa* in the French translation, while making editorial choices to render certain scenarios more relatable for children growing up in France. Dupont, 1987, 20-23.

[608] Raitz, 1992, 7.

And so, to avoid exploitative leanings in her curatorship, the author of philosophical novels must continuously evaluate her dual writing purpose—narrative and expository, artistic and pedagogic—to help ensure against a hidden curriculum that presupposes certain ideas about what kinds of lives are reasonable to value. Her pedagogical integrity and expertise in showcasing philosophical themes that can inform and resonate with children's deep concerns must be balanced by the artistry of creating multidimensional characters, settings and situations that problematise these themes through a plurality of considerations accounting for the diversity of cultures, traditions and values of an ever globalising world, as my proposed features of deliberate moral imagining require.

Accordingly, the adult author may face the significant challenge of maintaining authenticity in her creative purpose while upholding her responsibility to child readers. On my view, the affective weight of this curatorship points to the urgency of having myriad authors share the task of writing many and varied philosophical stories in the same spirit of curiosity and with the same dual commitment to modelling both multidimensional thinking and a morally imaginative orientation to life. I think it fair to suppose that children's exposure to such morally imaginative stimulus materials could have an impact on the types of wonderings that interest them: their inquiry questions may touch on a broader range of topics, be less assumptive in their formulation, grow in complexity and nuance, and the like.

Last but certainly not least, recalling the principle of indeterminacy from chapter four, when extended to the stimulus, imaginative curatorship can help to create indeterminacy by curating the affects of wonder and doubt in the storylines themselves so that children may suddenly see as contestable those issues or questions that previously seemed rather settled or unproblematic, making them not only more receptive to the contestability in the content emerging from the inquiry, but also to the affects of wonder and doubt circulating within the CPI group. To use the parlance I adopt in my own work with children, this two-tiered indeterminacy enables them to feel more "philosophically itchy" because they sense the Peircian irritation of doubt more genuinely and thoroughly from both the stimulus and the group's reaction to it, and thus their desiring energy of wanting—their aspirational eros—is awakened and seemingly easier to sustain during the inquiry that follows.

The dialogue

Following the sharing of the stimulus, once the concept and question are selected for the given CPI dialogue, the imaginative curatorship of children's own mental landscaping can involve particular strategies on the part of adult facilitators to help the group mobilise the features of deliberate moral imagining in ways that push the inquiry forward, whether by envisioning the implications of viewpoints, considering novel possibilities, identifying undetected assumptions, etc., and self-correcting accordingly. Since adult facilitators are inviting children to share the tasks involved in this purposeful envisioning of multiple frames of reference, their combined efforts can widen their collective moral lens: for instance, they may expand what they count as criteria for empathic engagement, not only in the types of examples they consider together but also within their own inquiry circle (how they treat one another in their dialogical exchanges, contributing to the aesthetic atmosphere being curated) and within their personal relationships (how they treat the people in their everyday lives as a result of their CPI experience).

In my view, the intricacies of deliberate moral imagining in action can be better understood with reference to Johnson's work on imaginative rationality—a term he uses to capture how individuals ought to engage in moral deliberation. In his book *Moral Imagination: Implications of Cognitive Science for Ethics*, he explores the ways that individuals can hone their skills of imagining to better understand how their moral reasoning is structured:

> We need self-knowledge about the imaginative structure of our moral understanding, including its values, limitations, and blind spots. We need a similar knowledge of other people, both those who share our moral tradition and those who inhabit other traditions. We need to imagine how various actions open to us might alter our self-identity, modify our commitments, change our relationships, and affect the lives of others.[609]

Within a CPI, this knowledge of imaginative rationality can be gradually gained even in young children if adult facilitators use certain curating strategies to reveal the toxins or undesired plant species that may be lurking in the group's mental landscapes. To reiterate an earlier point, such strategies can be deemed justifiable on my account because I am opting for a weak/moderate substantive account of autonomy that emphasises responsibility: children's mental landscapes ought to be protected so as to not yield polluting contents that end up compromising their early attempts at living autonomously in relationally sound ways, with the aim that they learn to grow in their capacity and confidence as their own mental landscapists. I want to consider two elements in Johnson's work that I find especially illuminating for my argument—*conceptual framing* and *prototype structure*—and point to some of the ways they can elevate deliberate moral imagining in a CPI, with reference to the narrative aids previously explored.

i) Conceptual framing

First, Johnson argues that our understanding of a situation depends heavily on the way it is framed either by others or ourselves. Returning to my fictional instance of *The Three Little Pigs* from chapter two, the destruction of the straw and stick houses can be interpreted as the cunning ploy of a bloodthirsty killer or as the tragic but unintended consequence of a sinusitis-afflicted neighbour, depending on the conceptual framing. Access to both versions of this story—the classic fairy tale and the imaginative reinterpretation—can help children to recognise such conceptual frames at work so they can better appreciate the dangers of limited perspectives and adopt a broader imaginative lens when exposed to similar scenarios in the future.[610] If the CPI is curated by adult facilitators so as to help children uncover the conceptual frames influencing their moral reasoning at specific points in the dialogue, they may (as budding mental landscapists) become more sensitive to oversimplified portrayals in general. The "Big Bad Wolf" image and others like it may start to carry less weight in an imaginative repertoire that contains alternative perspectives, in part due to an awareness of conceptual framing.

Similarly, children may start to see how specific agendas may be influencing the conceptual frames from behind the scenes. For instance, with respect to the aforementioned sex industry narratives, the prostitute's plight could be strategically framed as an affront to family values and society's moral fabric by a card-carrying conservative, while framed by an anti-pornography feminist as a type of exploitative harm that violates women's civil rights. On Johnson's argument, we must become aware of such agendas and learn to mobilise imaginative rationality in order to responsibly grasp the full breadth of circumstances: "Knowing about the precise

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[609] Johnson, 1993, 187.

[610] To push the conceptual framing even further, children could creatively rewrite other fairy tales that also promote the hero/villain dichotomy in an effort to imagine other ways of envisioning well known narratives.

nature of the particular frames we inherit from our moral tradition and apply to situations is absolutely essential, if we are to be at all aware of the prejudgements we bring to situations."[611]

Applied to the CPI, in so doing, the ambiguities within interpretations may begin to expose themselves more easily. As Pritchard notes in *Studies in Philosophy for Children*, "Stimulating the moral imagination, for example, can lead us to analyse key moral concepts or principles. Analysing key moral concepts or principles can help us recognise hidden moral issues, and it can also stimulate the moral imagination to think of new possibilities...disclos[ing] uncertainties about how far our responsibilities extend, and so on."[612]

If adult facilitators want to emphasise deliberate moral imagining in this way during CPI dialogues, they can invite children to consistently call into question the source and accuracy of their conceptual frames through some of the method's procedural prompts, used purposively to activate the three features of deliberate moral imagining:

- "How else can the situation be perceived?"
- "Are certain concepts too narrowly defined?"
- "Could we benefit from some new, more inclusive criteria?"
- "How can we see this problem differently?"
- "Are we making any assumptions we have not noticed?"
- "Can we understand our inquiry question in other ways?"
- "Are there contexts in which we might hold a different position?" …etc.

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[611] *Ibid*, 192.

[612] Sharp and Reed, 1996, 55.

ii) Prototype structure

In addition to conceptual frames, Johnson claims that moral reasoning can likewise be impeded by the prototype structure of concepts. In his view, some moral theories incorrectly maintain that concepts have a stable core that make them intelligible to all, when in reality, they are unstable and contestable, making moral imagining important to preventing their exclusionary application. In his words, "A central part of our moral development will be the imaginative use of particular prototypes in constructing our lives. Each prototype has a definite structure, yet that structure must undergo gradual imaginative transformation as new situations arise. It thus has dynamic character, which is what makes possible our moral development or growth."[613] By way of illustration, he offers the prototype structure of the concept of *person*, noting that many ethical issues have resulted from attempts to extend the prototypical (usually the adult white heterosexual male) to the nonprototypical (women, minorities, disabled individuals, etc., even other mammals).[614]

Recalling my thought experiment about talking animals from chapter two, a CPI dialogue on this topic may be limited by existing prototype structures in children's mental landscape regarding what they understand to be beneficiaries of moral concern, say rationally competent humans. This prototype can be indirectly supported by negative metaphorical constructs in ordinary language referring to animals, like the disparagement of a person's moral character ("he's a weasel," "she's a bitch"); condescending statements about ability ("you can't teach a dog new tricks," "monkey see, monkey do"); snide descriptions of hopeless situations ("flogging a dead horse," "going to the dogs"), etc. Yet if Johnson is right, conscientious metaphorical thinking may help to explode such prototypes, and this purposeful process—which I see as an example of deliberate moral imagining at work—could in turn lead to a broadened moral lens with which to approach and assess lived experience. In this case, the lens would be broad enough to consider various candidates for personhood—not only humans but also non-human animals. In Johnson's words, "what we call 'lessons of life' are thus possible because of our ability to reason metaphorically. Often we learn from an experience by metaphorically extending from that particular experience to our present situation, which is not exactly the same."[615]

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[613] Johnson, 1993, 192.

As part of their curatorship role, adult facilitators can help children become more aware of the structure of prototypes by exposing them to conceptual resources that explode them, particularly if the group is exhibiting a failure to morally imagine in the face of certain prototypes during their dialogical exchanges. For example, the award-winning, youth-friendly documentary *Dirt* adopts a truly interdisciplinary account of the soil by including interviews with a range of experts worldwide, from natural history writer Bill Logan and physicist Vandana Shiva to Nobel laureate Wangari Maathai and ecological designer John Todd.[616] These interviews are complemented by accounts of cultural traditions and religious rituals as well as overviews of sustainability projects organised by local and international activists and non-profit groups. Throughout, the film's interviewees manage to explode the prototype structure of the concept of dirt and call attention to the negative metaphorical constructs in ordinary language that affect people's common conception of the soil as inconsequential.

Viewing this documentary, children may start to examine how their own metaphorical language may limit their appreciation of dirt (from insults like "dirt bag" and "eat dirt" to informal expressions like "dirty look," "dirty tricks" or "dragging someone's name through the

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[614] *Ibid*, 195.

[615] *Ibid*, 195.

[616] Benenson, Common Ground Media, 2009.

dirt”). Again, this kind of awareness can then be extended to other circumstances since the boundaries of the mental landscape have been stretched and the identification of prototype structure has become a new tool in the deliberate moral imagining toolkit. Suddenly, for the film’s young viewers, dirt might become a concept they value—an asset they want to protect, a substance binding them to other life forms that also need it for survival—and they may think twice when confronted with similar notions that initially appear unambiguous, interrogating the prototype structure underlying them. This morally imaginative orientation can shape deep concerns in ways that make their evolving autonomy more responsible in terms of its relational impact: in this case, a profound interest in ecological wellness and nature as a part of the ethical community.

During CPI dialogues, adult facilitators can purposefully set these lessons in motion for children by encouraging them to question prototypes and consider new metaphorical constructs through procedural prompts already embedded in the method, such as:

- “Are we making any hasty generalisations?”
- “How is this concept more complex than we thought?”
- “What are the consequences of thinking this way?”
- “Are there alternatives to thinking this way?”
- “Can we interpret this concept differently?”
- “Can we draw analogies to help us understand this concept?”
- “What would an opposing position sound like?”
- “What new metaphors could help us understand this concept?” …etc.

Conceptual framing and prototype structure are just two elements of imaginative rationality among many that point to how deliberate moral imagining may be formalised within a collaborative practice like the CPI through strategies that adult facilitators can use to maintain pedagogical integrity in their role as curators. Such strategies can help address some of the risks involved in facilitating the CPI as a morally imaginative practice, notably high-stakes moments: children may start to see that their framing and structuring of concepts—whether those of their own making or those inherited from others—affect how they construct their perspectives, perhaps more restrictively than can be justified once revealed.

Of course, if adult facilitators want to mobilise such strategies effectively and authentically, they themselves will have to become more aware of the impacts of conceptual frames and prototype structure on their own reasoning so they can be adept at deliberate moral imagining and identifying moments when it can help children. An adult with narrow empathetic scope, conversion inhibition or problematic inaccurate pseudoenvironments will likely be ill-equipped to support the deliberate moral imagining of children in the ways described thus far. Their own aspirational eros in this regard is crucial if they are to be models of morally imaginative strategies for CPI groups and to co-construct meaning with them: after all, as Johnson notes, moral imagining is "the chief activity by which we are able to inhabit a more or less common world—a world of shared gestures, actions, perceptions, experiences, meanings, symbols, and narratives."[617]

The supporting activities

In the traditional P4C curriculum designed by Lipman and Sharp, the CPI dialogues are meant to be complemented by specially designed supporting activities within the pedagogical guides in the form of what they call "discussion plans"—which aim to stretch concepts that appear in the philosophical novels to reveal their ambiguity and multiple meanings—and "exercises"—which focus on training children to identify, use and assess thinking tools in connection with the leading ideas in the stimulus. Here, too, I think the CPI model can be particularly flexible in its accommodating of activities that specifically mobilise the features of deliberate moral imagining I am proposing, thus heightening its prospects as a collaborative morally imaginative practice.

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[617] Johnson, 1993, 201.

Although I hold discussion plans and exercises in high esteem and integrate them regularly in my own P4C practice, I want to discuss two different but complementary kinds of supporting activities that I think can contribute to the CPI as a imaginative curatorship of children's own mental landscaping, specifically by allowing their tacit knowing to be unfolded through interpretive acts. As we have seen, the CPI involves children co-constructing knowledge in answer to a philosophical question of their choosing, but some of this knowledge is tougher for them to access, representing those fuzzy aspects of experience that they perceive as significant but are hard to name and explain. Within immersive philosophical exploration, however, supporting activities involving imaginative interpretive acts—specifically, figurative language construction and thought experiments—can become especially useful to children's elucidation process.

First, the more intentional use of figurative language constructions in a CPI designed as a collaborative morally imaginative practice can draw on children's imaginative resources to manage the fuzziness of phenomenological experiences by at once clarifying and clouding them—as Warnock puts it, while "our imagination is at work tidying up the chaos of sense experience, at a different level it may, as it were, untidy it again."[618] On the one hand, when children attempt to explain their tacit knowing and find themselves hitting that infamous wall of linguistic limitations, adult facilitators can encourage figurative devices like metaphors and analogies to provide a circuitous but often more existentially satisfying route to express what once felt ineffable. The aim of such tools is not precision but meaning generation that is intersubjectively compelling—as Polanyi notes, "In order to describe experience more fully language must be less precise."[619]

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[618] Warnock, 1976, 207.

As interpretive acts of deliberate moral imagining, such constructions may encourage children to imaginatively align two things that are distinct but comparable in some intuitive way, testing the comparison's worth by extending it along various avenues across different contexts. In so doing, they change that which they are trying to name and colour, and their tacit knowing is transformed—metaphors and analogies become "actual carriers of knowledge" and "the basis for the transfer of tacit knowledge,"[620] because they "create novel interpretations of experience by asking the listener to see one thing in terms of something else...and create new ways of experiencing reality."[621] A time-tested case is myth: as an allegorical device, it is a prime example of collective tacit knowledge elucidated by imagining so that it can be borrowed by individuals and put to use in their own phenomenological experience—it endures because of what Egan calls an "affective tug;"[622] the vivacity of its affects survives through time and interweaves with the drive to imaginatively interpret meaning.

Yet at the same time, figurative language constructions can be destabilising: since children cannot co-imagine—that is, their imaginings never coincide exactly—the best thing they can do through metaphors and analogies is "put together what [they] know in new ways and begin to express what [they] know but cannot yet say."[623] In these circumstances, ambiguity is not a failing since the imprecise explanations that figurative language offers may be more honest than some forms of explicit knowledge, recognising the messiness of phenomenological experience and accepting the byproduct of tacit residue. It is no coincidence that metaphors and analogies are used throughout this thesis to grab hold of concepts that pose a flight risk. As products of deliberate moral imagining, when used purposively in a CPI, what they might end up elucidating is the extent to which tacit knowing is indeed obscure but profoundly integrated into children's everyday context of living, and thus worth their attention in and beyond their inquiry dialogues. Importantly, they can help children see that "the more energetic and lively the imagination, the more are facts constantly finding themselves in new combinations and taking on new emotional colouring as we use them to think of possibilities, of possible worlds."[624] Under the tutelage of deliberate moral imagining, figurative language constructions can elucidate children's tacit knowing by awakening them to new but unfinished meanings.

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[619] Polanyi, 1962, 89.

[620] Fock in Göranzon et al., eds., 2006, 103.

[621] Donnellon, Anne et al., 1986, 48.

[622] Egan, 1992, 32.

That said, it is important to note that metaphors and analogies are already thinking tools in the P4C roster—Lipman and Sharp clearly treasure their contribution to creative thinking, offering many discussion plans and exercises to help children master their intricacy, notably in the pedagogical guide that accompanies the novel *Pixie*. In practice, however, it seems such tools are often considered too advanced for children or merely a nice but unnecessary add-on. I think this is mistaken, especially if the overall aim of the CPI is to cultivate children's evolving responsible autonomy with the assistance of deliberate moral imagining. In my view, analogical reasoning and metaphorical thinking are not simply avenues to enhancing the elegance of an argument or lending a certain poetic colouring to the CPI's aesthetic atmosphere, though these two aspects should not be discounted.

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[623] Richards, 1936, 89.

[624] Egan, 1992, 50.

Indeed, I want to argue that if a CPI is to be a collaborative morally imaginative practice, figurative language constructions must be integral because of their potential to elucidate children's tacit knowing and thus acknowledge them as emerging agents who are able to co-construct knowledge that is informed by their own phenomenological experiences. In my view, when mobilised carefully by adult facilitators, metaphors and analogies can become arresting aesthetic encounters for children: an affect alien can make her ineffable but genuinely felt experience of estrangement intelligible to the group; a high-stakes moment's dangerous implications can be communicated in a symbolic way that uncovers the problematic conceptual frames or prototype structures impeding imaginative rationality.

Second and similarly, the use of thought experiments in a CPI designed as a collaborative morally imaginative practice can help to unfold and reconfigure tacit meanings existing in children's mental landscape. Understood as imaginative hypotheticals deliberately devised to probe a concept and its implications, thought experiments elucidate the fuzziness of phenomenological experience by "reconfigure[ing] our conceptual commitments, thereby rendering our concepts newly meaningful," to borrow from aesthetics philosopher Noel Carroll, and as such can be regarded as "productive of knowledge, since they make what in some sense is already known accessible and salient."[625]

When well constructed and sensorially detailed through careful curating by adult facilitators, thought experiments can also become arresting aesthetic encounters because of the affectively charged, creative world-making they encourage in children by invoking their tacit knowings, enabling them to move from actualities to possibilities and back again—to "see as" in the words of Paul Ricoeur.[626] Thanks to the fuel of deliberate moral imagining, the specificity of details that thought experiments provide can contribute to concretising concepts for children, involving their bodies affectively in the visualising of what could happen if the hypothetical obtained—"we feel in ourselves some of the affective aspects of the scene"[627]—so "although the world-frames of imaginative presentations lack the depth, breadth, and persistence of the perceived world, they do present themselves as evanescent constellations of specific imagined contents, as momentary mini-worlds of imaginative experience."[628]

If children imagine, for instance, a world without imagination, a thought experiment that was often used in the empirical study informing this chapter, the myriad elements of their pre-factual and counterfactual thinking can evoke strong emotional reactions because of what they already know to be the case in their social interactions (by appeals to collective tacit knowledge), and due to the affects sticking to the atmosphere of their endeavour—at times consternation at the possibility of the hypothetical coming true, other times playfulness with the freedom of imagining different scenarios. In thought experiments, children's deliberate moral imagining gets to flex its muscles. As Egan writes,

> The flexibility that is central to imaginativeness seems to enable the imaginative person to conceive of a wider than normal range of states or actions that do not exist or that do not follow by literal extrapolation from current states or actions or from conventional representations of states or actions. In conceiving an

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[625] Carroll argues that thought experiments "rely upon what competent users of a concept already, in some sense, know in order to clarify our understanding." Carroll, 2002, 7-8.

[626] Egan, 1992, 18.

[627] Warnock, 1976, 169.

[628] Casey, 1976, 51.

> indeterminate range of such states or actions the imaginative person can hold them in the mind, consider potential implications, assess their appropriateness, scan their features, selecting whichever might be most unusual and effective.[629]

This complex imaginative thinking is crucial because it sheds new light on children's existing tacit knowing, and may even contribute to their shaping and moulding of the collective tacit knowledge that governs so much of their intersubjective exchanges. Indeed, by painting alternative possibilities that engage children affectively, thought experiments, as imaginative explorations, "suggest the contingency of the reality we are envisaging,"[630] and can move them to challenge the contents of their cultural fluency. What they are able to communicate through thought experiments can help them figure out what matters to them in light of tacit knowings they already had, all the while giving these a new colouring: as development psychologist Paul Harris writes, "the landscape of reality may look different after they return from an excursion into the counterfactual world."[631]

And so, if integrated mindfully by adult facilitators into CPI dialogues with deliberative imagining in mind, figurative language constructions and thought experiments as supporting activities can encourage children to pinpoint fuzzy but significant elements of their tacit knowing that they would like to elucidate, and take on the challenge of crafting effective metaphors and analogies that extend the breadth of their mental landscape through imaginative world-making in thought experiments, while problematising their repository of conceptual and sensory information (including the framing and structuring of concepts) toward new meanings and knowings. Moreover, in both cases of immersive philosophical exploration—figurative language constructions and thought experiments—children can often benefit from a “reflective afterlife”[632] that continues to colour in the contours of the concepts and phenomena they have sought to name, bringing a creative philosophical literacy to their everyday context.

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[629] Egan, 1992, 14.

[630] Greene, 2013, 30.

[631] Harris, 2010, 118.

With the help of adult facilitators curating the dialogical space for such interpretive acts, children may gain new understanding through imaginative “readings”of their tacit knowings. If successful, such curated collaborative interpretive acts may become arresting aesthetic encounters for children that are intersubjectively meaningful, diminishing the likelihood of undetected high-stakes moments and the accidental creation of affect aliens, while heightening possibilities for their emerging agency at school and beyond. As such, supporting activities become an important part of the imaginative curatorship of children’s own mental landscaping by enabling them to locate pollutants and uncover the roots of new flora as budding mental landscapists themselves. In turn, this can enhance child-adult relationships by giving children space to become better acquainted with themselves as knowers and be more active participants in knowledge co-construction among themselves but also with the adults in their lives—parents, teachers, community leaders. As epistemologist Ingela Josefson writes, “There is a tacit knowledge in every word we say. A person’s language is a fingerprint of her meeting with the world; it is loaded with the individual fabric of life that has given concepts meaning.”[633]

The metacognitive reflection

Traditionally, the CPI’s last stage of “further responses” includes the option of a metacognitive reflection during which children are asked to analyse and assess their individual and collective progress in terms of both their philosophical inquiry and their community engagement, with the overall aim of promoting self-correction. Here, the role of adult facilitators is analogous to an x-ray, revealing issues and processes beneath the inquiry's surface so children have a chance to mull them over after the fast-paced, multifaceted dialoguing phase. Sadly, many practitioners tend to neglect this stage because of practical constraints (the very real pressure to conduct a CPI within an already overbooked classroom timetable) or because of inexperience (they do not yet recognise its potential to give children a sense of ownership over the process).

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[632] Carroll, 2002, 12.

[633] Josefson in Göranzon, ed., 2006, 44.

As a P4C trainer and coach, I insist on including what I call "meta moments" following the dialogues, even if adult facilitators only have a few minutes to do a quick thumb gauge with children to determine their impressions of the inquiry at the levels of both content and procedure, and request their suggestions for strategies to improve future sessions.[634] To my mind, if the CPI is to be a collaborative morally imaginative practice, the metacognitive reflection becomes even more crucial as a special interlude to examine how well the group has succeeded at activating deliberate moral imagining at opportune times—like to address high-stakes moments or affect aliens—and how the group's aesthetic atmosphere helped or hindered at embodied and affective levels. In other words, adult facilitators committed to the CPI as an imaginative curatorship must be actively interested in how children experience the model phenomenologically, especially if they are to motivate them to strive to do better by harnessing their aspirational eros.

Returning to Johnson's research, because of the intricacies of imaginative rationality, in my view, the metacognitive reflection in a collaborative morally imaginative practice ought to involve an awareness of the experience of thinking itself—how the ebb and flow actually feels and influences action. Johnson makes a compelling case for the embodied quality of rational thinking in his book *The Meaning of the Body: Aesthetics of Human Understanding*:

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[634] For example, the adult facilitators can prompt the children with questions like "Did we make progress with our question?" (philosophical inquiry) and "Did we share control of the dialogue?" (community engagement), with children answering gesturally with a thumb position (up, down, middle) and explaining their choice, revealing the possibility of different qualitative experiences of the same situation.

> Human thinking is an embodied, continuous flow, and what we call our 'ideas' are phases of that ongoing flow…What we feel are the patterns and qualities of this transitional flow of thought, even though most of the time we have lost the habit of noticing these feelings. Because most of us are not in the habit of attending to these subtle, nuanced feelings of direction and relation in our thinking, we are inclined to deny that they play any serious role in logic.

To illustrate his point, Johnson describes the corporeal aspects of the writing process, from feelings of momentum and rhythm when thinking develops smoothly to bodily tensions and paralysis when writer's block hits. Similarly, the CPI process can be analysed and assessed not only for its resulting meanings but also for the multi-layered experience of meaning-making it enables as an embodied, affectively charged aesthetic practice that can elucidate tacit knowing. On my interpretation, the stages of the CPI, including what I call the "meta moment," become axiological since they aim to establish value on both ethical and aesthetic levels.

On the one hand, the purpose is to explore what is reasonable to value to make a life meaningful, in an effort to determine how we should live (ethical judgements). If we connect this effort of deliberate moral imagining to aspirational eros, the motive becomes, to borrow from Garrison, "teaching [eros] to desire the good."[635] On the other hand, the purpose is also to evaluate the inquiry process itself as an embodied, multi-sensory experience that produces value, in an effort to determine how meaning-making feels (aesthetic judgements)—in the words of philosopher Louis Arnaud Reid, "apprehend[ing] meaning immediately embodied in something;

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[635] Garrison, 1995, 408-9.

in some way unified and integrated: feeling, hearing, imagining."[636] This valuation further solidifies the CPI's prospects as a imaginative curatorship of children's own mental landscaping, taking into account both its contents and the ways such contents are generated through the group's actual phenomenological experiences.

Accordingly, adult facilitators can curate the metacognitive reflection phase by helping children become aware of their presuppositions regarding body language "vocabulary" in the same way that they recognise assumptions in their conceptual frameworks. Lipman's mission to liberate children from "unquestioning, uncritical mental habits" can be extended to unquestioning, uncritical bodily habits since these also affect the learning dispositions and relational openness so needed for successful CPI dialogues. Children need a chance to get clarity about how they define gestures and words alike, or else risk "body talking" past each other and sensing disagreement or tension where none exists, which can ultimately threaten the self-other chiasm and create affect aliens.

Like correcting bad posture, regulating bodily habits might require a very diligent, almost artificial focus at first, and involve some overcorrection and awkward manoeuvring until more congruous body talk becomes possible.[637] I find the comparison to exercise helpful: whereas children may begin without much strength or suppleness, through ongoing training and well timed corrections from their coach, they can gain in fitness and flexibility. Perhaps here too, the particular receptivity that characterises childhood can make children more apt at transforming bodily habits that have had less years to become entrenched. This effort towards a global sense of self-correction that includes mental and bodily habits is an important endeavour—one that reveals a neglected dimension of the CPI with potentially broad repercussions on its pedagogical effectiveness, especially as a collaborative morally imaginative practice.

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[636] Costantino and White, eds., 2010, 167-168.

[637] As Morris writes in relation to Merleau-Ponty, "It is by virtue of the body's capacity to acquire habits that the past has a *weight*, and the weight of the past, we might say, both enables us to go forward and holds us back, it creates both momentum and inertia. On the one hand, without the capacity to acquire habits, we could not learn from experience, we could not acquire the skills and competences which enable us to do things that we could not do before. On the other, habits

Of course, such a self-corrective disposition is not easy to maintain continuously. As Kennedy writes, self-correction requires "a certain courage, abandon, and ability to endure," notably when dialoguing bodies are being unreasonable, unclear, verbose, meandering, bigoted, and the like.[638] Children may genuinely believe that they could have made better use of the dialogue time, so in a sense have to accept what Kennedy calls "the little death of [their] own potential contribution,"[639] and resist getting the last word with their bodies. If body taunting has affected the community's solidarity, a self-corrective disposition may be even harder to maintain, since children might feel they are the only ones trying, and sense the boundaries between themselves and others becoming increasingly pronounced. Phenomenologist Maurice Hamington argues that awareness helps to enable care: "Corporeal knowledge creates the potential of sympathetic perception that makes care possible," he writes. "The common denominator capable of overcoming physical and social distance is our embodiment...Through the intermingling of the flesh I have a glimmer of what the stranger experiences."[640]

In order to foster this corporeal awareness and prevent affect aliens, body taunting should become one of the targets of metacognitive reflection. Since this phase makes explicit certain problems arising within the group's dynamic, such as issues of power, participation and communication styles, it is easy for adult facilitators who suspect body taunting or other types of

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can be difficult to change, so that if I have learned to play tennis a bit inefficiently, correcting my bad postural habits is difficult." Morris, 2012, 69.

[638] For Kennedy, true self-correction in a CPI includes asking oneself tough questions, notably: "What am I really after? What am I willing to give up in order to get it? How am I a part of this group? How am I using it?" Kennedy, 2010, 208.

[639] Kennedy, 2013, 217.

corporeal hostility to raise questions about bodily interventions that amount to gauging, "Were our dialoguing bodies interacting constructively?" Children can discuss and decide together what body vocabulary they find distracting or offensive, whether the bodily hostility they witness seems inadvertent or deliberate, and whether the body taunts warrant serious strategic consideration or only acknowledgement. This process must be particular to a CPI on the basis of need, since not all groups will necessarily respond to perceived body taunts in the same way—it is hard to gauge the afterlife of taunts given some groups might not notice or mind them, others might recognise and grow from them, and still others might disintegrate completely as a result of them.

However, if body taunting is experienced by even a minority of children, no matter how seemingly exaggerated or unreasonable the reaction, the community should consider its potential effects given the commitment to an aesthetic atmosphere that is morally imaginative. This sense of accountability becomes all the more pressing when cultural differences within the group complicate their interpretive work, requiring collaborative clarifications and definitions of body vocabulary—what the group agrees is or is not appropriate for their exchanges. Since awareness of body taunting might not be enough to eradicate it, what should matter is the effort towards constructive body talk. The CPI as a collaborative morally imaginative practice should strive for nuance not only in speech but in "total language," with the inquiry cared for both intellectually and corporeally.

Overall, from my perspective, this focus on embodiment through metacognitive reflection amounts to a concern for what I call bodily tact. Generally speaking, tact has been described in P4C scholarship as "a certain moral intuitiveness" and "reactive sensitivity" that enables

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[640] Weiss, 2018, 213-215.

inquirers to perceive the contextually significant features of a situation and the individuals involved (which I see as including gestural cues), and "be sensitive but at the same time strong, as tact may require straightforwardness, determination and...experience of the other's vulnerability."[641] By extension, bodily tact would require an effort towards congruity between verbal and body language so that children can focus on the interpretive work of deciphering and making meaning out of the content of contributions, with minimal mixed signals to alienate or distract them from that already exacting task.

It is important to note that disagreement and tensions are welcome as the aim is not an aloofly neutral or emotionless bodily presence, but rather a body vocabulary that is in harmony with voiced arguments to prevent unnecessary provocation, dismissiveness or intimidation caused by perceived contradictions between words and gestures. In terms of deliberate moral imagining, bodily tact can enhance the chiasmatic relations between self and other when disagreement and tensions do arise in the community as a result of conflicting perspectives on what might be reasonable to value. A tactful dialoguing body would strive to maintain the authentic interest necessary for engagement in self-othering, especially in challenging moments, addressing communication issues directly rather than through oblique body taunts.

At the same time, bodily tact might also involve the recognition of the possibly constructive effects of bodily hostility or ambivalence on the CPI's aesthetic atmosphere. As Kennedy notes, a rupture is often necessary to "break the false sense of harmony" in a group and have inquirers confront each other's differences and limitations to move toward more authentic, honest interactions.[642] Since misunderstandings in a CPI are unavoidable given the difficult philosophical content of dialogues—high-stakes moments being a prime instance—bodily hostility might bring about the crisis needed to raise the group's accountability to each other and to the inquiry process, and acknowledge what might be motivating such moments, such as their epistemological biases, discomfort with uncertainty, intolerance or egoistic inclinations. Specifically, body taunting could offer a potential form of resistance for affect aliens who feel subjugated or ostracised during CPI dialogues.

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[641] Juuso, 2004, 6-9.

For instance, a domineering inquirer who is negatively affecting the group's dialogical progress or potential for intersubjectivity might elicit an individual or collective response of body taunting from co-inquirers attempting to make his problematic behaviour explicit. Children who feel estranged might read each other's body vocabulary as evidence that they are not alone, and gain the confidence necessary to confront their antagonist. In turn, this might help the body taunter recognise and reconstruct his body image: as Kennedy writes, "in my own gestural accommodation to it, [I] am affording you a new understanding of your own gesture."[643] And so, though bodily hostility may often be detrimental, it is not altogether undesirable since it can illuminate strains and frictions in a CPI that might otherwise be ignored.

Finally, an emphasis on self-corrective bodily tact in the metacognitive reflection phase also sheds light on wider implications for the CPI as a collaborative morally imaginative practice. For marginalised dialoguing bodies, philosophical inquiry as a form of group engagement may produce alienating experiences simply by virtue of the fact that its intellectual traditions and theories have been largely male-dominated, western, ageist and heteronormative in character. Awareness of bodily hostility as a possible threat to intersubjectivity and the self-other chiasm may illuminate philosophical perspectives that have been historically excluded, including those of women, marginalised cultural groups, queer communities, and even children.

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[642] Kennedy, 2010, 197.

Though domination and even coercion might represent "honest and engaged involvement by students in a painful process of social reconstruction,"[644] if the CPI as a imaginative curatorship of children's own mental landscaping strives for truly diversified meaning-making, it must advocate for those who are in danger of subjugation or ostracising because of their vulnerable societal positions, or else risk estranging them further as affect aliens. Kennedy describes children as "voices from the margin" and "privileged strangers,"[645] whose philosophical perspectives have been predominantly neglected because of an adultist stance that denies their intellectual and moral agency. Yet as we have seen, this prejudice against their philosophising capacities denies the ways in which children, by their very malleable, nascent nature, may represent new subjectivities. As Merleau-Ponty notes, "We must conceive of the child not as an absolute other, nor as the same as us, but as a polymorph"—a being that can take many forms by virtue of its transitional state.[646] And so, such an openness on the part of adult facilitators may also contribute to stronger child-adult relationships by challenging the discipline of philosophy's ageist character and improving representation within applied philosophical practices. I see deliberate moral imagining as having the potential to play a role here as well.

In conclusion, it is my hope that this section has helped to specify the CPI's prospects as an imaginative curatorship of children's own mental landscaping, with specific suggestions regarding how it can become much more explicit and systematic as an aesthetic practice in order to ensure deliberate moral imagining is modelled and exercised with pedagogical integrity. As curators of collaborative morally imaginative practices, adult facilitators have a crucial role to play in motivating children to take on the demanding tasks of collective inquiry and in

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[643] *Ibid*, 194.

[644] Burgh and Yorshansky, 2011, 447.

[645] Kennedy, 2010, 41.

supporting them at every stage by infusing the method's steps with the features of deliberate moral imagining previously proposed. Conceived in this way, the CPI as a collaborative morally imaginative practice can become part of an intellectual self-defense strategy for children, equipping them with specific tools of mental landscaping to identify when their evolving responsible autonomy efforts are being threatened (and when they themselves may be representing a threat to others), and hopefully be in a position to respond accordingly, all the while fostering empathic engagement, self-efficacy and reasonableness to expand and enrich their mental landscapes.

Closing remarks

In this chapter, using the CPI as my case study, I have sought to determine the necessary criteria of a collaborative morally imaginative practice in ways that mirror the conception of deliberate moral imagining I have been articulating throughout this thesis. As someone who believes in the CPI's prospects as an imaginative curatorship of children's own mental landscaping, I have tested and continue to actively experiment with these criteria to see how the model may become more explicit and systematic in creating the aesthetic atmosphere that I argue is needed to ensure deliberate moral imagining is modelled and exercised with pedagogical integrity. While the points on offer reflect the lessons learned from my ongoing experimentations, I want to end this chapter with a short description of my own P4C practice in its current form to demonstrate a concrete instance of these suggestions in action. Since these experimentations are currently being studied as part of formal empirical studies, my goal in sharing some details about them is not to make claims about effectiveness so much as to show—as this whole chapter has striven to illustrate—what an applied example of "envisioning valuable

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[646] *Ibid*, 197.

lives" might involve. And so, this section will briefly describe Brila's take on the CPI model in the form of its *philocreation* approach.

In response to the shortage of opportunities for youth to collectively explore life's big questions, since its first programs in 2008, Brila has sought to be a youth-driven educational charity committed to inspiring young people from preschool through college through a blending of philosophy and creativity, both in formal and informal educational contexts. Its mission—articulated through the three imperatives "think, create, engage"[647]—has been to promote thoughtfulness in both senses of the word: on the one hand, encouraging the capacity to be deeply absorbed in thought and to reason in a careful, discerning manner; and on the other, fostering genuine consideration for others and concern for their treatment through attentive, empathetic and responsible thinking dispositions. Since its founding, Brila has become an endorsed affiliate centre of the original Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC) founded by Lipman and Sharp, and while it is still purist in terms of its commitment to the CPI's core principles and facilitation techniques, over time it has developed its own approach to the model in an effort to address the concerns for responsible autonomy and the potential of collaborative morally imaginative practices I have been discussing thus far.

This approach—dubbed *philocreation*—strives to capture the combined role of philosophical inquiry (primarily though not exclusively in dialogical form) and of imaginative engagement with different forms of agency, through immersion in creative projects that vary widely from artistic to activistic pursuits.[648] This specific approach to the CPI model was deemed necessary as a way of attending to the diversity of educational settings in which Brila has conducted its bilingual charitable activities, from typical classrooms to extracurricular environments that range from day camps and after-school workshops to activities held in partnership with youth theatres, science centres, art galleries, political forums, and more. Specifically, this assortment of settings has translated into the great privilege but also the significant responsibility of working with children from myriad backgrounds, including indigenous, underprivileged, neurodiverse, refugee and new immigrant youth, some of whom have spent their first days in Canada doing one of Brila's *philocreation* programs.

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[647] The charity's website defines these three aspects of its mission as follows: by "think," it means participants are able to explore and analyse their perspectives in a supportive atmosphere that emphasises the process not just the results; by "create," it means participants are able to quench the performance pressures associated with creative projects, connecting to their sense of playfulness and quieting their self-censorship; by "engage," it means participants are able to face the serious, perplexing challenges of their day with strong reasoning skills and genuine empathy. <www.brila.org/about>

The breadth of participants—and with it, the array of needs and forms of engagement—has meant that the CPI's steps have at times seemed overly structured and rigid in circumstances where everything from cultural to linguistic to economic barriers, coupled with divergences in learning and discourse styles, have demanded the kind of relational openness that I argue can be enabled by deliberate moral imagining. In a world overflowing with complex issues and viewed through the prism of children with such distinct life experiences, Brila has felt it crucial to carefully curate spaces for participants to practise deliberate moral imagining as part of their philosophical inquiry, exploring topics that matter to them and having their deep concerns as well as their philosophical positions taken seriously by adults. These facilitators see Brila's participants as capable thinkers with ideas worth sharing but also appreciate the opportunity amidst risk that the CPI represents as a collaborative morally imaginative practice.

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[648] *Philocreation* is now a trademarked term that denotes the approach to the CPI model that Brila has designed to integrate creativity—or what I have been calling in this thesis "access to creative expression" and "imaginative curatorship"—into every phase of philosophical inquiry with youth.

Accordingly, though the *philocreation* approach includes and continues to celebrate the classic version of the CPI described in this chapter—or what the IAPC, following Lipman and Sharp, has nicknamed the "plain vanilla" version—it has also adapted philosophical inquiry into different dialogical forms and cooperative projects that explicitly seek to give children opportunities to practise the different dimensions of deliberate moral imagining explored in this thesis. Specifically, this explicit emphasis is meant to encourage them to learn and enact the dispositions I have deemed as supportive of pragmatic inquiry, such as humility and acceptance of fallibility, epistemological flexibility and comfort with uncertainty—conditions that, to my mind, are doubly important when working with such diverse populations and within multiple educational contexts.

While a full explanation of these variations is beyond the scope of this section, I want to briefly mention a few of them in relation to the CPI's steps to highlight how I think *philocreation* can reflect what I have been defining as a collaborative morally imaginative practice. First, the stimuli that Brila uses to spark philosophical questioning and create indeterminacy through a carefully curated aesthetic atmosphere are not limited to philosophical stories but also include theatrical renditions, role-playing and problem-setting games, as well as creative workshops with special guests who share their professional expertise in areas ranging from sustainable gardening to the arts to STEM disciplines, in an effort to show children the omnipresence and pertinence of philosophical concepts, while priming them to acknowledge their limited perspectives, recognise commonality and identify competing considerations.

Second, the dialogues, although necessarily philosophical and inquiry-based in terms of both content and procedure (as explained in chapter four), comprise over half a dozen specific types beyond the classic version. These include the *thought experiment* type previously explained, which aims to invoke children's tacit knowings while also giving these a new colouring through the deliberate use of imaginative rationality strategies. They also include the *story circle* type referenced in chapter three, which strives to highlight distinctive orientations to a given concept through personal narratives thus fuelling curiosity about "how soaked and shot-through life is with values and meanings," to borrow from William James.[649]

Yet the dialogue types also build in components that are not focused on talk, such as written and image-based exchanges (particularly diagramming as an accessible buttress for metacognitive awareness), as well as movement-driven exchanges rooted in dance and other performance arts, not least to accentuate the embodied, affectively charged dimensions of philosophical inquiry as an aesthetic practice. For example, the concept of discomfort could be explored through a thought experiment depicting an alternate universe where it was impossible to ever feel uncomfortable, then characterised through a story circle of personal narratives on moments of truly felt comfort, then tested through movement and body work in a circus arts workshop. This variety of types also represents an attempt to promote inclusion, especially of children who have exceptionalities, children who are visual or kinetic learners, and children who are less fluent in the two languages of the charity's program delivery.

Third, the supporting activities that complement the dialogues include complex team challenges that move participants beyond the regular use of classic "exercises" and "discussion plans" that resemble those found in the P4C pedagogical guides, as well as the aforementioned figurative language constructions to elucidate children's tacit knowing while helping them to detect and cope with ambiguity. At the heart of the *philocreation* approach, these team challenges invite participants to use the same thinking tools, strategies and dispositions they mobilise in their CPI dialogues but toward the mission of collaboratively constructing some kind of solution to a given problem that represents a current contemporary issue, whether ethical, political, societal, environmental, etc.

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[649] Quoted in Gregory, 2006, 108.

For example, children may receive the mission of designing their own sustainable community or ideal school. In this guise, *philocreation*-style challenges ask children to explain and justify their creative choices in the same way they would their philosophical positions during CPI dialogues, thus applying the rigour, collaborative spirit and willingness to self-correct of P4C to a hands-on project that enables them to test and expand their theoretical claims, all the while being scaffolded and supported by adult facilitators. This imaginative engagement is intended to help children see philosophical inquiry not merely as a mental exercise with sporadic applicability to real life—one that can be powerful yet also periodically frustrating or existentially dissatisfying—but instead as a concretisable process which can seamlessly extend to everyday encounters. This portrayal also reflects what I deem as a duty to satisfy the evaluation criteria I have generated from pragmatic principles: of note, for inquiry-based learning to have pedagogical integrity, children must be engaged in reflective reasoning with corresponding actions, or more colloquially, they must learn to walk their talk.

Last but not least, Brila's *philocreation* approach carves out a significant amount of time and space for the last CPI stage of "encouraging further responses." While Lipman and Sharp have clearly manifested their valuing of this fifth stage in their writings, in practice, the emphasis placed on the children's dialogue tends to leave little room for the kinds of non-dialogical inquiry enabled through access to creative expression, which to my mind jeopardises invaluable opportunities for them to further ingrain, feel and live the existential meanings of their perspectives, and to practise deliberate moral imagining via complementary channels.

While Brila integrates many creative forms into its *philocreation* approach to strive to enhance children's metacognitive awareness and bridge the gap between dialogical and non-dialogical meaning-making, most of these forms come together in the production of the charity's zines, or more specifically, its *philozines*—the children's mixed media mini-publications that act as their philosophical artifacts, offering tangible evidence of their inquiry efforts and attesting to the discernment in their wonderings.[650] I have argued elsewhere that the practices of zining and philosophical inquiry are clear allies in their shared concern for designing spaces for marginalised voices: As a radical form of self-publishing soon celebrating its centennial, zining has enabled countless voices from the fringes to explore ideas they care deeply about and experiment with creative expression on their own terms.[651]

By fusing philosophical inquiry and zining, Brila's *philocreation* approach allows children to deepen their CPI experiences through expressly designed open-ended thinking prompts connected to the concepts at hand—which they receive as mini *philozine* missions before, during and after the dialogues: from a gratitude postcard written to the concept being explored to a drawing of a counterfactual reality to a diagram prioritising the top criteria currently under investigation. Philozines also offer them the chance to assume the roles of cultural producers and social historians in order to form their own discourse communities, with their own way of communicating their common goals, values and vantage points—in my view, this opportunity is in line with the kind of community-building that Lipman deems essential to agency development:

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[650] Details about *philozines* as well as digital examples of collaborative zines—or *communozines*—can be accessed on the charity's website. <www.brila.org/zines>

[651] Please see Fletcher, 2017, 53-75. Spurred by the advent of the printing press as well as the French and American revolutions, the zine—abbreviated from "magazine"—has represented a revolutionary and unprecedented chance for marginalised citizens to communicate with specific readerships about particular issues through a highly manipulable self-published medium, like a leaflet or pamphlet. Developed in tandem by many fringe thinkers, political leaders and artists, zining has become a fixture of the Do-It-Yourself (DIY) movement, helping people embrace their sense of freedom in the face of opposition and disenfranchisement. Zining thus supports Brila's commitment to cultivating responsible autonomy in children since it invites participants to convey their burgeoning perspectives through writing, illustration, new media and the like, while developing accountability for what they say, how they say it and who is affected by it. For more on zining practices, please see Alexander (2002), Bartel (2004), Bayerl (2000), Chidgey (2006, 2013), Chu (2013), Congdon and Blandy (2003), Creasap (2012), Duncombe (2008), Finders (1996), Gibb (2013), Klanten (2011), Piepmeier (2008), Radway (2001) and Wan (1999).

> If children are to be 'seen and not heard,' their silencing deprives the rest of us of their insights…the formation of childhood communities, where candour and trust mingle freely with wondering, searching, and reasoning, provides a needed social support during those critical years in which children are...endeavouring to establish themselves as mature and responsible individuals.[652]

As an extension of this concern for agency development, within this last "further responses" stage, Brila's *philocreation* approach also incorporates an intensive metacognitive mapping tool to help children make sense of the phenomenological experiences of doing philosophical inquiry with others. Dubbed a *philosogram*, this tool was designed in response to research interviews with children and adolescents who spoke highly of the impact of doing collaborative philosophy but confessed to feeling ill-equipped when asked to describe the nature of these positive effects.[653] And so, in addition to the aforementioned "meta moments" after each dialogue that enable participants to gain ownership over the CPI process, a philosogram invites them every term or year to map out their overall engagement with collaborative philosophical inquiry as an evolving practice to which they have already committed a significant amount of time and energy.

By focusing on the patterns that emerge from multiple dialogues at cognitive, affective, corporeal and intersubjective levels, participants reflect on what they experience while philosophising collaboratively, from moments of questioning and doubting to moments of feeling and sensing. As part of a collaborative morally imaginative practice, this exercise supports self-corrective dispositions in children by enhancing their intersubjective understanding, helping them better appreciate the commonalities and differences in how they each experience their collective dialogues, and providing the figurative language to help them establish strategies for improvement in one another, heightening the possibilities for empathic engagement, self-efficacy and reasonableness—the philosograms act as mirrors of individual and collective growth in a philocreation practice. As one child's words, "it makes me imagine—imagine another thinking."[654]

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[652] Lipman, 1988, 194-197.

[653] This diagramming tool was inspired by the *aesthetigram* model developed by Boyd White to analyse individuals' experiences of their encounters of artworks. For details, please see Fletcher, 2017b.

In closing, while it could seem that philocreation represents quite a departure from the CPI as originally conceived due to its emphasis on deliberate moral imagining, I want to argue that it simply emphasises the criteria of a collaborative morally imaginative practice that this chapter has sought to defend. In line with his pragmatist commitments, Lipman's writings stress the cruciality of a reflective model of educational practice, one that is appraisive and self-corrective, constantly analysing itself in order to meet the changing demands of learners and their environments.[655] In this light, philocreation represents an adaptation of the CPI in response to active and ongoing reflections on specific contextual considerations of practice as well as theoretical insights from different areas of philosophy. Though the empirical studies underway will illuminate the anecdotal evidence collected so far, I think it stands to reason that such an adaptation is justified on Lipmanian grounds because of its potential to not only prioritise reflective practice but also to foster stronger, more nuanced processes of meaning-making in childhood.

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[654] Fletcher, 2017b, 132.

[655] Lipman, 2003, 18.

Conclusion

"Everything you can imagine is real," Pablo Picasso reportedly affirmed, with reference to the spirited envisioning that enables the act of creation. Without his full reasoning, it is not clear how far he himself intended this statement to reach, though for the purpose of my argument, the meaning seems evident: If "real" suggests that whatever is deliberately imagined might become an actionable possibility of what seems reasonable to value, then the implications for childhood are considerable. These imaginings gain in significance because their capacity to exist within children's mental landscapes may translate into their potential to be achieved in reality. Such chances unveil possible limitations of my proposed conception in terms of the possible dangers and demands it may involve.

To review, throughout this thesis, I have defined deliberate moral imagining as a conscious, flexible process that may contribute to children's emerging agency by expanding and enriching their envisioned options for what they believe is worth valuing—in others, in themselves and in the world—within their current and future circumstances, thereby helping to make their autonomy more responsible through a relational openness that raises their sensitive to and awareness of life's complexities. On the view I have been defending, although not all deliberate imagining is necessarily moral, if it deals with values that can colour deep concerns and thus affect autonomous living, then it has a potential relational impact. Yet might there be aspects of life that children ought not imagine, regardless of their relational salience? Might morally imaginative practices require too much of children? And at what point can children be deemed to have imagined sufficiently for their evolving responsible autonomy? In response to these questions, this concluding chapter will offer a brief two-pronged critique of my theory through an examination of some of the possible *dangers* and *demands* of deliberate moral imagining, then end with some reflections on the broader implications of my conception for children as they near adulthood.

Possible dangers of deliberate moral imagining

Theoretically speaking, the idea that everything imaginable is real may ring true to the extent that, in the Lipmanian sense, such purposeful envisioning contributes to what makes moral seriousness possible—the very process of deliberate moral imagining might sensitise children to values that stand a strong chance of shaping their evolving responsible autonomy in their actual life. On this interpretation, the imagined content is therefore real in terms of its potential impact on their deep concerns, even though the work itself is imaginary in that it occurs within their mental landscape. Yet are there things children ought not imagine given their vulnerable status as emerging agents? On my argument, deliberate moral imagining may cultivate a trio of characteristics that I deem as crucial supports for responsible autonomy in childhood because they seem primed to address some of the challenges children face as emerging agents, like narrow empathetic scope, conversion inhibition and inaccurate pseudoenvironments. But in trying to cultivate empathic engagement, self-efficacy and reasonableness in response to these childhood challenges, might deliberate moral imagining be giving rise to other dangers? In this first part of my critique, I will offer a short analysis of some of each characteristic's possible dangers, while recognising that in practice they would likely operate together and thus overlap.

i) Empathic engagement

Is it possible to extend deliberate moral imagining too far and empathise too much, to an inordinate degree that negatively affects responsible autonomy? Although this thesis zeroes in on the particular deficiency of narrow empathetic scope within its interpretation of the theoretical framework of neo-Aristotelian virtue theory, it is certainly worth examining the equally important excess of empathy—or what I have called self-alienation—which can be perceived as a possible danger. In “Anti-Empathy,” Peter Goldie suggests that excessive empathy could cause a kind of extreme perspective-shifting that threatens personal agency.[656] Applied to childhood, this would imply that while deliberate moral imagining may help move children from narrow empathetic scope toward a more desirable degree of empathic engagement, it could become problematic if it pushes them beyond the virtue target to the point that they lose sight of their own burgeoning perspectival identity.

Yet even if children can avoid this danger of self-alienation, they may not be immune to another kind, that of negative images. Can they ever really “un-see” the imagery that enters into their mental landscape once the process of deliberate moral imagining is undertaken to broaden the scope of their empathy? Referring back to the example of criminality explored in the second chapter, a child who extends herself outward into a criminal’s experience may consider a kind of lifestyle that is morally detrimental, even dangerous, because of the new imagery at her disposal, thus affecting her envisioning of the overarching context of relation-to-other—how she views (and consequently) treats those in her life.

In his book *L’imagination en morale*, Martin Gibert considers whether imagination applied to moral circumstances can actually lead to detrimental expressions of empathy, notably in cases where a counterfactual requires imagining a nefarious world context, like one in which torturing innocent people is acceptable. In such cases, the pressure to empathise with the torturers might alienate an individual from her values in ways that impede her agency and her capacity for practical wisdom.[657] In a similar vein, Adam Morton's article "Empathy for the Devil" claims that the decency of morally good agents must constrain their imagination so as to disable empathy towards those who commit atrocious acts. He argues that "these barriers affect our imagination of choice as well as our actual choices, so that they inhibit us from making nasty choices vivid."[658]

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[656] Coplan and Goldie, eds., 2012, 302-318.

In terms of the implications for empathic engagement in childhood, such a constraint would involve preventing children from gaining access to narrative aids that risk excessively broadening who they find worthy of their empathy or introducing possibilities of lifestyles which result in the immoral treatment of others, thereby impeding their relational openness. If there are indeed things that children ought not imagine because of the possibly long-lasting negative effects of such imagery, then their empathic engagement should only be expected to extend so far as this constraint permits, lest their purposeful envisioning become dangerous. What remains unclear is the criteria that ought to determine whether children's empathetic scope has extended beyond what is morally "decent," and if they themselves are supposed to be the ones applying this criteria to judge whether another's actions seem too nefarious or atrocious to merit their empathic engagement through deliberate moral imagining.

ii) Self-efficacy

Whereas the dangers with empathic engagement revolve around how children might view and treat others, particularly by endorsing morally indecent actions through an overly widened empathetic scope, the dangers with self-efficacy focus more specifically on the overarching context of relation-to-self, that is, how they perceive and value themselves as emerging agents.

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[657] Gibert, 2014.

[658] Morton, 2012, 321.

Could deliberate moral imagining—understood as a complex capability that grants access to conceptual resources, dialogical space and creative expression—make so many options valuable for children that they become disoriented and overwhelmed by the sheer volume and variety of possibilities for agency? Conceivably, if such a state were possible, even if children were to develop a positive self-image coupled with increased resilience when converting resources into opportunities and outcomes they deem valuable, their responsible autonomy might be undermined by the overabundant choices suddenly illuminated by their purposeful envisioning.

One ensuing danger could be an increased susceptibility to persuasion techniques in advertising and social media designed to lure them into envisioning lifestyles that mask specific consumeristic or political agendas under an apparent abundance of riches they deem worthy of their reflective endorsement. Relatedly, another danger could be their becoming so adept at imagining alternate sources of value that they become less able to actually appraise their interpretations of their own circumstances—the value set of others might even eclipse their own. Worse still, echoing the previous point regarding moral indecency, children's purposeful envisioning may introduce harmful alternatives they otherwise would not have considered worthwhile but nonetheless start to associate with their own self-image as emerging agents.

For instance, with reference to the hypothetical case of Aisha in the third chapter, if she were to attempt to mobilise the features of deliberate moral imagining to address her conversion inhibition, specifically around her appraisal of herself as a potential leader, her exposure to many rich and diverse conceptual resources—as well as to dialogical space and creative expression around these—might confront her with confusing, even contentious conceptions of leadership. She could, for example, come across artworks that portray villainous dictators, thus creating arresting aesthetic encounters that feed her mental landscape with diversity but also with atrocity; leaders who rule through misogyny, bigotry, demagoguery.

In her analysis of moral and aesthetic defects, Mullin cautions against the possible moral corruption that can arise from habitual exposure to works of art that present an unethical position. "Certainly," she writes, "even a single instance of such an imaginative experience can destroy a kind of moral innocence, in which, for example, some kinds of cruelty had simply never occurred to one."[659] In terms of the implications for self-efficacy in childhood, this danger would necessitate the controlling of children's access to conceptual resources: to reiterate an earlier claim, given their already vulnerable status (or arguably, their "moral innocence" to borrow from Mullin), their mental landscapes would need to be protected from polluting contents that compromise their early attempts at living autonomously in relationally sound ways. On this view, there are indeed things children ought not imagine—from cruelty at one extreme and submissiveness on the other—as these imaginings could become toxins in their mental landscapes that risk skewing their self-image and thus impeding their responsible autonomy competence. Here, too, however, a similar question remains: what counts as a toxin in children's mental landscapes and are children expected to make the judgement of toxicity by and for themselves?

iii) Reasonableness

So far, I have been exploring whether certain imaginings ought not to be encouraged in children because of their potentially dangerous effects on their envisioning of the overarching contexts of relation-to-other and relation-to-self, assuming that the content of these imaginings is correct and complete in terms of construction but somehow morally questionable in terms of consequences. And yet, with respect to reasonableness, my earlier discussion of inaccurate pseudoenvironments and stereotyped concepts suggests another angle on the dangers of deliberate moral imagining in childhood. Perhaps children ought not imagine certain things because they cannot do so accurately given their current status as emerging agents who are still practising their evolving responsible autonomy. Here, then, the danger lies in their envisioning of the overarching context of relation-to-knowledge: certain imaginings may do harm not because they represent inherently bad intentions or actions, as with the aforementioned instances of atrocity and cruelty, but because their flawed construction may distort how children learn and what they claim to know about the world, thus impacting their reasonableness.

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[659] Mullin, 2004, 252.

Drawing on Gregory Currie's account of imagining as simulation, since some circumstances can be tough to envision due to children's particular lived experiences, when they try to determine what is worth pursuing, deliberate moral imagining could also lead them astray and produce an unreliable mental picture of the potential merits and outcomes of a situation: "we sometimes think we have acquired knowledge through imagining when all we have really acquired is erroneous belief."[660] For instance, a child initiating deliberate moral imagining to try to make up for lacking facts regarding a social phenomenon she does not understand might produce an incomplete picture, to say nothing of the estranging effects her efforts may have on the people whose conditions she has inaccurately envisioned, despite her well meaning intentions.

For his part, Mark Coeckelbergh questions whether such errors represent merely mistakes of the imagination or actual moral failures that reveal the epistemological limits of imagination in terms of its role in reasoning.[661] Applied to the Peter Pan Picture from the fourth chapter, the group of children dealing with the stereotyped concept of freedom and its related dubious normative claims—resulting from the misapplication of inaccurate pseudoenvironments—may not yet be equipped to engage in deliberate moral imagining on this specific topic because of an undiagnosed epistemic rigidity they simply have not yet had a chance to address. As Mackenzie argues, "the degree of cogency of an imagining will, of course, vary according to the extent of the repertoire assigned to the protagonist":[662] if children's mental landscapes are still too barren, their repertoire will require greater exposure before it can be expected to produce more accurate imaginings—notably of complex concepts—and foster their reasonableness.

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[660] Currie, 1995, 254.

However, as we have seen, the possible dangers associated with empathic engagement and self-efficacy call for reduced exposure in order to lessen the chances of negative imagery influencing what children believe is worth valuing in themselves and others, whereas the possible dangers associated with reasonableness urge for increased access to conceptual resources to enhance accuracy in their construction of imaginings. How might this tension be resolved? I think it is important to re-emphasise here that I have been defining deliberate moral imagining as *pre-critical*: it can be intentionally initiated to assist with the goal of bringing to light options for what seems valuable, but it does not itself make the judgements of value. Clearly, as I have argued from the beginning, such purposeful envisioning cannot support responsible autonomy alone; reflective endorsement must make sense of what the mental landscape offers and judge accordingly.

In his reflections on agency and socially constructed selfhood, Joe Anderson astutely observes that "the expansion in possibilities for choice brings with it an expansion in the responsibilities for choosing well," which must involve joint efforts toward being "maximally open to relevant considerations."[663] This stance captures the requirements of responsible autonomy as I have been defining it, but also highlights the need for collaborative imaginative practices to promote the kind of "enlarged mentality" extolled by Seyla Benhabib through judgement that "involves the capacity to represent to oneself the multiplicity of viewpoints, the variety of perspectives, the layers of meaning which constitute the situation."[664] To my mind, such a mentality stands a strong chance of addressing the tension of exposure levels.

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[661] Coeckelbergh, 2007, 46.

In closing, given the considerable overlaps between the characteristics that deliberate moral imagining seeks to cultivate, it would be fruitful to devote more research to explicitly exploring the relations between them: for instance, how could an increase or reduction in a child's self-efficacy affect her empathic engagement and reasonableness? What are the possible connections between each item in the triad and how might collaborative morally imaginative practices contribute to making them more complementary? As this section has suggested, perhaps there are aspects of life that children should not yet imagine, regardless of their relational salience, because of the possible dangers that might result. This possibility warrants further investigation in future research: Could restraints on deliberate moral imagining be beneficial?

As an objection to my proposed conception, it is worth evaluating whether an intentionally restrained practice of deliberate moral imagining might be justified in some cases to help children focus their energies on issues that appear more immune to dangers and thus more mindful of their vulnerable status as emerging agents. But even if the perfect balance could

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[662] Mackenzie and Stoljar, eds., 2000, 128.

[663] Anderson, 2011, 102.

[664] Benhabib, 1992, 54.

somehow be struck, when activated, the process of deliberate moral imagining remains a demanding one, which brings us to the second part of my critique.

Possible demands of deliberate moral imagining

The critique of deliberate moral imagining in terms of its possible dangers reflects a justifiable concern over such purposeful envisioning in children inadvertently producing the opposite of its desired effects—not a greater relational openness (an expansion of the relation to other, self, knowledge) nor a stronger sense of responsibility for their deep concerns and how they might act in accordance with them, but a desensitisation to negative imagery and inaccurate imaginings, and perhaps even an inclination to normalise them. On this interpretation, "everything you can imagine is real" may become a dangerous proposition. Yet these very pitfalls point precisely to the reasons why I have argued at length for the importance of collaborative morally imaginative practices in childhood. What children omit or fail to envision alone they may be better able to do together, notably when properly guided by an adult facilitator who carefully curates and scaffolds the imaginative engagement.

To protect this experience, we could still maintain that certain adverse imaginings ought not enter their mental landscapes, but even if they did creep in, at least their prospects as options for valued living would likely unravel when put to the test of the group's combined inquiry. Nevertheless, as I have mentioned, the process is not easy, even when the work is shared. Could it be argued that even a collective effort of deliberate moral imagining demands too much of children's evolving responsible autonomy and is therefore not actionable? As I see it, the response depends on the connotations of "demanding," the consequences of the collective experiences, and the intensity of the targeted outcomes—the focal points of this section.

It should come as no surprise at this point that my own connotations of "demanding" are in no way negative, even within the context of childhood. As mentioned, the arguments in this thesis are largely inspired by my philosophical practices in diverse settings from preschool onwards with children who have consistently been willing and able to tackle difficult tasks related to the CPI model and to philocreation projects with an impressive work ethic. In this sense, opting for "demanding" pedagogical approaches is akin to showing profound respect for their emerging agency—their current abilities and their future potential—but also appreciation for the complexity of contemporary living: though varying levels of immersion are likely desirable for the reasons already outlined, we are not doing young people any favours by instilling in them a false sense of simplicity or uniformity in a world that is growing increasingly intricate. Some adults may genuinely wonder whether children can and should be expected to handle demanding pedagogies; to my mind, their hesitation only further underscores the need to be deliberately morally imaginative in the very design of these approaches by developing new conceptual frames and prototype structures—like the notion of *aspirational eros* for instance—to ensure the experience is itself meaningful and motivating for children despite its exacting components.

As I see it, then, the problem arises not when a pedagogical approach is demanding, but when it is unduly so, in that it places unrealistic expectations on its young subjects to the extent that it becomes a detrimental experience, not only failing to reach its targeted outcomes but actually causing harm. In terms of the experience of deliberate moral imagining, what might be some possible consequences of collaborative morally imaginative practices demanding too much of children? To begin, they could conceivably be prone to what I want to call *complexity exhaustion*, a response similar to the compassion fatigue ascribed to individuals who work in caring professions—a kind of stress, anxiety, negativity and even hopelessness associated with being in constant contact with adversity, suffering or disadvantage in real-world interactions.[665] Except in the case of deliberate moral imagining, the response in children would not be personal distress or societal indifference caused by difficult realities, so much as a resistance to complexity and ambiguity as well as decreasing tolerance of discomforting perspectives or processes, caused by oversaturated mental landscapes of diversified value sources and overexposure to varied forms of collective imaginative engagement.

Moreover, if children repeatedly face limitations of language, facts and interpretation in their purposeful envisioning—despite the group's willingness to help one another correct the inaccuracies or lacunas in their imaginings—their complexity exhaustion could take the form of scepticism toward the usefulness of collaborative morally imaginative practices and toward their own ability to undertake them. On both fronts, the oft-heard polite response of "I can't imagine!" when confronted with a horrible scenario or anecdote is telling: it suggests not only that the speaker may not feel equipped to envision the given situation but further that she perhaps feels she *ought not to imagine it* out of respect for its severity. As I see it, this stance is simply misguided given the accessible nature of deliberate moral imagining: even though it can be hard to master and may yield inaccurate results, it remains ever accessible as an exercise. The response "I can only imagine…" is much more apt as an orientation to relational openness, suggesting that such purposeful envisioning is a readily available option despite it not being sufficient for reason-driven meaning-making. Besides, reluctance to engage in deliberate moral imagining with others seems to hold the riskier promise of bolstering tribe thinking or herd mentalities towards the protection of a relationally suspicious status quo.

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[665] Figley, ed., 1995.

That being said, it seems collaborative morally imaginative practices can only succeed when they are genuinely shared: if certain children feel they are bearing the brunt of deliberate moral imagining within their group, their skepticism may also be tinged with resentment. For instance, the affect aliens discussed in the fifth chapter could feel indignant at having to constantly envision the standpoint of privileged white cisgendered males—a symbol of their oppressors—when the reverse seems seldom to occur.

With these possible consequences in mind, let us suppose that the experience of collaborative morally imaginative practices could be carefully curated so as to prevent the kind of complexity exhaustion that arises when the process becomes unduly demanding. Still, the question of targeted outcomes persists: At what point can children be deemed to have imagined sufficiently for their evolving responsible autonomy? If relational openness is the overall aim of deliberate moral imagining in childhood, and its related goals include the ability to acknowledge limited perspectives, recognise commonality and identify competing considerations—all in order to fuel the mental landscapes through which children envisage their evolving responsible autonomy—then what results can be reasonably expected from their involvement in collaborative morally imaginative practices?

As noted at the end of the previous section, what seems truly dangerous about the aforementioned adverse or inaccurate imaginings is not their existence per se but the effects they could have on children as emerging agents if not judiciously assessed at the stage of reflective endorsement. This assessment requires the elaboration of criteria to determine thresholds of atrocity, toxicity, accuracy, and the like, as well as the ability to correctly apply these criteria in the formation of judgements, especially when case-by-case analysis complicates the endeavour. Although such critical reasoning is exactly what the CPI strives to develop in children—

especially as they become more advanced and learn to consistently apply evaluation criteria to assess the philosophical quality of their positions—it remains a tough undertaking for children and adult facilitators alike. Is the CPI as a morally imaginative practice really actionable in terms of its targeted outcomes?

At the outset of this thesis, in laying the foundations of an account of responsible autonomy relevant to childhood, I justified my preference for Friedman's relational approach in part because it seems to sidestep the problem of undue demands by recognising degrees of autonomous living. On her view, a minimal level of autonomy can be attained provided an agent has a basic grasp of her own concerns and these at least partly determine her actions. I have argued that deliberate moral imagining can provide children with important occasions to envision these concerns in action, even if their age and circumstances—including developmental and legal restrictions—keep them from living in accordance with all of them. In this light, they can be deemed to display a minimal degree of autonomy that can evolve as they grow up. Applied to collaborative moral practices, a regulating ideal could be that children work together to refine their reflective endorsement through deliberate moral imagining to get as close to maximal global autonomy as their circumstances permit; but they need only engage in basic "mental landscaping" to be deemed to have imagined sufficiently for a minimal degree of responsible autonomy.

Within a CPI, this mental landscaping would involve the group being willing and able to activate at least one of the features of deliberate moral imagining during a collaborative dialogue in order to expand their envisioning of an overarching context—relation to others, self or knowledge. In doing so, they would also be starting to demonstrate more advanced dispositions of relational openness, like the metacognitive awareness necessary to sense that their inquiry content or procedures are too rigid, thus purposefully initiating an imaginative engagement with the aim to generate multiple frames of reference with which to approach and assess their current lived experience. But minimally, if children show a willingness and ability to bring to light possibilities for what seems reasonable to value, they have imagined sufficiently for their evolving responsible autonomy, and this envisioning is enough to fuel their reflective endorsement.

Viewed in this light, the CPI as a collaborative morally imaginative practice is indeed actionable. Practically speaking, such basic mental landscaping can be curated by adults through simple but original facilitation aids that promote deliberate moral imagining. For instance, one philocreation technique is to have a cardboard silhouette of a person sitting in an empty chair within the circle to act as a visual reminder that perspectives must strive to pass the "Stranger Test," prompting children to imagine what someone who disagrees with them or has another view might say. Another philocreation technique is for children to try to manage both their own perspective as they understand it and the possible perspective of another, like being an "animal advocate" when talking about environmental ethics by sharing both their position and the stance they imagine their assigned animal finger puppet might hold.

More generally, the philocreation approach includes a physical toolbox that metaphorically represents each of the thinking tools used in P4C. For example, magical sunglasses help children see opposite viewpoints to test the criteria under consideration through counter-examples: if they think friendship is defined by kindness, then the glasses allow them to imagine an unkind friend to gauge the true importance of kindness as a criterion. Such immersive activities offer creative entries into the features of deliberate moral imagining while fuelling their mental landscapes toward the identification of their deep concerns. To my mind, this latitude in terms of targeted outcomes is desirable on two fronts: first, in terms of inclusiveness, it makes room for children in all their diversity, including those with exceptionalities and varied learning styles. Second, in terms of progressive child/adult relationships, it welcomes into the fold those adults who are not convinced that children should be pushed to maximal levels of responsible autonomy but are nonetheless interested in working with them toward attaining a minimal degree through a less demanding approach. By not being unduly demanding, then, collaborative morally imaginative practices may also assist with the construction of new philosophies of childhood by collecting the incredible but often underestimated insights that children have to offer about the world and their place in it.

Closing remarks

In conclusion, if my conception of deliberate moral imagining were to be represented symbolically, it would most closely resemble the 1953 lithograph *Relativity* by graphic artist M. C. Escher. Depicting a room of topsy-turvy stairways where perspectives change depending on the fields of gravity, the print makes it near impossible for viewers to determine which way is up and orient themselves accordingly, subtly suggesting that things are not always as they appear and should therefore not be taken for granted. The resulting dizziness seems to lessen the likelihood of outright discounting perspectives as worthy of consideration by creating the kind of comfort with uncertainty and epistemological flexibility necessary to manage complexity and ambiguity without fleeing into a more dogmatic, black-and-white stance.

With respect to childhood, I see deliberate moral imagining as helping children realise they have power over a given situation simply by virtue of being able to see it differently—the labyrinth-like world of *Relativity* metaphorically captures the capacity to envision diverse options for lives that seem reasonable to value, while keeping the resulting perspectives in flux even as they begin to orient responsibly autonomous action. By extension, collaborative morally imaginative practices familiarise and sensitise children to this dizzying stairway experience so that they can learn to activate it for themselves when they sense their horizons of meaning becoming too restrictive.

While I find the possible dangers and undue demands of deliberate moral imagining explored in this chapter both significant and worthy of further analysis, I think they lose some force if mitigated through careful imaginative curatorship by adults who understand the opportunity within risks that such pedagogical practices present. If sustained over time, such practices seem primed to equip children with increasingly advanced skills to combine deliberate moral imagining with reflective endorsement to support their emerging agency: they not only learn to acknowledge missing perspectives but also transcend them, they not only learn to recognise commonality but also embrace it, they not only learn to identify competing considerations but also assess them.

Creating a space for children to share and discuss the contents of their own mental landscapes can be a joyful, fulfilling experience that enriches their sense of possibility as emerging agents. Since a CPI asks children to consider not only what kind of world they do live in but also what kind of world they should live in, it is ideally suited to the task of collaboratively negotiating and reconstructing their mental landscapes. As Sharp so eloquently writes, echoing Paulo Freire, “you have to be awake to the ethical and political meaning of your experience—emotionally as well as conceptually—before you can sense, and then articulate that there is something wrong with it."[666] It stands to reason that these children will grow into adults who can embody relational openness and challenge the narrow perspectives that jeopardise their relations to other, self and knowledge, rather than allow questionable ideologies to normalise them. Moreover, by becoming more attuned to their own childhood experience, by their very enactment of their evolving responsible autonomy as they age, they can contribute to redressing problematic conceptions about children and model more positive child/adult relationships.

So in response to my original question regarding the possibility of constructing a theory of imagining relevant to childhood that connects autonomy to responsibility, I still maintain that it is indeed feasible, particularly if the deliberate and moral aspects of imagining are emphasised. The childhood experience seems uniquely positioned to reveal the potential power of *imagining on purpose*: through such intentional envisioning, children can open themselves up to broader possibilities for valuable lives that can shape their sense of both agency and accountability. Since this conception of deliberate moral imagining was inspired by my ongoing philosophical practices with children and continues to inspire my broader work moving forward as a practitioner and researcher, I am committed to realising the interdisciplinary empirical work with expert colleagues in order to assess and refine collaborative morally imaginative practices in service of youth's emerging agency. Such a project embodies what I care most about after engaging myself in deliberate moral imagining: philosophy used to enrich understandings of life and intersubjectivity, creative immersion designed to deepen appreciation of challenging concepts and issues, and that playful childhood energy so needed to restore authentic meaning-making in community discourse where rigidity and anaesthetic experiences have eclipsed any sense of whimsy and wonder.

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[666] Maughn Gregory, "Philosophy for Children and its Critics: A Mendham Dialogue," *Journal of Philosophy of*

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